

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	7 th June 2023
Title:	Adopt South – Annual Report 2022-2023 with Hampshire County Council Highlights
Report From:	<i>Stuart Ashley – Director of Children’s Services</i>

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Purpose of this Report

1. This report and film outlines the activity of Adopt South, the Regional Adoption Agency for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton local authorities for the financial year 2022-2023.

Recommendation

2. That the Annual Report 2022-2023 for Adopt South, is noted by the Children and Families Advisory Panel.

Executive Summary

3. This report seeks to present the performance of Adopt South for the financial year 2022-2023 (Year 4), making comparisons on activities since the launch in April 2019.
4. The report also highlights specific reference to Hampshire County Council’s children’s journey which includes:
 - a. 18% increase in Children’s Plans for Adoption compared to Year 3
 - b. 30% increase in Placement Orders compared to Year 3
 - c. 11% increase in children formally linked compared to Year 3
 - d. All 60 Hampshire children were placed in-house
 - e. Just 3 children without potential links at end of Year 4



5. Adopt South's Year 4 KPIs include:

- a. Enquiries 8% above 708 target (763)
- b. Achieved 93% RAA Mystery Shopper Score
- c. Adoption Information Sessions - 10% above 460 target (508)
- d. Registration of Interest Forms – 34% above 150 target (201)
- e. 94 Adopters approved – 85% of target
- f. 39% (37) adopters approved for sibling groups
- g. 28% (26) adopters approved for Fostering for Adoption
- h. Average Enquiry to Assessment Conversion Rate is 24% against a target of 20%
- i. £124,000 income generated from 4 interagency child placements
- j. Overall assessment journey 5 months (Government target 6 months)
- k. £921,475.19 approved by the Adoption Support Fund +18% on Year 3 (£783,714.82)
- l. £47,579 of income generated from therapeutic courses
- m. 228 children with families identified + 4% on Y3
- n. 124 of these have been Hard to Place (54% of total) +7% on Y3
- o. 119 children have been formally linked to 97 families +28% on Y3
- p. 38 sibling groups have had families identified +3% on Y3
- q. 20 children over the age of 5 years +11% on Y3
- r. 26 children placed in Fostering for Adoption placements
- s. Just 9 children with no potential links
- t. Just 2 children (siblings) placed externally at £54,630
- u. Scorecard 10 433 days, just 7 days above Government guidance (426 days)

Contextual information

6. In 2015, the Department of Education (DoE) released a Parliamentary Paper, which recommended a move towards grouping neighbouring adoption services into Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA) to improve practice and performance. By 2017, there was a recommendation that local authorities would operate their adoption services in a cluster or group of local authorities within 18 months.
7. In April 2019, Adopt South was launched. The Regional Adoption Agency is a partnership which includes Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton local authorities.

Performance

8. Since launch, Adopt South has improved the outcomes for many children who cannot live with their birth families.
 - a. 746 children have had families identified
 - b. 347 of these children have been Hard to Place



- c. 438 children formally linked
 - d. 433 new adoptive families approved
 - e. Stage 1 Timescales 1.6 months (Government target is two months)
 - f. Stage 2 Timescales 3.7 months (Government target is four months)
 - g. £2.9m of ASF funding since our launch
9. How does Adopt South compare to 32 RAAs (**ASGLB data April 2021 – March 2022*):
- a. Approved the third highest number of adopters
 - b. Our adopters spent less time than any other RAA from enquiry to Stage 1
 - c. 1 of just 2 RAA's where Scorecard 1 is in timescale
 - d. Only RAA who achieved both Stage 1 and Stage 2 in timescales
 - e. Adopt South adopters had the shortest adoption journey from enquiry to approval than any other RAA
 - f. Lowest timescale from Placement Order to Adoption Order
 - g. We placed more children with in-house adopters than any other RAA

Appendix

- 10. Adopt South's 2022-2023 Annual Report
- 11. [End of Year 4 Film](#)



REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	no
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	no
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None



EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

This report is an information update for the Children and Families Advisory Panel and therefore no impact has been identified.



Adopt South

Summary Report

With Hampshire County Council Highlights

Data and Comparisons to projected targets

Year 4 – 2022-2023

Presented by

Rachel Reynolds
Head of Adopt South

April 2023





Since we started in April 2019:

- 746 children had families identified
- 347 of these children have been Hard to Place
- 438 children formally linked*
- 433 families approved
- Stage 1 timescales 1.6 months
- Stage 2 timescales 3.7 months
- £2.9m of ASF funding since our launch

* Impacted by Covid and Somerset Judgement

How does Adopt South compare to 32 RAAs?

- Approved the third highest number of adopters
- Our adopters spent less time than any other RAA from enquiry to Stage 1
- 1 of just 2 RAA's where Scorecard 1 is in timescale
- Only RAA who achieved both Stage 1 and Stage 2 in timescales
- Adopt South adopters had the shortest adoption journey from enquiry to approval than any other RAA
- Lowest timescale from Placement to Adoption Order
- We placed more children with in-house adopters than any other RAA
- We spent less on interagency placements

ASGLB data 2021 - 2022



Executive Summary

Year 4 – 2022-2023 – Annual Results

Adopt South's Year 4 has achieved excellent outcomes for both adopter's and children's journeys:

Year 4 - Adopter's Journey

- ↑ **763** Enquiries **8%** above target (708) - 5% above last year
 - Eventbrite appointments introduced and new events
 - Achieved **93%** RAA Mystery Shopper Score
 - Over 2,000 followers on social media
 - #DylanandJames campaign
 - Biggest turnout of runners and supporters at ABP and GSR
- ↑ **508** AIS **10%** above target (460)
- ↑ **274** Enq Discussions **19%** above target (230) -7% above last year
- ↑ **201** RIFs **34%** above target (150) -23% above last year
- ↑ **185** progressed to assessment **30%** above target (142)- 21% above last year
- **94** families approved
- **39%** adopters approved for sibling groups (37)
- **28%** adopters approved for FfA (26)
- Average target to Assessment Rate is (24%) **20% above target** (20%)
- **4** placements sold - 5 children placed generated **£124,000** for year
- Stage 1 Timescales – **1.6 months**
- Stage 2 Timescales - **3.7 months**
- Overall adoption journey – **5 months** – 7% less time than Y3 (5.4 months)

Since the launch of Adopt South in 2019, 772 households have progressed to assessment

Year 4 - Children's Journey

- **228** children with families identified (150 matches confirmed) +4% on Y3
- **124** of these have been Hard to Place (54% of total) +6% on Y3
- **38** sibling groups with families identified (21 confirmed), 7 with a sibling group of 3 (4 confirmed) + 3% on Y3
- **20** children over 5 years with families identified (16 confirmed) – +186% on Y2
- **119** children formally linked to **97** adopters - + **28% on Y3 (including 19 sibling groups, 16 with a sib group of 2, 3 with a sibling group of 3; 9 children over the age of 5**
- Just **9** children with no potential links
- Just **1** Interagency purchase (sibling group of 2) – 117 children placed in house
- **26** children with FFA placements



- **433 days** for Scorecard 10 – just 7 days outside of the government guidance (426 days)
- **151** Children’s plans sent to ADM +12% above Y3
- **135** Placement Orders Made +10% above Y3
- **105** Adoption Orders Made + 15% above Y3

Adoption Support

- **542** Adoption Support enquiries for year
- **£921,475.19** approved applications from Adoption Support Fund + 18% above Y3
- **£47,579** of income generated from therapeutic courses – +4% on Year 3
- **35** adopter mentors - 245 families receiving mentoring support (214 Assessment/ 31 Adoption Support)



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Introduction

Success Outcomes

Adopt South's fourth year has continued to be strong, and we have seen some significant achievements.

Families have been identified for 228 children and the excellent news is that this has included matches being identified for 124 hard-to-place children, including 38 sibling groups and 20 children over the age of 5 years. Out of the 228 identified matches, 150 have been confirmed/progressed to panel or placement under FfA (Fostering for Adoption), including 21 sibling groups, which consists of 4 sibling groups of 3, and 16 children over the age of 5 years.

- **127 Hampshire children**
- **13 Isle of Wight children**
- **35 Portsmouth children**
- **53 Southampton children**

94 new adoptive households have been approved and 119 children formally linked with 97 families, a 28% increase on the number of children linked last year. This includes 19 sibling groups (16 sibling groups of 2, and 3 sibling groups of 3). It also includes 9 children over the age of 5 years.

- **60 Hampshire children (1 child over the age of 5)**
- **9 Isle of Wight children (1 child over the age of 5)**
- **18 Portsmouth children**
- **32 Southampton children (7 children over the age of 5)**

With the exception of a sibling group of 2, all have been linked with in-house adopters.

There are just 9 children with Placement Orders who currently have no potential links, and who Adopt South are actively family finding for. This includes two sibling groups of three male children and three single children. The three single children include a 6-year-old; all have complex or medical needs. Given the complexities, these children are unfortunately likely to wait longer to find their forever family.

This is one less than last quarter, where 10 children (including a 6-year-old, two 5-year-olds, and a 4-year-old,) all of whom had complex needs including two of the children having a 50% chance of inheriting Huntington's disease, had no potential links. Families have now been found for almost all of these children. The strategies Adopt South have implemented within marketing, recruitment, family finding, Stage 1 and Stage 2 have had a positive impact on the matching opportunities for our sibling groups, seeing 15 sets of siblings proceed to confirmed matches during the last two quarters



of Year 3. A further 21 sets of siblings (including four sibling groups of 3) have proceeded to confirmed matches during Year 4.

The number of children waiting continues to remain much lower than at the commencement of Adopt South when there were 39 children with no potential matches.

Since the launch of Adopt South, 433 adoptive families have, therefore, been approved and 438 children have been linked. Of these, 227 have been HCC children; 33 IOW children; 68 PCC children; 110 SCC children.

