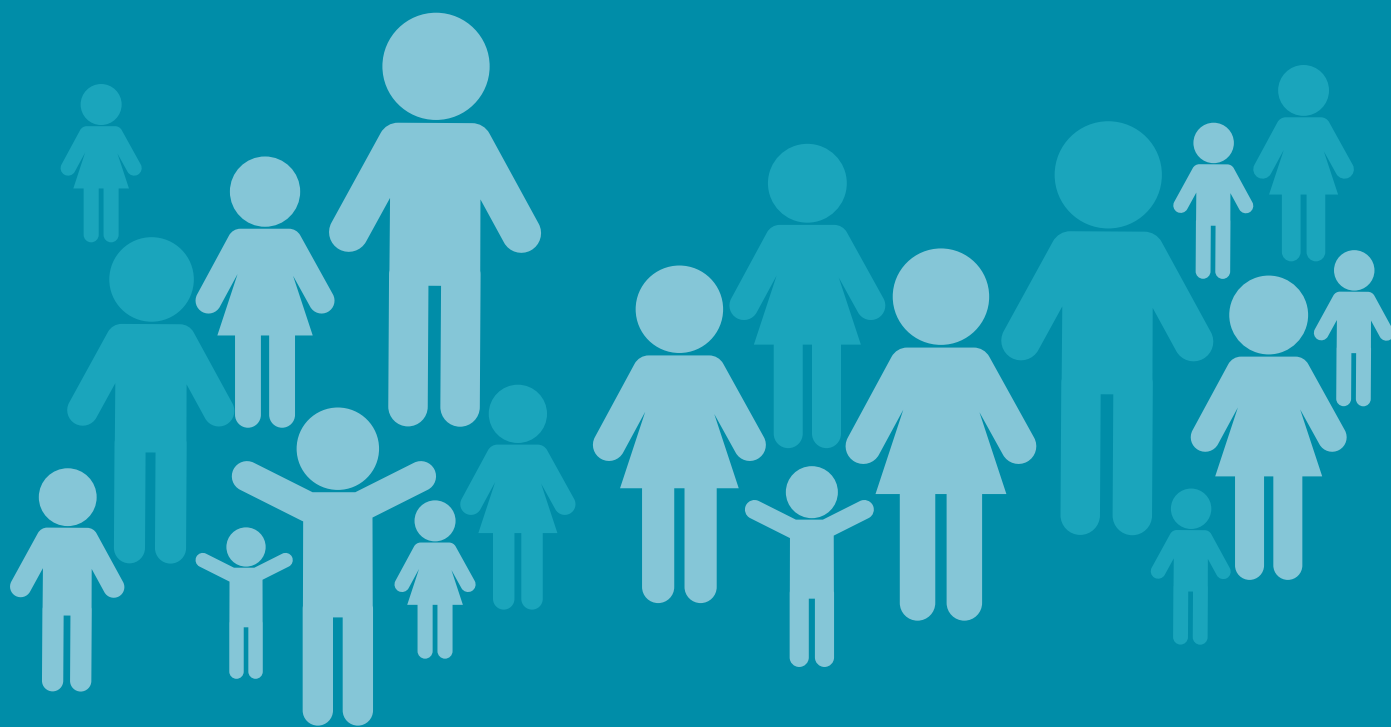


# Kirklees Children and Young People Services



This bulletin has been produced by Kirklees Council – and shared with partners - to keep you updated on the work of Family Support and Child Protection.

### **Message from Gill Ellis, Director for Children and Young People**

I would like to bring you another update on our improvement work and the report recently completed by our Commissioner, Eleanor Brazil.

Eleanor's report to the Department for Education – including recommendations for improvement and about whether different arrangements for our children's services would be the most effective way forward – has now been submitted.

It was originally planned that the Minister would consider Eleanor's findings and would report back to us fairly quickly as to whether they were minded to accept her recommendations. However, the announcement of a general election for June 8<sup>th</sup> has unfortunately led to a delay in this process.

The Minister will not be considering Eleanor's report until after the election and we don't currently know how long the delay will be. At the moment there is no clear timeline for when the Minister will make any decisions. This is a little frustrating as we would all like more certainty about the future, but the hold-up is beyond our control and, of course, it doesn't stop us continuing with our improvement work.

The Minister's options include Kirklees entering Trust status, through to the creation of a formal partnership with another council, through to staying as we are. In the meantime, as we know we need support to improve, we are developing an even stronger relationship with Leeds City Council.

Leeds have been on an improvement journey of their own and have emerged in a much stronger position. In their 2015 Ofsted inspection they were rated as 'good' overall with 'outstanding' leadership, management and governance. They are also an approved 'partner in practice', so it makes absolute sense for us to tap into this excellent source of support right on our doorstep.

In terms of our everyday improvement work, it's very much business as usual. We continue to focus on our priorities; we continue to do everything possible in developing the way we support children and families; and we continue to put children at the heart of everything we do.

### **Next Ofsted visit**

We now have the dates for our next monitoring visit from Ofsted. This will be the second visit and will take place on 27 and 28 June.

The first monitoring visit, which took place in March, found a number of positives whilst confirming what we already knew – specifically that our journey still has a long way to go. We look forward to welcoming Ofsted back so that we can demonstrate further improvements.

### **Liquidlogic is on the way**

We are continuing to work on the introduction of a new case management system for children's social care records.

This will replace Care First and will be a more effective tool, enhancing the quality of performance information available. The new system is called Liquidlogic and is used by many organisations around the country.

We are working closely with Liquidlogic to ensure the system is tailored precisely for our needs and will help us to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families. Implementing a new and large-scale system is, of course, a major undertaking, so we have a number of staff working to ensure this happens as smoothly as possible.

Liquidlogic won't be introduced for a few more months, but this is a vitally important project. All staff will need to attend mandatory training sessions later this year, learning in detail how to use the new system. Help and support will be offered throughout the change.

### **Regionalising adoption in Yorkshire and the Humber**

You are probably aware that our adoption service is changing.

Central government have directed that they want all adoption services nationally to be organised on a regional basis by 2020. Here in Yorkshire and the Humber we are doing this now so we can begin to improve our adoption services as soon as possible.

All five councils (Kirklees, Calderdale, Leeds, Wakefield and Bradford) agreed to create the West Yorkshire adoption agency. This will be called One Adoption West Yorkshire and will be hosted by Leeds City Council. This includes the recruitment and assessment of adopters, adoption support and family finding.

Adoption staff who are in scope have been consulted on TUPE arrangements transferring them to the new agency under Leeds City Council. This change will enable the new agency to deliver adoption services more effectively, improving outcomes for children by reducing the time it takes to place a child with a family, enabling the recruitment of more of the right type of families and improving the way adoption support services are commissioned and delivered.

Adoption staff will still work from their local offices, maintaining close contact with the social work and fostering teams they currently work with. There may be some changes of staff in these teams and differing areas of responsibilities for each team.

It's important to stress that we will still have a localised presence in adoption services. Local services for Looked After Children will remain the corporate parenting responsibility of each local authority and each council will make decisions about whether their children should be adopted.

If you would like to know more about the regionalisation agenda you can read about it [here](#).