

	Corporate Parenting Committee 12 October 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director of Children and Young People and Community Development
	Lead Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment and Climate Action - Cllr Jake Rubin
Brent Adoption Report 6-monthly report: 1 April to 30 September 2026	

Wards Affected:	ALL
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the duration of the meeting, on the grounds that the attendance of representatives from the council's Children in Care council, necessitated the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2, Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, of the Act, namely: Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
List of Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Adopt London West Annual Report
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Debbie Gabriel, Head of Service, Adopt London West Brent's Regional Adoption Agency GabrielD@ealing.gov.uk Kelli Eboji Head of Service for Looked After Children and Permanency Kelli.eboji@brent.gov.uk Palvinder Kudhail Director, Early Help and Social Care Palvinder.Kudhail@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to both present a report and provide a briefing to the Corporate Parenting Committee in relation to:

- Adopt London West annual report for 2025/26
- adoption performance data for the period 1 April 2026 – 30 September 2026
- the progress and activity of Adopt London West
- how good outcomes are being achieved for children.

Information and child level data presented in Section 5 of this report is provided by Brent CYP; the annual report includes the progress and activity of Adopt London West.

- 1.2 This is the thirteenth report presented to the Corporate Parenting Committee in this format as Cabinet gave approval in April 2019 for Brent council to:
- a) join the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), Adopt London West (ALW) consisting of the London boroughs of Ealing, Hounslow and Hammersmith and Fulham for the provision of Adoption services and Special Guardianship Support; and
 - b) delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Children and Young People, in consultation with the Lead Member for Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care to agree and enter into a Partnership Agreement with participating boroughs.
- 1.3 The Key Decision was made on 2 September 2019 and, following the TUPE of those Brent staff members who chose to move to Ealing, Adopt London West has been a 'live' RAA since October 2019.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee is requested to note, review, comment on, and question the contents of the reports. This is to provide evidence that the management of the adoption service is being monitored and challenged to promote good outcomes for children. This is in line with standard 25.6 of the Adoption National Minimum Standards (2014).

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1.1 This report sets out the provision and management of the local authority's adoption service and the developments that have taken place in the reporting period. The work of ALW contributes to the following borough priorities:

- **The Best Start in Life**
- **Prosperity and Stability**
- **A Healthier Brent**
- **Thriving Communities**

In order for care experienced young people to have the best start in life, prosperity and stability, safety, and good health they need safe, stable, permanent homes with primary carers who love them and who are able to meet their holistic needs throughout their minority. The work of ALW and the LAC and Permanency service contribute to these priorities by ensuring permanency is achieved for children and young people either via a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or Adoption. Providing safe, stable, permanent, loving placements for children and young people when they are unable to remain with their parent/s, means that they will have the best life chances.

3.2 Background - Adopt London West

- 3.2.1 Previous reports have set out the background and circumstances leading to the formation of Adopt London West Regional Adoption Agency in October 2019.
- 3.2.2 The partnership continues to mature and evolve, relationships between all partners remain positive with consistent attendance of Directors and senior leaders at the quarterly partnership board meetings.