The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that Adopt South approved the second highest number of adopters out of all 31 Regional Adoption Agencies between April 2020- March 2021 and had the lowest number of children waiting. The data for last year (April 2021- March 2022) shows similar comparisons. There are now 32 Regional Adoption Agencies and Adopt South's children had the lowest timescale out of all 32 RAA's from Placement to Adoption Order. We approved the third highest number of adopters.

Marketing and Recruitment

Activity in Year 4 developed key messages and themes on what contacting us felt like, sibling groups, identity and children who wait the longest.

Face to Face events were across the whole of the Adopt South region, with our big quarterly events and monthly events. We also introduced Eventbrite appointments as another way to meet people interested in adoption. The Online Adoption Information Events were heavily promoted and generated around 25 webinar guests fortnightly. Summer months, we attended the New Forest Show, Alresford and Romsey Show, as well as visit shopping centres and areas where there was good footfall across the country.

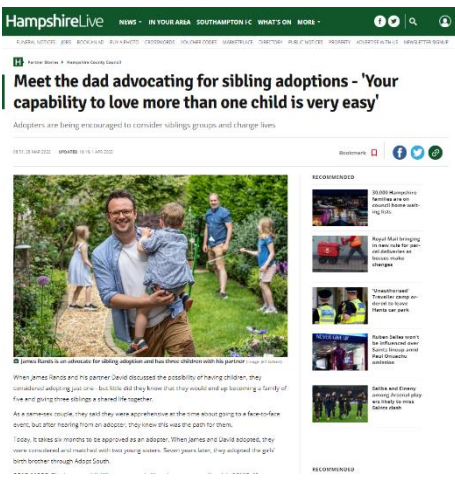
Advertising consisted of a range of creative styles and messages which featured all different people and children to visually communicate that no family or children are the same and Adopt South is inclusive and welcoming to all different people. These appeared across our regional press, Google AdWords, and various publications including parish magazines, Facebook and Instagram.



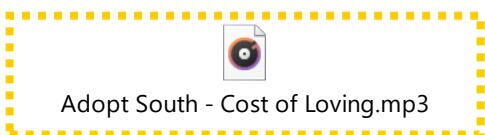


North Hampshire Lifestyle Magazine

Three families featured in Paid advertorial stories covering adopting two girls, siblings of three and identity. The feature was well received, and we saw generation of clicks onto our website and an uplift in activity during this period. The story was shared on our social media pages to gain additional traction.



Radio rotated with a number of scripts raising awareness of adoption and humanising the Adopt South brand. With the cost-of-living crisis worsening throughout 2022 and start of 2023, we introduced a Cost of Loving radio ad to give an empathetic stance around 'we know it's difficult' to encourage people to talk to us.



3D reach, the smartphone digital advertising platform continued to generate high click thru to our website promoting events throughout the region.





"Interested in adoption? 🙋🏻🙋🏻🙋🏻 Book onto our free webinar on 3rd January - TAP HERE for details."

Community events including Hampshire FA's Senior Veteran's Cup Final, local authority community initiatives including Mela festival in Eastleigh, Portsmouth's Paulsgrove community event, Pride in Southampton and activities with our church connections across the region.



Other major events including the ABP Southampton Races (April) and Great South Run (October)

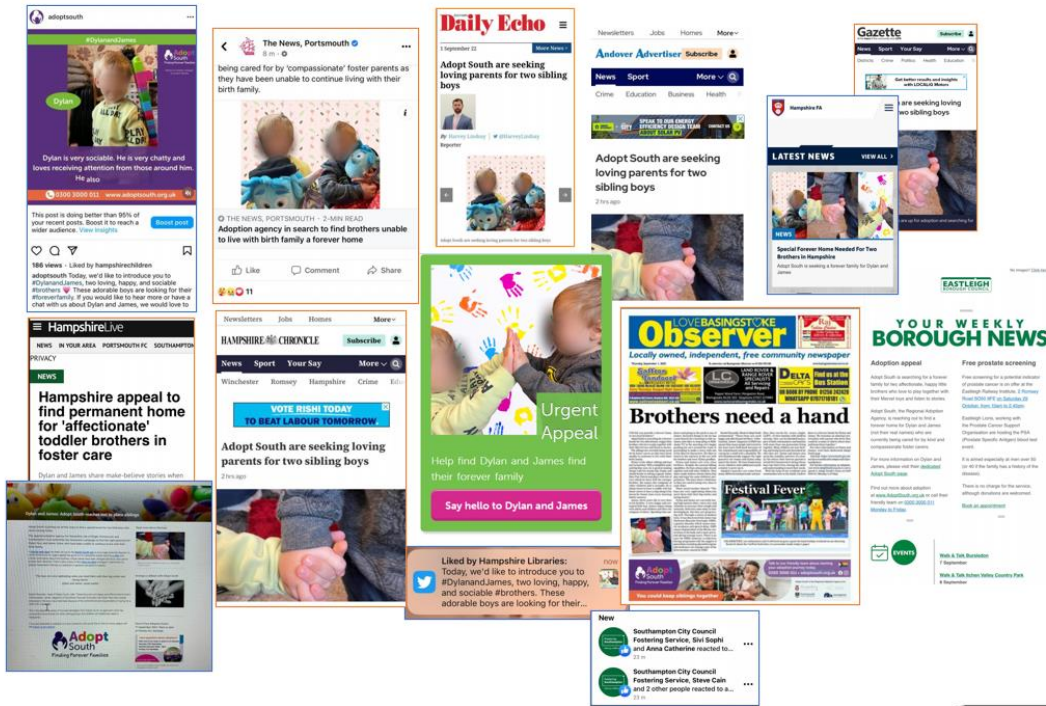


Social media included informative tiles on Fostering for Adoption, LGBT+ Fostering and Adoption Week (March 2023), National Adoption Week (October) signposting to events and call backs as well as being open about money and calling us for an informal chat.

Visits to the Adopt South website were consistent and we could track some activity from digital promotion.



We also ran one Hard-to-Place campaign for Dylan and James, which received a high-level interest resulting in a family being found for the two boys.



There were periods where activity overall was affected by the Ukraine crisis, the death of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II and the increase in the cost of living. With inflationary rises, the marketing budget has been affected by on average 17% increase in costs due to inflation which resulted in monies not being able to be as stretched as the previous year.

Performance and Timescales

The Adopters Journey

The Stage 1 Team have progressed to assessment the **185** new households during Year 4 and have continued to support them to build their skills. They have ensured all applicants have had at least one session of Virtual Reality to increase their understanding of the needs of adopted children.

*Stage 1 timescales have averaged **1.6 months** across the four quarters, remaining well within the government expectation of 2 months.*

The ASGLB data (April 2021- March 2022) shows that last year, Adopt South was the only Regional Adoption Agency who averaged Stage 1 in timescales. It also shows that Adopt South adopters spent less time than any other RAA from Enquiry to Stage 1.



The specialised team have continued to encourage new applicants to consider placements of siblings, older children and children with additional needs, giving greater scope for placement.

245 families (**214** in assessment/placement stage; **31** post order) are currently receiving mentoring support from our **35** Adopter Mentors, who offer support to both potential and post order adopters.

*Overall timescales of Stage 2 assessments achieved **3.7 months** across the four quarters, continuing to be well within the government expectation of 4 months.*

The ASGLB data (April 2021- March 2022) shows that last year, Adopt South was 1 out of just 4 RAA's who averaged Stage 2 in timescales. We were the only RAA, however, who achieved both Stage 1 and Stage 2 in timescales.

The overall adoption journey, averaged 5.0 months, similarly remaining well within the government expectation of 6 months.

The ASGLB data (April 2021- March 2022) shows that last year, Adopt South adopters had the shortest adoption journey from Enquiry to Approval than any other RAA.

Quarter 4 has seen an average of **59** available adopters across the region. At the end of the quarter, 32 of these, however, had been pre-linked with children either with Placement Orders or awaiting Placement Orders, leaving 27 available.

The Child's Journey

Year 4 has seen a significant increase in Children's Plans with **151 being referred to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM)** across the region, a 12% increase on last year when 135 were referred. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight have seen the steepest increase. Hampshire has had 80 Children's Plans referred during the year, compared to 68 last year, ***an increase of 18%***. The Isle of Wight has had 11, compared to 6 last year, ***an increase of 83%***.

There have been **135 Placement Orders** granted during Year 4, a 10% increase on last year when 123 were granted. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight have seen steep increases. Hampshire has seen 78 Placement Orders granted during the last year, compared to 60 last year, ***an increase of 30%***. The Isle of Wight has seen 10, compared to 6 during last year, ***an increase of 67%***.

There have been **105 Adoption Orders** made during Year 4, a 15% increase on last year when 91 were made.

During Year 4, both Portsmouth and Southampton have averaged well within the government guidance for Scorecard 10. Hampshire averaged 55 days above the government guidance, the higher



timescale due to prolonged care proceedings for a number of children, in addition to delays due to the complexities of the children, including the increase in sibling groups and older children, where family finding has taken longer. The Isle of Wight averaged 106 days above the government guidance. The higher timescale was due to just 3 children being adopted in Year 4, and one child having a care journey of 913 days, being made subject to a Care Order and then placed with his mother, firstly in a parent and child placement and then in the community. He remained looked after for the whole period.

The average for all 4 Local Authorities combined is **433 days**, just seven days above the government guidance.

