Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

The Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board provides leadership to the adoption and special guardianship system in England and to drive improvements in performance.

The Chair of the Board, Andrew Christie CBE, will attend the Board to provide an update on the Board’s current work and priorities, and to receive feedback on these from board members.

Recommendations

That the Board considers the update from the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board and:

1. provides feedback to the ASGLB from their own authorities; and
2. directs officers to take action as appropriate.

Actions

Officers to take any actions arising from the discussion.

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Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board

1. The Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) was set up in 2014 to provide leadership to the adoption system and drive improvements in performance. In 2018 the Board became the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board (ASGLB), with a remit to cover previously looked after children subject to adoption or special guardianship orders.
2. The ASGLB is made up of 12 senior officials from key organisations in the adoption and permanence system in England, including the Local Government Association. This includes colleagues from local authorities, voluntary adoption agencies, the Department for Education, and independent experts.
3. The ASGLB is chaired by Andrew Christie CBE, who was appointed by the Education Secretary in March 2016. Andrew has over 40 years’ experience on the front line of children’s social care and is also Chair of the Birmingham Children’s Trust. Previously, Andrew has acted as Chair of the Lambeth Safeguarding Children Board, the Executive Director of Children’s Services for London’s Tri-borough area, and as Chair of Health, Care and Additional Needs Policy Committee at ADCS.
4. As part of its oversight of the adoption and special guardianship system, the ASGLB receives data returns from every local authority, voluntary adoption agency, and regional adoption agency in England on a quarterly basis.
5. The latest publicly available data covers the period to 31 December 2018. The latest key headlines are:
	1. There were 2750 children waiting at 31 December 2018. This is a 1.9 per cent increase from 30 September 2018 when there were 2700 children waiting with a placement order not yet placed with an adoptive family.
	2. The number of new placement orders has fallen from 920 in quarter two in 2018/19 to 850 in quarter three for 2018/19; a decrease of 8 per cent.
	3. Registrations to become an adopter have increased from 800 in quarter two to 920 in quarter three; an increase of 15 per cent.
	4. The number of families approved for adoption has increased from 670 in quarter two for 2018/19 to 780 in quarter three for 2018/19; an increase of 16 per cent.
6. Andrew Christie will be attending the Board meeting to discuss the current priorities for the ASGLB, and to hear the views of councillors about issues in their own authorities that the ASGLB may wish to investigate. A copy of his presentation can be found at **Appendix A**.

Implications for Wales

1. The ASGLB covers England only.

Financial Implications

1. There are no financial implications to this item.