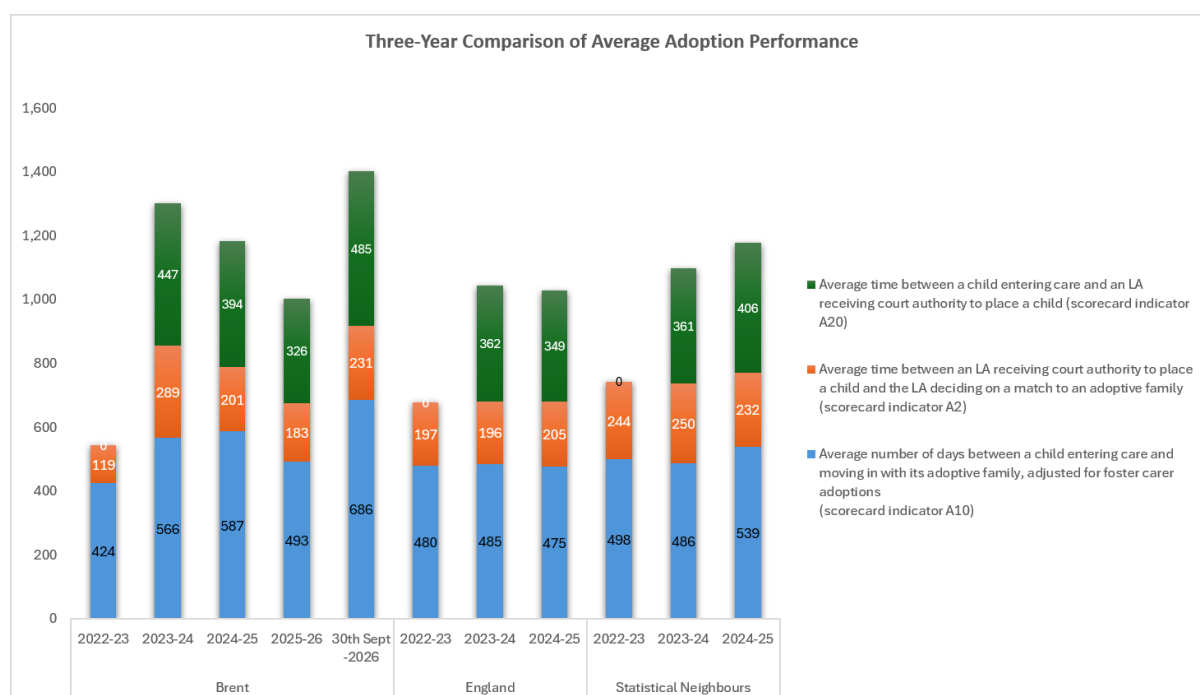
4.0 Responsibilities

- 4.1 As delegated in the partnership agreement between Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham and Hounslow, Ealing (as the host Local Authority for ALW) is responsible for ensuring that children whose permanence plan is adoption in all four partner Local Authorities are matched in a timely way with adopters who best meet the needs of those children. This involves featuring children in various profiling events, via national linking websites, supporting them in adoption activity days and networking events with other Regional Adoption Agencies in London and nationally. ALW is also responsible for the preparation and assessment of prospective adopters, supporting adopters with family finding following approval, and the on-going post placement support to adopters and special guardians. ALW is also responsible for the provision of services to adopted adults and all those affected by adoption who request a specific service or an assessment of need.
- 4.2 ALW provides a service to Brent residents who wish to make a private application to adopt their partner's child. These are non-agency adoptions and often referred to as "step-parent" adoption, or special guardians who may wish to adopt the child in their care. The team is also involved in completing adoption reports on children who may have travelled from and been adopted abroad; there is a legal requirement for these adoptions to be made lawful in the UK.
- 4.3 Inter-country adoption referrals continue to be referred to the Coram Inter-Country Adoption Centre, a specialist Voluntary Adoption Agency (VAA), with whom a service level agreement is in place.
- 4.4 Statutory social work in relation to children needing adoptive placements remains the responsibility of Brent CYP. The care plans for children are formulated by the social work teams and agreed by Head of Service for LAC and Permanency. The Director, Early Help and Social Care then considers and ratifies any adoption plans.

5.0 Performance Data

- 5.1 Brent's 3-year performance for 2023-26 is:
- A1 (The average time taken for a child entering care to being placed for adoption): 554 days (3-year average) (686 in the last 12 months) as at 30 September 2026.
 - A2 (The average time taken from the Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child for adoption and a match being approved): 212 days (3-year average) (231 days in the last 12 months) as at 30 September 2026
 - A20 (The average time between a child entering care and the Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child): 383 days (3-year average) (485 days in the last 12 months).

5.2 The below graph provides a comparison across Brent, England and statistical neighbours performance in relation to the A1, A2, and A20 indicators as of the 30 September 2026.



5.3 Performance variance in this small cohort of children is caused by a range of factors, and can be the result of significant delays for just one child, or a small group of children due to extended complex care proceedings, the individual needs and age of the child impacting on the availability of suitable adopters and therefore 'family finding' taking longer than hoped, these factors affect the average timescale for all children placed, some of whom may have been placed very quickly from the point a Placement Order was granted.

5.4 The increase in all three performance measures at the end of this reporting period is related to three specific children, because of lengthy care proceedings and the individual health and developmental needs of the children, which impacted on family finding.

6.0 Child related data

6.1 There have been 6 Adoption Orders granted so far in this reporting year.

6.2 3 children have been placed with their new families so far this year,

6.3 There are currently fifteen children with an adoption plan who have not yet been adopted. The details of these children's cases are as follows:

- Four children are placed with their new families, all placed with adopters approved by ALW. Three children were placed in 2026/27, but the Adoption Orders have not yet been granted.
- Nine children are subject to a Placement Order but are not yet placed, four have a potential link with a new family.