Adoption Support

Building on the success of amalgamating and expanding support across the region, alongside the dedicated Advice and Support Line, the Adoption Support Service was redesigned at the start of our fourth year into 4 specialist teams. This has created the opportunity for each team to focus on a specific part of the service and ensure services are continually reviewed and developed. The teams are;

- The Adopt South Family Hub
- The Adopt South Family Support and Assessment Team
- The Adopt South Family Connections Team
- Adoption Support for Adults

Year 4 Highlights:

- **542** new enquiries were received.
- **122** families accessed a workshop.
- Adopt South consultations have continued to be well used, with **43** consultations taking place.
- **92** parents attended virtual guest speaker webinars.
- **164** families have accessed a family activity event.
- **51** Educational Psychologist consultations have been provided.
- **500** parents and children attended our summer and winter Family Fun Days.
- **34** parents have attended a therapeutic parenting programme.
- **16** Video Interaction Guidance packages have been allocated.
- **5** families attended a joint information event (with the Virtual School) on the Isle of Wight.
- **10** Groundworks Fusion activities for young people have taken place.
- Access to 'Catch' online resources have been provided to Adopt South families.
- **116** new Adoption Support Needs Assessments (a 5% increase from last year) and **137** assessment reviews were completed, a combined total of 253.
- **£921,475.19** was approved by the Adoption Support Fund. (**£2,919.161** has, therefore, been approved since launch).



- There were **2,857** exchanges processed. (Additional support was provided to **597** birth and adoptive families - **481** virtual appointments and **116** face to face appointments).
- **21** direct contacts were supervised by Adopt South staff. Support was offered with a further **32** direct contacts, which were facilitated by the families.

Adopt South's Fourth Year

Strengths

New Recruitment Initiatives and the High Number who have progressed to Assessment/Approvals

Adopt South's fourth year has seen extremely encouraging results, both in terms of the numbers of prospective adopters coming forward and new initiatives.

We have continued to see some significant advantages of recruiting as a Regional Adoption Agency with recruitment enquiries continuing to flow in at **763** and **185** new prospective adoptive families progressing to assessment.

The conversion rate from Enquiry to Assessment in Year 4 has been higher at 24%, compared to 21% in Adopt South's third year.

The approval rate has continued to be strong with 433 adopters now being approved since the launch of Adopt South.

One of our initiatives is to increase the use of advocacy in our messaging, endorsing adoption through experiences of adopters telling their story about how they have embraced adoption and support their children's identity. Advertorials and radio testimonials will continue to feature heavily as we continue into Year 5. Our investment with developing relationships with communities has continued to be positive. We have contacted over 185 churches across our region and engaged with 35 individual churches in Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight. This includes adoption drop in events and placing our big posters outside church locations.

There is no doubt that our dedicated Recruitment Team, which includes two marketing specialists and a community project worker, have continued to help bring in some significant results. They are a very passionate, innovative team, who offer excellent customer service, always ensuring they call potential applicants back and arrange a visit without delay, at a time of the applicant's choice. This always includes a choice of weekends and evenings, as well as weekdays.

Our fourth year has continued to see many positive comments and feedback on social media from adopters about the service they have received, helping build Adopt South's reputation and has encouraged other potential adopters to progress with Adopt South, rather than with neighbouring Agencies.

The ASGLB data (April 2021- March 2022) shows that Adopt South approved the third highest number of adopters out of all 32 Regional Adoption Agencies last year.



Timely Assessments

Adopt South's fourth year has continued to see both Stage 1 and Stage 2 assessment timescales well within government expectations.

Stage 1 assessments were completed well within the government timescale of 2 months and have averaged **1.6** months.

This compares to an overall average of **1.7** months during Adopt South's third year, **1.5** months during Adopt South's second year and **1.7** months during Adopt South's first year. Pre-Adopt South, timescales averaged **2.1** months, outside of government expectations.

Stage 2 assessments have averaged **3.7** months, which is the same as Year 3 and **3.8** months in both Year 1 and Year 2, well within the government expectation of 4 months, therefore.

The overall adoption journey averaged **5.0** months, which compares to **5.4** months last year and **5.5** months the previous year and remains well within the government expectation of 6 months.

The ASGLB data (April 2021- March 2022) shows that last year, Adopt South was the only RAA who achieved both Stage 1 and Stage 2 in timescales and Adopt South's adopters had the shortest adoption journey.

Number of Families Identified/Numbers of Children Matched

A significant strength has continued to be the number of families identified for the 4 Local Authority's children and the number of children who have been matched.

With **228** children having a family identified (potential and confirmed matches) across the four quarters (which compares to **220** during Adopt South's third year; **150** during Adopt South's second year and **148** during our first year) and **119** formally linked (compared to **93** during Year 3; **108** during Year 2 and **118** during Year 1), the success with family finding continues to be clearly evidenced.

Having started Adopt South's first year with **39** children with no potential links, this was reduced to **12** by the end of the first year. On the completion of our second year, this was reduced further to just **2**. Although this rose to **15** in Year 3 Quarter 2 due to the steep increase in the number of children who were referred to Adopt South, particularly sibling groups, the good news is that this has reduced to **9** this quarter.

The strategies Adopt South has implemented has had a positive impact on the matching opportunities for our sibling groups, seeing 15 sets of siblings proceed to confirmed matches during



the last two quarters of Year 3. A further 21 sets of siblings (including four sibling groups of 3) have proceeded to confirmed matches during Year 4.

The strength of joining together as one Adoption Agency has continued to be clear, with a particular strength of finding families for **124** Hard to Place children across the four quarters, including **38** sibling groups and **20** children over the age of 5 years. (Families were found for **117** Hard to Place children in Year 3, (including **37** sibling groups and **18** children over the age of 5 years); **62** Hard to Place children in Year 2 and **44** in Year 1).

The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) showed that Adopt South had the lowest number of children waiting between April 2020 – March 2021 out of all the Regional Adoption Agencies.

Dedicated Stage 1 Team

Having a dedicated and innovative Stage 1 Team has continued to be a strength as we have ended our fourth year. We continue to be the only Regional Adoption Agency to have a dedicated team for Stage 1 and the benefits are clearly evidenced. The team have continued to support adopters to grow in Stage 1 and to further their understanding of the needs of adopted children and therapeutic parenting. Through the use of Virtual Reality and support to build childcare experience, potential adopters have been able to grow in knowledge and skills to meet the needs of our children, including sibling groups, older children and children with additional needs.

There is no doubt that this has continued to contribute to the high number of children placed in house and the need for very few interagency placements.

Training Pathway

The training offered to prospective adopters throughout their adoption journey has continued to be a strength. In addition to Stage 1 and 2 training, all prospective adopters attend a Paediatric First Aid and Care of Infants course prior to panel to enable them to have additional skills to care for a child when placed.

Following a child being placed, all adopters are encouraged to attend a therapeutic parenting course (Adopting Changes/Adopting Little Changes) to provide them with a toolkit of strategies they can draw upon to support them with caring for their adopted child.

A strength of the training pathway has included courses being co-facilitated by Adopter Mentors and being offered during the daytime, evenings and weekends to ensure that training is accessible to all prospective adopters.



Year 2 saw a pilot being rolled out, 'SteppingStones', a peer support group, which has quickly grown, and a regular cohort of prospective adopters now attend once a week.

Very positive feedback has continued to be received with regard to how equipped adopters feel to care for their adopted child, which is borne out in the low disruption rate since the commencement of Adopt South.

Mentoring Support and Fostering Buddies

Adopt South's Mentoring Scheme has remained a strength. Although initially Cornerstones were commissioned to run the scheme, bringing the scheme in house and employing an Adopter to lead the scheme, has seen it go from strength to strength with **245** families (**214** in assessment/placement stage; **31** post order) receiving support by **35** Adopter Mentors at the end of Year 4.

Towards the end of last year, the Mentoring Scheme developed and offered bespoke and targeted one-off consultations with Mentors who are experienced in specific areas of adoption. This included consultations on topics such as challenging behaviours, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, unknown future needs, supporting heritage and culture, parental mental health and meeting birth parents. Over the last few months, we have focused on helping prospective adopters understand the importance of direct contact with birth families.

A total of 113 bespoke consultations have been offered since one off consultations started, with 49 being offered in Year 4.

This part of the Mentoring Scheme has continued to grow so much that it allowed us to develop an additional service to all prospective adopters, in the format of live Question and Answer sessions.

The Question-and-Answer sessions are run monthly and are based on bespoke topics such as:

- Adopting with birth children
- Adopting siblings
- The importance of contact and meeting birth parents
- Children waiting to be placed
- Adopting an older child

The uptake of these sessions has been high with 105 households joining the sessions during Year 4.

Positive feedback has continued to be received about the scheme and of how much it is valued by both prospective adopters going through their adoption journey and by adopters needing additional support post adoption.



The **Fostering Buddy Scheme** was launched last year and was created in order to bridge the gap for prospective adopters who were struggling to gain childcare experience due to COVID-19. During the first 6 months of the scheme, it quickly became apparent how valuable the Foster Carer chats were to prospective adopters and it was agreed that everyone would be offered the time to meet and chat to a foster carer.

During Year 4, Foster Carer chats were offered to 103 families, with 102 families taking this up.

256 Foster Carer chats have, therefore, taken place since the scheme was launched.

There are presently **10** Foster Carer Buddies.

Advantages of More Local Placements

With just **2 children (siblings)** being placed externally during Year 4 and only **4** children (out of 93) being placed externally during Year 3, **3** (out of 118) and **4** (out of 108) in Year's 1 and 2, noticeable advantages have continued to be seen. These include adoptive families being able to access Adopt South's adoption support locally and children being able to maintain any local links, along with the impact on staff time and significantly reduced travel.

Regional Adoption Support

Amalgamating and expanding support, therapeutic training courses, workshops, coffee and chat sessions, support groups, family activities, Adopt South and Educational Psychologist consultations and individual support packages across the region, along with the dedicated Advice and Support Line and commissioning *Catch* from PACT and activities for young people from Groundworks, has continued to see clear evidence of more effective adoption support for adopters.

Some very positive feedback has continued to be received regarding the support and activities available.

Low Interagency Spend/High Number of Adopters Sold

With just one external placement purchased during Year 4, interagency spend has remained low and well within budget.

The current income target for sold adopters is £135,000, based on 5 placements of children from other RAA's with Adopt South adopters. At the end of Year 4, 4 placements were sold with 5 children placed, generating an income of **£124,000**.

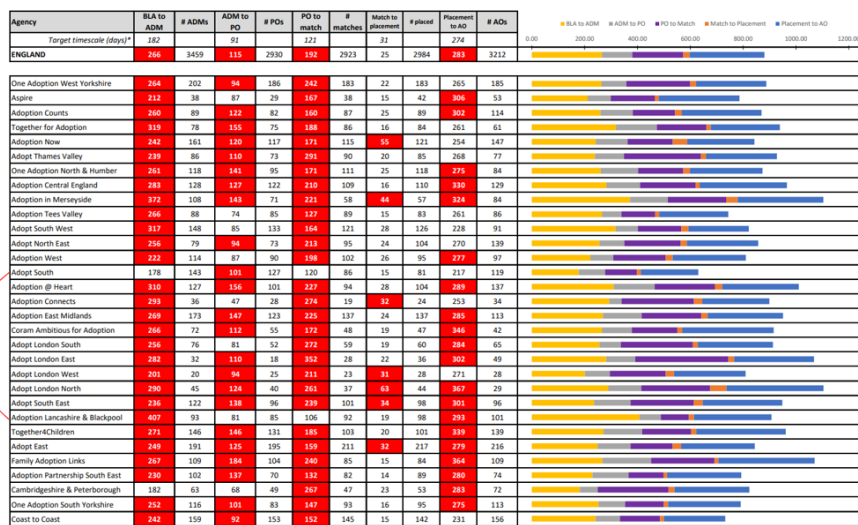


Timely Matching/Scorecards

Year 4 has continued to see strong evidence of timely matching.

The most recent data insights (ASGLB – April 2022) have highlighted Adopt South as finding matches quickly.

Timescales: children



Adopt South and Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool are finding matches quickly!

It's taking longer to make BIDs than in 2020 (245 days); and POs (108 days)... though matches are quicker (216 days)

No impact yet nationally on time to place children following match. Was 27 days in 2020... but some RAAs do seem to be experiencing delays

Recognition of Adopt South in the Evaluation of Regional Adoption Agencies Second Report October 2020 and RAA's Practice Note- Recruitment of Adopters

Adopt South's use of Virtual Reality was discussed as a positive intervention in the RAA Evaluation. Similarly, our Mentoring Scheme was discussed in detail in the Evaluation of Regional Adoption Agencies, Second Report (Oct 2020) and identified as a crucial aspect of both adopter preparation and adoption support.

Further to this, a case study outlining Adopt South's partnership with Hampshire Football Association was featured in the nationally published RAA's Practice Note- Recruitment of Adopters.



Strength of Comparisons with other Regional Adoption Agencies

The ASGLB data (April 2020 - March 2021) showed that out of 31 Regional Adoption Agencies:

- Adopt South had the lowest number of children waiting.
- Adopt South approved the second highest number of adopters.
- Our adopters spent less time than any other RAA from enquiry to Stage 1.
- Adopt South was one out of just two RAA's who averaged Stage 1 in timescales.
- Adopt South was one of just five RAA's who averaged Stage 2 in timescales.
- We were the only RAA who achieved both Stage 1 and Stage 2 in timescales.
- Adopt South placed more children with in-house adopters than any other RAA, spending less on interagency placements. Across the RAA's, there was an average of 31% of children placed externally, compared to just 3.7% for Adopt South.
- There were only two RAA's who placed more children than Adopt South in FfA placements.
- Adopt South was one of just eight who had Scorecard 1 under Government guidance.
- Although our Scorecard 2 averaged slightly outside of Government guidance, all RAA's averaged outside of this. Only 5 RAA's averaged lower than us.

The data for last year (April 2021- March 2022) shows similar comparisons. (There are now 32 Regional Adoption Agencies)

- Adopt South had the lowest timescale out of all 32 RAA's from Placement to Adoption Order. (Government expectation is 274 days- Adopt South averaged 198 days; England's average is 280 days).
- Adopt South are 1 out of just 2 RAA's where Scorecard 1 is in timescale. (The last 3 years have been averaged for this timescale- rather than just 2021/22. (Government expectation is 426 days- Adopt South averaged 368 days. England's average is 445 days).
- Adopt South was the 5th lowest for Scorecard 2. Similarly, the last 3 years have been averaged for this timescale. (England's average is 196 days; Adopt South averaged 163 days).
- Only 5 RAA's placed more children in FfA placements than Adopt South.
- Only 7 RAA's had more ADM/Children's Plans than Adopt South which gives an indication for how Adopt South fits with others in size.
- Adopt South approved the third highest number of adopters between April 2021- March 2022.
- Adopt South continues to be the only RAA who achieved Enquiry to Registration of Interest in the 5-day timescale.
- Adopt South was the only RAA who achieved Stage 1 in the 2-month timescale.
- Adopt South was 1 out of just 4 RAA's who achieved Stage 2 in the 4-month timescale.
- Adopt South adopters had the shortest adoption journey from enquiry to approval than any other RAA.



Hampshire County Council – Local Authority Information 2022-2023

Marketing and Communications Activity

- Events – 34 Hampshire locations
- ABP Southampton and Great South Run (the latter brings people from all across the region)
- Newsquest Titles – Hampshire Chronicle, Daily Echo, Basingstoke Gazette & Andover Advertiser
- Basingstoke Observer
- Hampshire Live and Aldershot News and Mail
- Parish Magazines to the north of the County
- Radio – Capital Radio/Heart FM/Greatest Hits/Hits Radio
- Social Media sponsored ads in north of the county & Hashtags with HCC to reach users of Facebook/Instagram
- 3D Reach – mobile advertising
- All major media owners – #DylanandJames
- Adoption events and marketing communications to churches in Hampshire
- Messaging - greater emphasis on sibling groups + Radio and Digital Advertorials

Annual Highlights for Adopt South's Local Authorities - Hampshire Children's Journey									
Hampshire County Council	Pre-Adopt South	Year 1	Diff.	Year 2	Diff.	Year 3	Diff.	Year 4	Diff.
Children's Plans ADM	70	56	-20%	74	32%	68	-8%	80	18%
Placement Orders	64	47	-27%	49	4%	60	22%	78	30%
Children Linked Formally	64	64	0%	49	-23%	54	10%	60	11%
Children Placed - Total	64	64	0%	49	-23%	54	10%	60	11%
Internal	63	62	-2%	48	-23%	52	8%	60	15%
External	1	2	100%	1	-50%	2	100%	0	-100%
Children with no potential links	7	4	-43%	0	-100%	0	0%	3	0%
Children with Adoption Order	69	70	1%	53	-24%	43	-19%	57	33%