- Two children were relinquished and have been placed in early permanence placements.
- Four of the children are likely to have a change of care plan due to an updated assessment of their needs.
- ALW and Brent are exploring potential families for the remaining children who are subject to a Placement Order. Of the three children placed this year, all have been placed with families who reflect their racial and cultural background and identity.

7.0 Adopter Recruitment

- 7.1 8 Adopter households have been approved so far in 2026/27, the current projections are for 25 approvals by the end of March 2027 which would be the highest number of approvals to date.
- 7.2 There are currently 33 ALW approved adopters: 7 of whom already have a child/children placed with them, 12 are in the active family finding stage, 6 of these families are already matched or linked with children 8 families are on hold due to their personal circumstances.
- 7.3 The adoption assessment process comprises 2 stages. Stage 1 assessments should take place within 2 months (60 days), this stage is described as “adopter led”, where adopters work through exercises and complete various tasks that contribute to a full and thorough assessment of their suitability. Department for Education (DfE) Adoption and Special Guardianship data for 2026/27 in Quarter 1 shows the London average for Stage 1 was 155 days, and ALW average for those adopters approved is 162 days
- 7.4 Stage 2 should take a maximum of 4 months (120 days), this is a detailed assessment that is both reflective and analytical. In total, the comprehensive assessment process should be completed within 6 months. DfE data for Q1 the London average for Stage 2 is 208 days, the average for ALW is = 158 days
- 7.5 There are 25 prospective adopters in the formal stages of assessment. 15 households are in Stage 1 and 9 are in Stage 2.

8.0 Casework and partnership with Local Authority

- 8.1 In this reporting year so far ALW has offered a service to 26 Brent children, families or individuals who have required support. Five children continue to be open to a social worker and are receiving a social work support service. 16 Brent children are receiving an Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) therapeutic service that is under review. As of the end of August 2026, there were eight requests for access to adoption records held by the National Adoption Society; five such request were allocated for social work support and we were awaiting 44 more records to be located and shared with us for allocation and support to clients.
- 8.2 In addition, at the end of Aug, there were 172 keeping in touch arrangements (formerly referred to as contact) being facilitated for Brent families - 31 direct contact arrangements and 141 active letter exchanges.

8.3 Feedback from families

Special Guardian – *“We did not know about you until the school told us you may be able to help. I really appreciate the promptness with which my emails were dealt with and the support offered.”*

Adopter – *“ALW’s reactivity to reach out to support me was helpful. I have just started being in contact with ALW as I need therapeutic parenting advice and other supports to help my son and they’ve been efficient in trying to set up some support for me, especially. They have been reactive as to help me find support which I am awaiting for now. Guiding me to support for therapeutic parenting and NVR courses has been helpful. I am looking forward to start courses which will help me better support my teenage son’s needs and his life story, as well as learning to communicate better with him.”*

Feedback from recent ‘Foundations for Attachment’ training for adopters and special guardians:

- *The ALW facilitators were knowledgeable, allowing space to discuss. It felt they were invested in our experiences and not rushing the sessions.*
- *It was helpful to have some of the practical advice and discussions with the group.
I enjoyed hearing from other experiences, that I can learn and compare to my situation.*
- *The ALW team was amazing, empathic and very friendly.*
- *Everything was helpful to be honest, I enjoyed all the advice and knowledge given and how engaging and helpful each session was.*
- *Meeting parents in a similar situation and having a discussion. Very engaging; staff were great, and getting all the valid points across, and relating these to our experiences.*
- *The experience I had with the people, and the explanations of the topic. Overall, I learned a lot of things.*