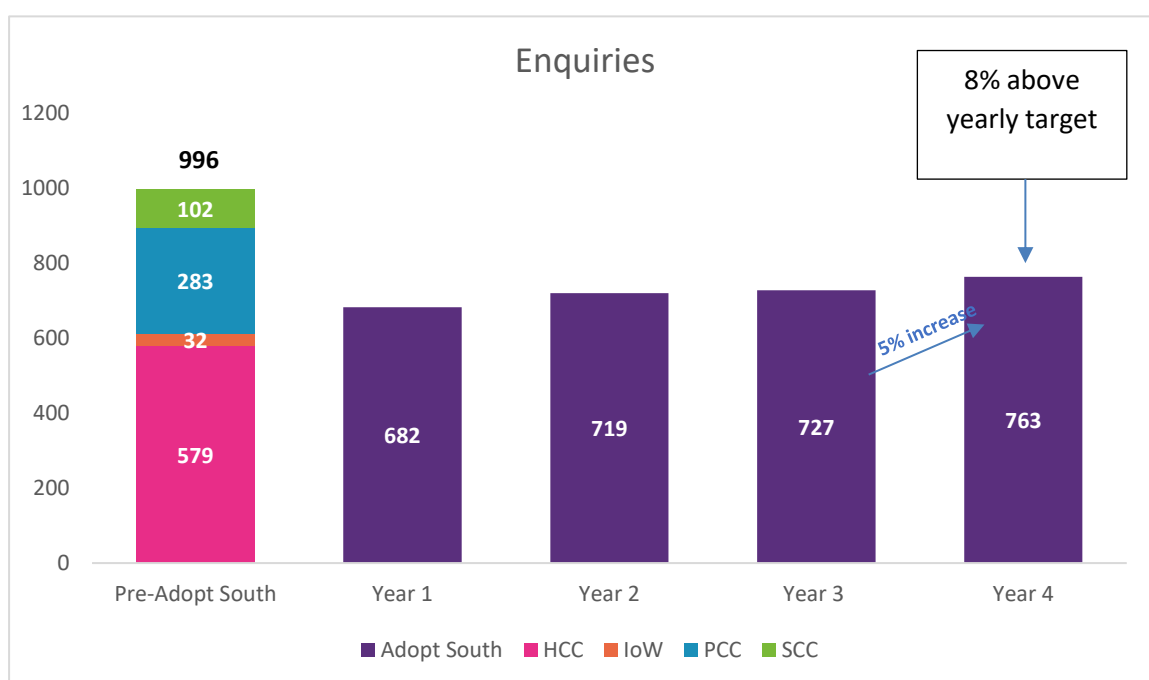


Adopt South's Year 4 – Q4 Data

Adopter's Journey: Enquiry to Approval

Enquiries

Table 1.1



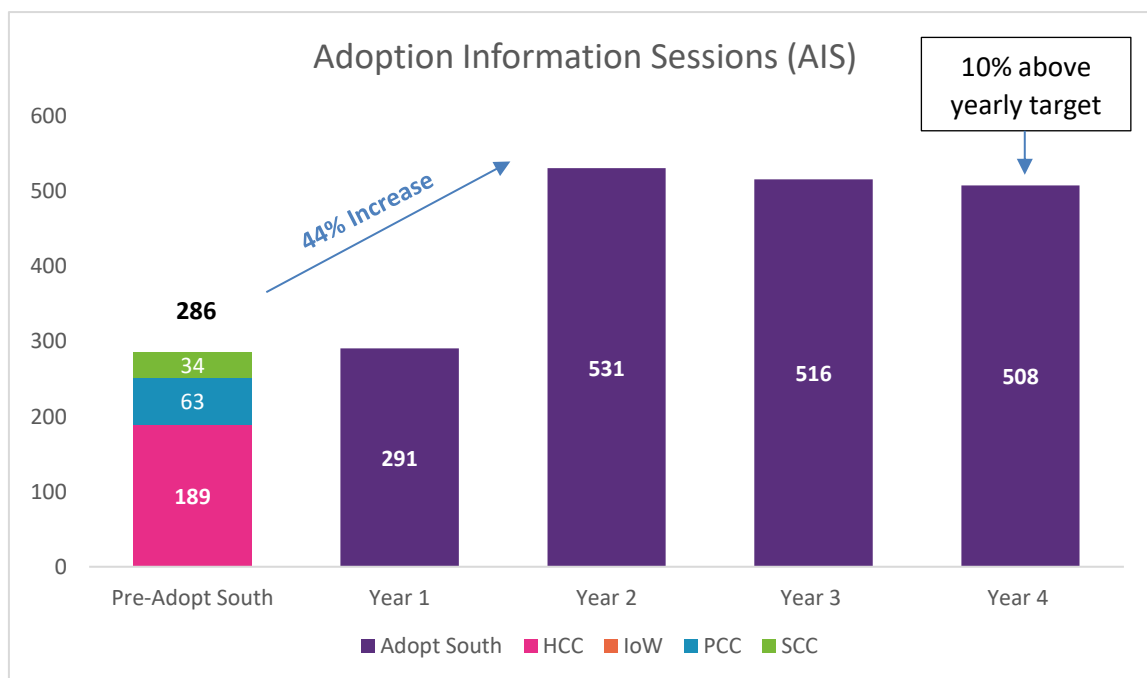
Commentary:

- A total of 763 enquiries have been received during Year 4, 8% above our yearly target of 708 enquiries and 5% higher than the total number of 727 enquiries in Year 3.
- Although enquiries have reduced since Pre-Adopt South, targeted advertising has led to a significantly improved conversion rate.
- Pre-Adopt South conversion to approval was at 9%; over the first two years with Adopt South the conversion rate averaged 17% and averaged 14% in Year 3 and 13% in Year 4 with revised targets for these last two years.
- Although the last two years conversion rate has been lower than the average across our first two years, it reflects our change in messages at the front door and only progressing with prospective adopters who are able to consider the children we have waiting, siblings, older children and children with complex needs.



Adoption Information Sessions (AIS)

Table 1.2



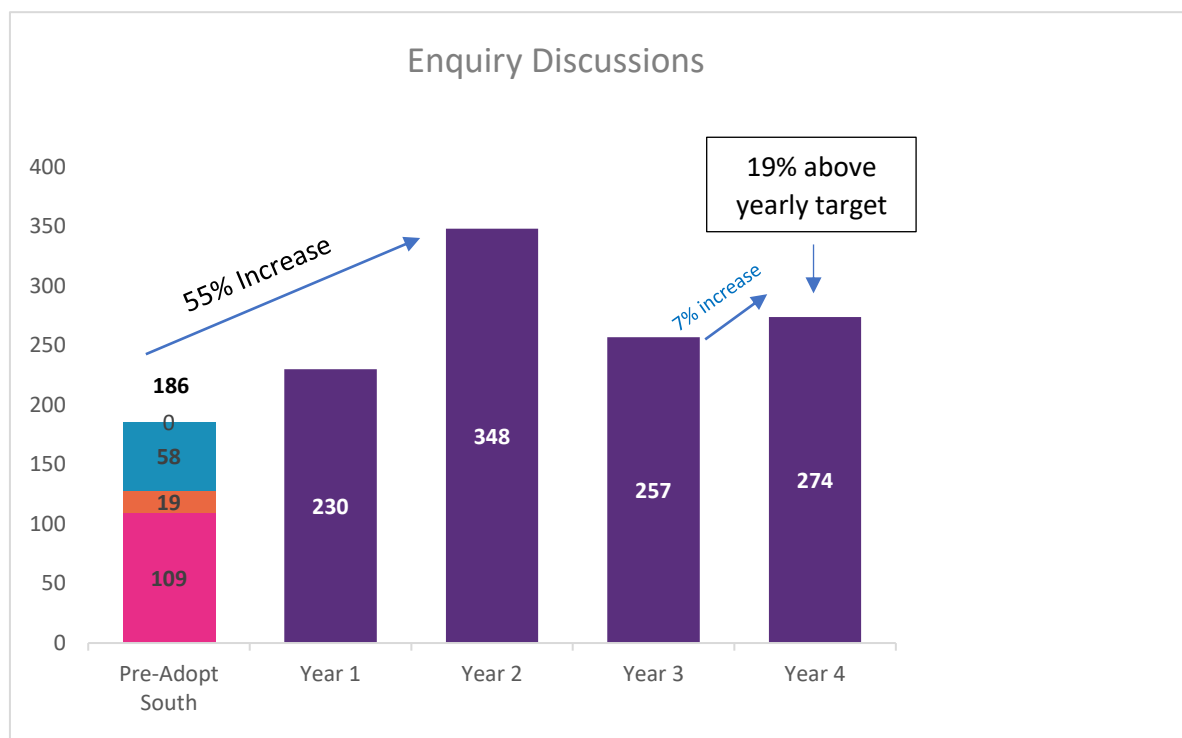
Commentary:

- 508 households attended an Adoption Information Session during Year 4, 10% above our yearly target of 460.
- The number of households attending Adoption Information Sessions increased by an average of 44% over Adopt South's Year 1 and 2 from Pre-Adopt South. ($291+531/2 = 411$ AIS)
- The number of AIS on average over four years (462) compared to Pre-Adopt South (286) is an increase of 60%.



Enquiry Discussions (Previously Pre-Stage Visits)

Table 1.3



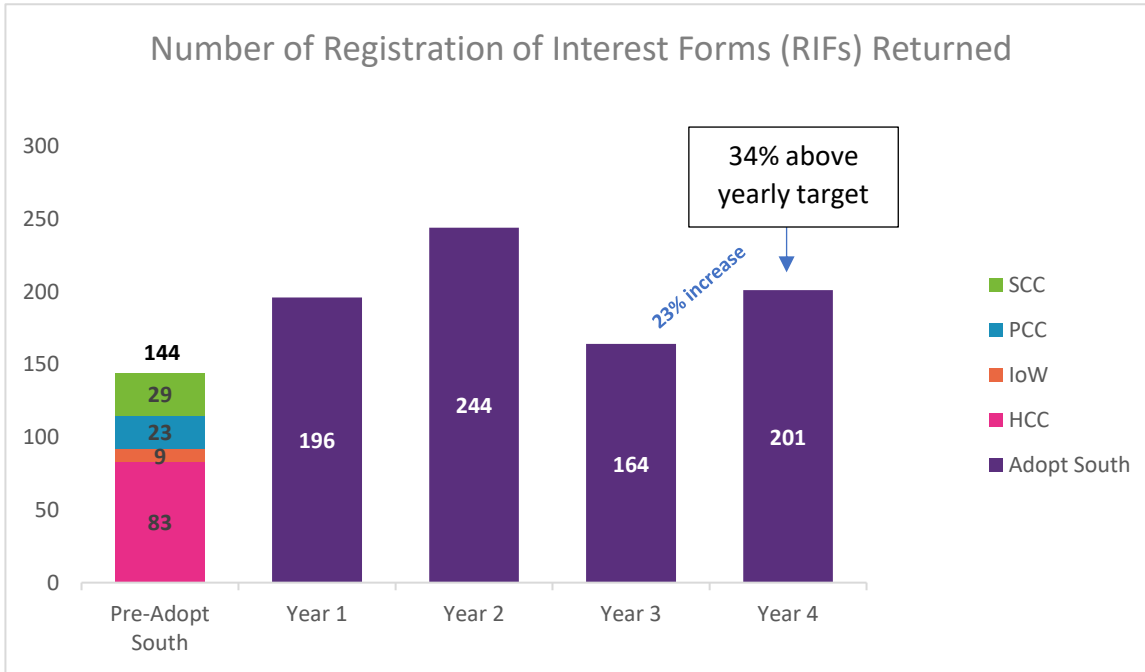
Commentary:

- 274 Enquiry Discussions (previously Pre-Stage Visits) were undertaken during Year 4, 19% above our yearly target of 230.
- Enquiry Discussions (Pre-Stage Visits) increased from Year 1 to Year 2 by 55%. (A total of 230 in Year 1, compared to 348 households in Year 2).