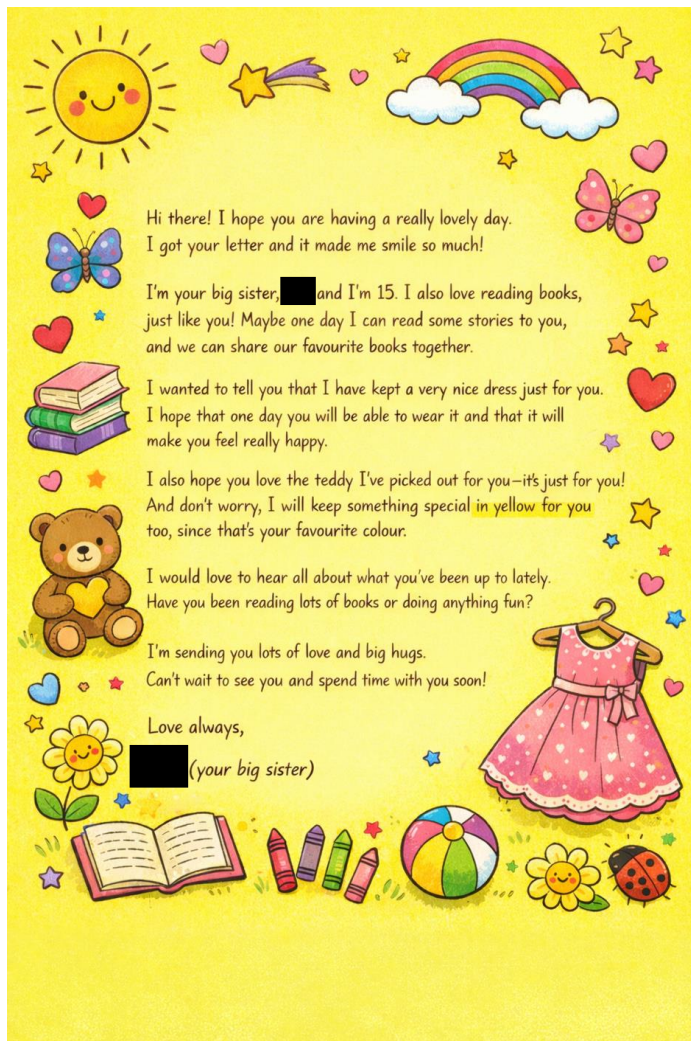
8.4 Some examples of positive joint work between Brent and ALW,

One case involved the child’s social worker, birth mother’s leaving care worker and team manager from Brent with the ALW team including the adopters’ social worker, ALW support social workers and the keeping in touch team. Professionals worked well together to manage several complexities and were able to support the adopters and birth mum to meet face to face which went very well. The adopters are also currently attending the ALW ‘Foundations for Attachment’ course.

In August 2026 an ALW keeping in touch worker supported an initial family time session between a Brent child, his adoptive parents, his birth grandmother and his two birth siblings. This session was very positive, and the adoptive parents will carry this on themselves, with a plan to do so 3 times a year. Grandmother said *“the meeting more than met our expectations, we were so happy to meet T and his parents. We all felt so at ease and comfortable and we all got on so well. Thank you, for making the arrangements, we felt that you went above and beyond to make this happen. I can’t believe it happened and will never forget. Thank you so much.”*

ALW have also been working with S, a 23-year-old Brent care experienced young person, and her Personal Advisor for several years to try and connect her with multiple brothers and sisters who were adopted. This work has resulted in making a connection between S and her youngest sibling and their Special Guardian. They are in direct contact now and are all so happy.

Below is an example of a “letterbox” letter to a 3-year-old adopted child from her 15-year-old older sister who is in care.



9.0 Priorities for 2026/27- taken from ALW Annual Report

- Complete ALW service review and finance modelling.
- Continue to lead and influence practice development in Keeping in Touch arrangements for children.
- Continue to lead the Adopt London Multi- Disciplinary team and implement plans to integrate therapeutically informed social work practice model across London.
- Develop understanding of sensory processing difficulties in children who have experienced developmental trauma through the delivery of BUSS to both staff and families
- Extend the offer of group work interventions for families by delivering the Great Behaviour Breakdown and Non-Violence Resistance programmes
- Lead the pan- regional innovation grant project across London including appointing a youth worker to progress peer support and voice and influence opportunities for adopted children and young people. As illustrated in the infographic below

10.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 10.1 There are currently no additional stakeholder and ward member consultation considerations arising from this report.

11.0 Financial Considerations

- 11.1 Brent Council's contribution to the cost of running the functions of ALW in 2025/26 was £0.403m, funded through existing general fund budget allocation for the service.
- 11.2 The overall benefits of a shared service are also realised through the practice improvement and opportunities that are possible now that small individual services have become part of the wider Adopt London collaboration and the national RAA network. It was previously not possible for LA Adoption services to offer the range of support and services that can now be delivered as a Regional Adoption Agency.
- 11.3 A review is currently underway in relation to the future financial sustainability of ALW in its current form. This has been commissioned by the ALW Board, and a decision is likely to be made before the end of this financial year.

12.0 Legal Considerations

- 12.1 There are no additional legal considerations arising from this report.

13.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 13.1 There are no additional Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) considerations arising from this report.

14.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 14.1 There are no climate change or environmental considerations.

15.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

- 15.1 There are no human resource or property considerations.

16.0 Communication Considerations

- 16.1 Considered within the main body of the report.

Report sign off:

Nigel Chapman

Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Community Development