Registration of Interest Forms (RIF's) Returned

Table 1.4

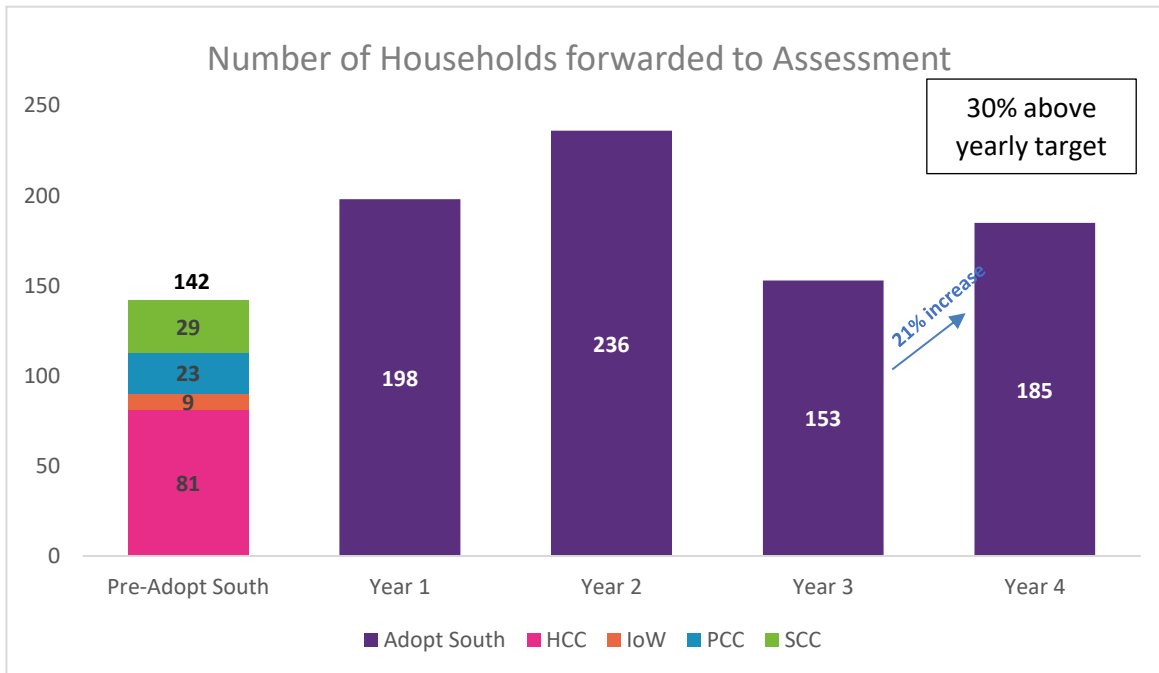


Commentary:

- 201 Registration of Interest Forms were returned during Year 4, 34% above our yearly target of 150.
- The number of Registration of Interest Forms returned increased by 36% in Year 1 and 69% in Year 2. (A total of 144 were returned Pre-Adopt South, compared to 196 in Year 1 and 244 in Year 2).

Number of Households forwarded to Assessment

Table 1.5



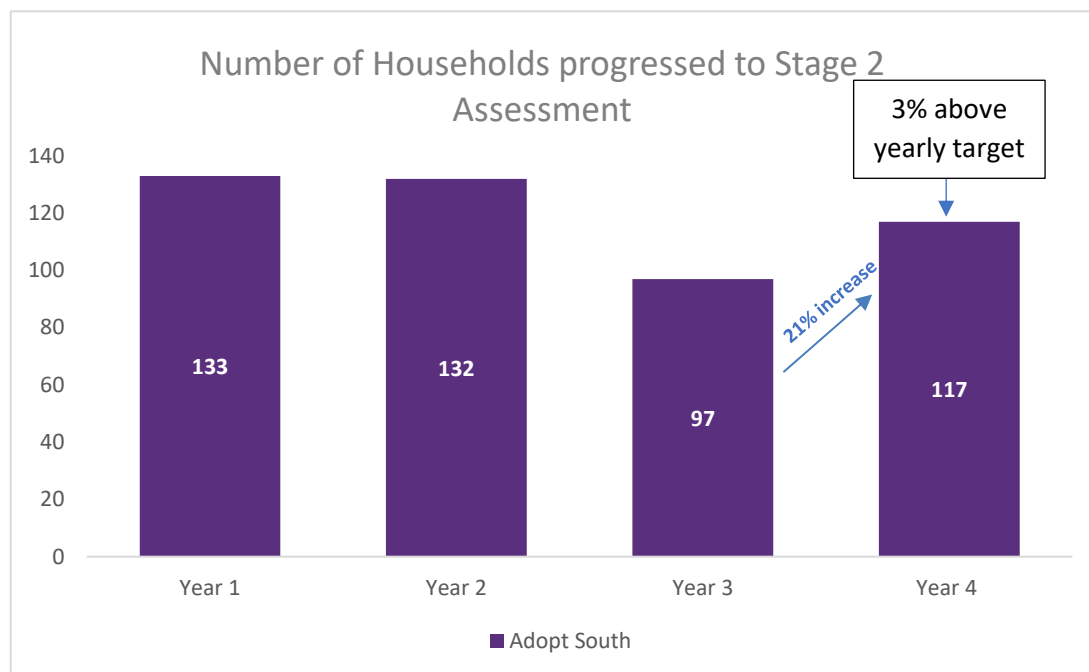
Commentary:

- 185 households were forwarded to assessment during Year 4, 30% above our yearly target of 142.
- The number of households forwarded to assessment increased by 53% on average during Adopt South's first two years. (A total of 142 households progressed Pre-Adopt South, compared to 236 households in Year 2).
- Pre-Adopt South conversion rate from enquiry to assessment was 14%; over Adopt South's first two years, it averaged 31%. During Year 3, it was 21% and during Year 4, 24%, based on a new target adjustment.
- Although the number of households forwarded to assessment during the last two years has been lower than our first two years, this, again, reflects our change in messages at the front door and only progressing with prospective adopters who are able to consider the children we have waiting, siblings, older children and children with complex needs.
- ***Specifically targeting to recruit adopters for sibling groups in Year 3 had great success, with families being identified for 37 sibling groups. This success has continued during Year 4, with families being identified for 38 sibling groups.***



Number of Households progressed to Stage 2 Assessment

Table 1.6



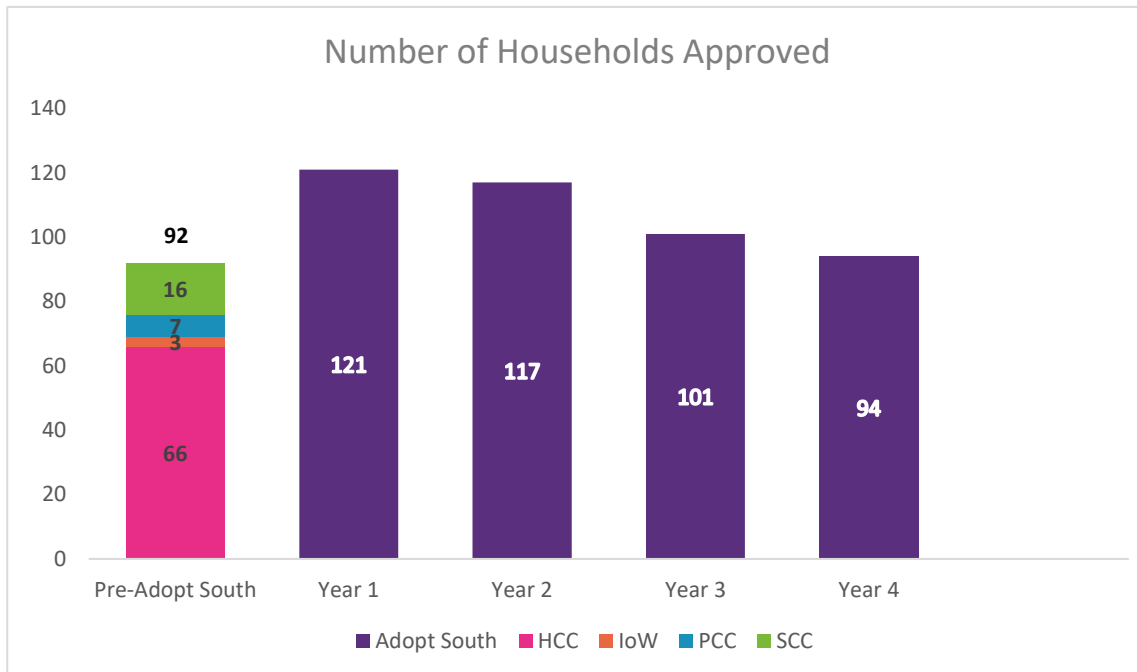
Commentary:

- 117 households were forwarded to Stage 2 assessment during Year 4, 3% above our yearly target of 114 and 21% above the total of 97 in Year 3.
- The service target was to approve 110 new adoptive households during Year 4. To allow for a potential 3% closure rate in Stage 2, this equates to 114 assessments transferring to Stage 2 over the year. On average this means that 9 assessments per month need to transfer from Stage 1 to Stage 2 for full assessment and equates to 28 assessments per quarter.
- Although the number of households forwarded to Stage 2 assessment during the last two years was lower than our first two years, it reflects the targeted work undertaken by the Recruitment and Stage 1 teams and the considerations from applicants who are more suited to the needs of the children waiting to be matched. There continues to be a sufficient number of available prospective adopters to match with younger children. Continuing to have a focus on assessment, support and development of prospective adopters for sibling groups and older children allows us to ensure there is sufficient resource to match the children who are waiting.



Households Approved

Table 1.7



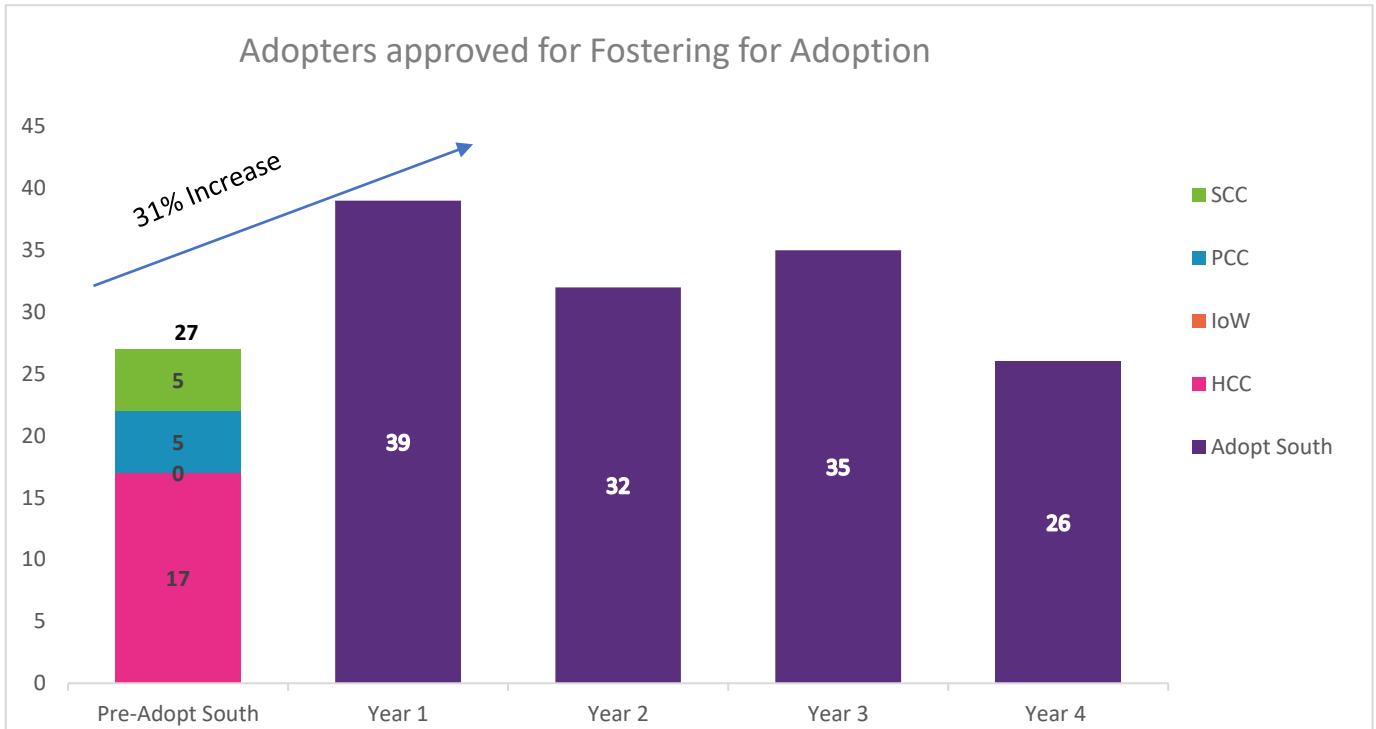
Commentary:

- 94 new adoptive households were approved during Adopt South’s fourth year. Whilst this is 16 less of our annual target (achieved 85%), targeted marketing this year has continued to increase the number of households suitable to adopt sibling groups and hard-to-place children.
- 101 new adoptive households were approved during Adopt South’s third year, just nine less (92%) than our annual target of 110.
- The number of adopters approved increased by an average of 29% from Pre-Adopt South to the end of Year 2. (A total of 92 adoptive households were approved Pre-Adopt South, compared to 121 in Year 1 and 117 in Year 2).
- 433 adoptive households have, therefore, been approved since the launch of Adopt South, providing greater choice of matching.
- ***The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that Adopt South approved the second highest number of adopters out of all 31 RAA’s between April 2020- March 2021.***
- ***The data for last year (April 2021- March 2022) shows similar comparisons. There are now 32 Regional Adoption Agencies and Adopt South approved the third highest number of adopters last year.***



Adopters approved for Fostering for Adoption (FfA)

Table 1.8



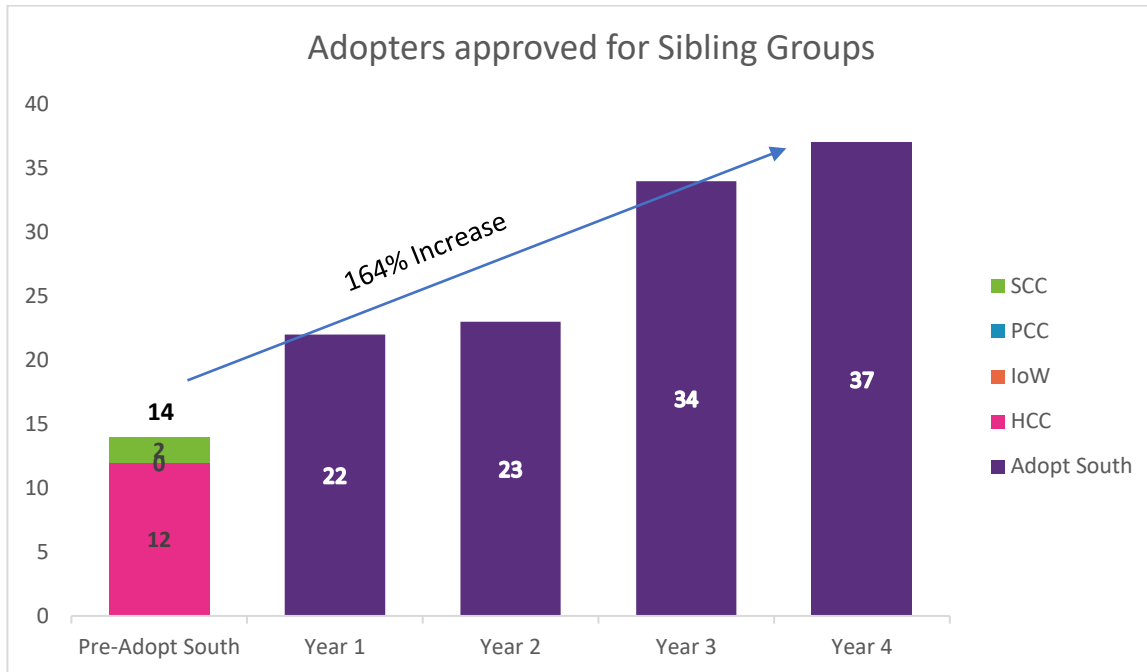
Commentary:

- Out of the 94 new adoptive households approved during Adopt South's fourth year, 26 (28%) were approved for FfA.
- 35 (35%) were approved for FfA in Adopt South's third year.
- 39 adopters were approved for FfA in Year 1 and 32 in Year 2, compared to 27 Pre-Adopt South, an average increase of 31%.
- In addition to increased stability and reduced number of placements for an adoptive child, there is a reduction of costs.



Adopters approved for Sibling Groups

Table 1.9



Commentary:

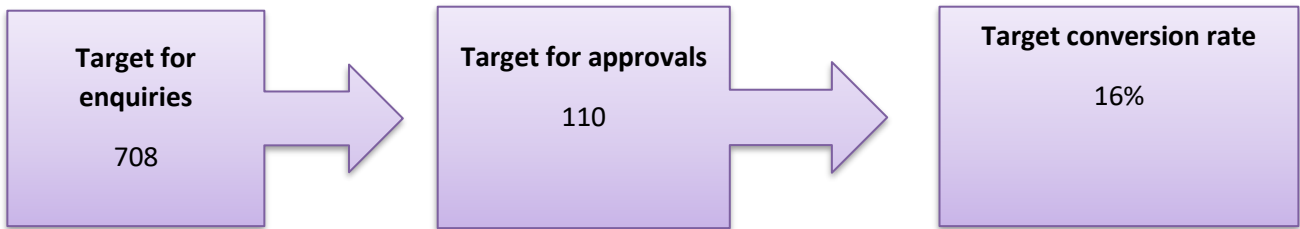
- Out of the 94 new adoptive households approved during Adopt South's fourth year, 37 (39%) were approved for Sibling Groups, which evidences a continued increase year on year since Adopt South began.
- 34, out of the 101 approved, (34%), were approved for Sibling Groups in Year 3.
- 22 adopters (out of the 121 approved) were approved for Sibling Groups in Year 1 and 23 (out of the 117 approved) in Year 2, compared to 14 Pre-Adopt South, an average increase of 61%.
- The IoW and PCC did not approve any for Sibling Groups Pre-Adopt South.
- ***Specifically targeting to recruit adopters for sibling groups has continued to have much success, with inhouse families being identified for 37 sibling groups in Year 3 and inhouse families being identified for 38 sibling groups during Year 4.***



Enquiry to Approval Conversion Rates

Table 1.10

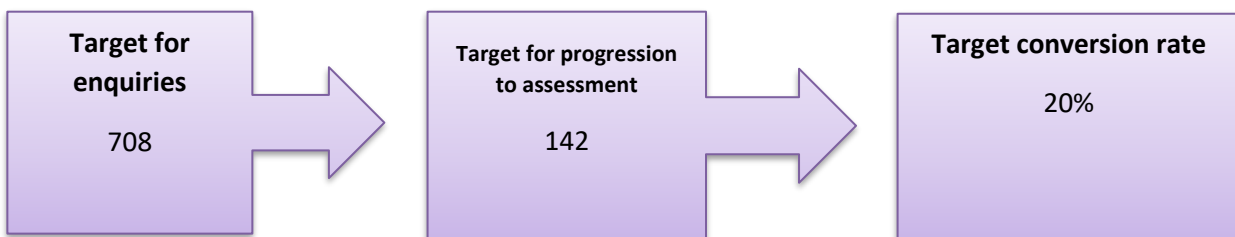
Target enquiry to approval - per year



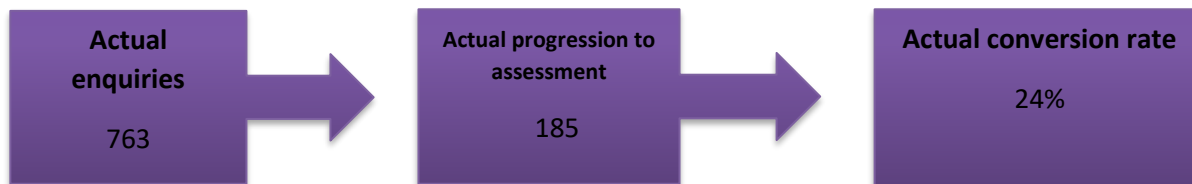
Actual enquiry to approval – per year



Target enquiry to assessment – per year



Actual enquiry to assessment – per year



Target assessment to approval - per year



Actual assessment to approval – per year



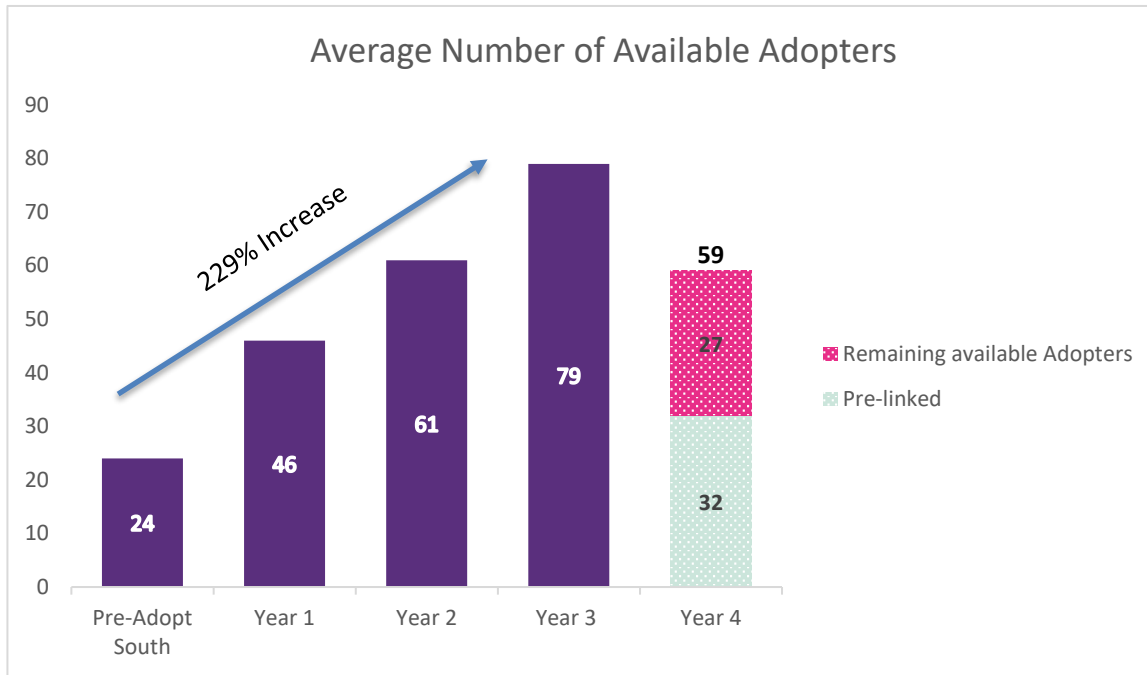
Commentary:

- **The Average Enquiry to Assessment Conversion Rate was above target at 24%, against a target of 20%, during Adopt South's fourth year.**
- The target conversion rates allow for a 20% closure rate in Stage 1 and a 3% closure rate in Stage 2.
- Average Enquiry to Approval Conversion Rate for Adopt South's first two years was 17%, compared to 9% Pre-Adopt South.
- Average Enquiry to Approval Conversion Rate for Adopt South's third year was 14% against a target of 19% and is 13% for Year 4 against a target of 16%.
- The slightly lower conversion rate in Year 3 and Year 4 reflects our change in messages and only progressing with prospective adopters who are able to consider the children we have waiting, siblings, older children and children with complex needs.



Available Adopters

Table 1.11



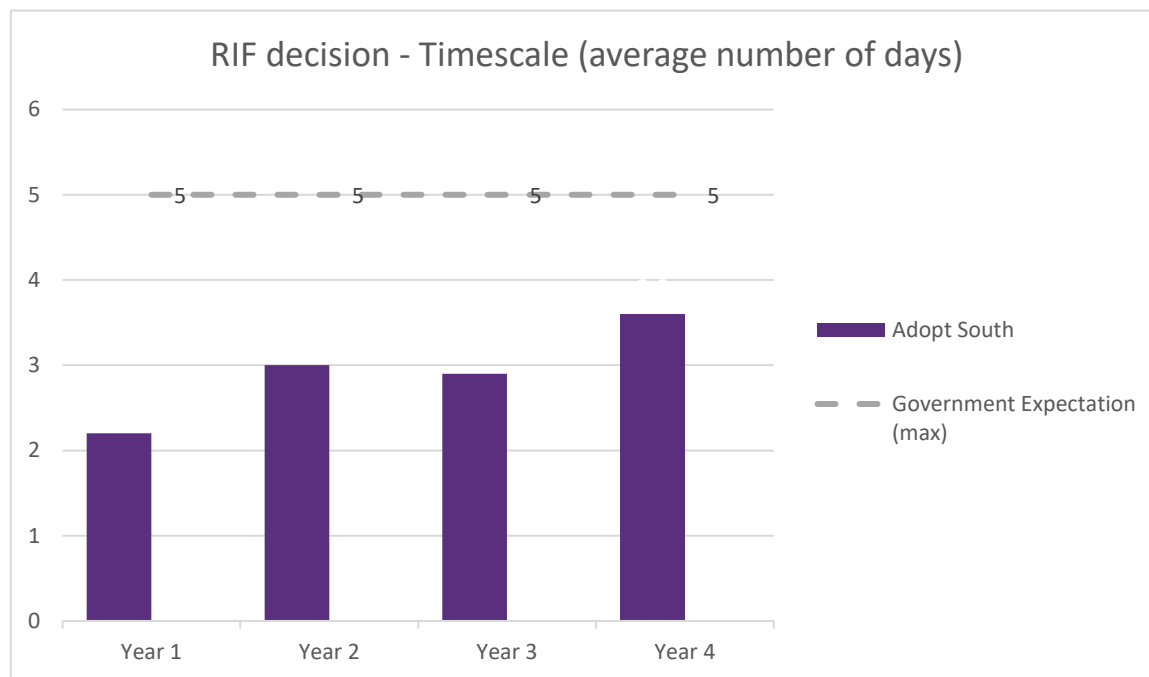
Commentary:

- At the end of Adopt South’s fourth year, 59 adopters were available. However, 32 of these have been pre-linked with children either with Placement Orders or awaiting Placement Orders.
- At the end of Year 2, there were 61 adopters available compared to 24 at the inception of Adopt South, an average increase of 123%.
- This increased to 79 at the end of Year 3. However, 32 of these had been pre-linked.
- A larger pool of adopters has increased choice and has led to better matches for children, reducing the need to purchase adopters externally.



Timescales- Registration of Interest Form (RIF)

Table 1.12

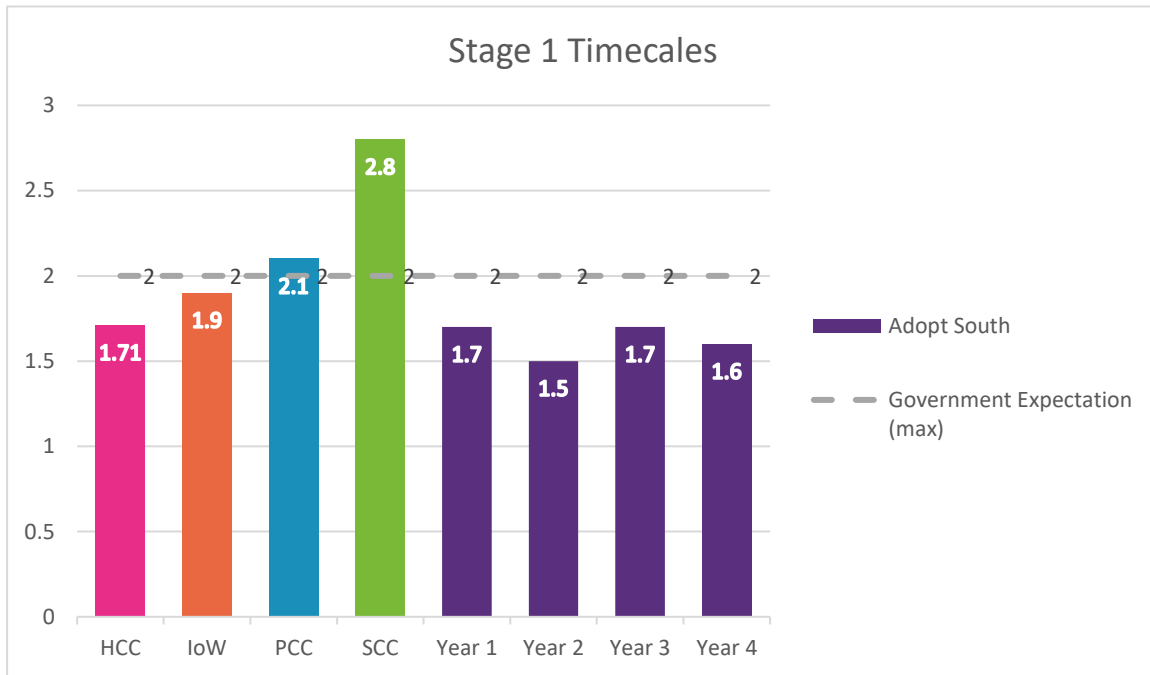


Commentary:

- Registration of Interest Form timescales have continued to average well within government timescales during Adopt South's fourth year (3.6 days).
- Similarly, Adopt South's first, second and third years averaged well within the government timescale of 5 days.
- ***The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that Adopt South was the only RAA out of all 31 RAA's who met the 5-day timescale between April 2020- March 2021. The data for last year (April 2021- March 2022) shows that Adopt South continued to be the only RAA who achieved Enquiry to Registration of Interest in the 5-day timescale last year.***

Timescales - Stage 1

Table 1.13



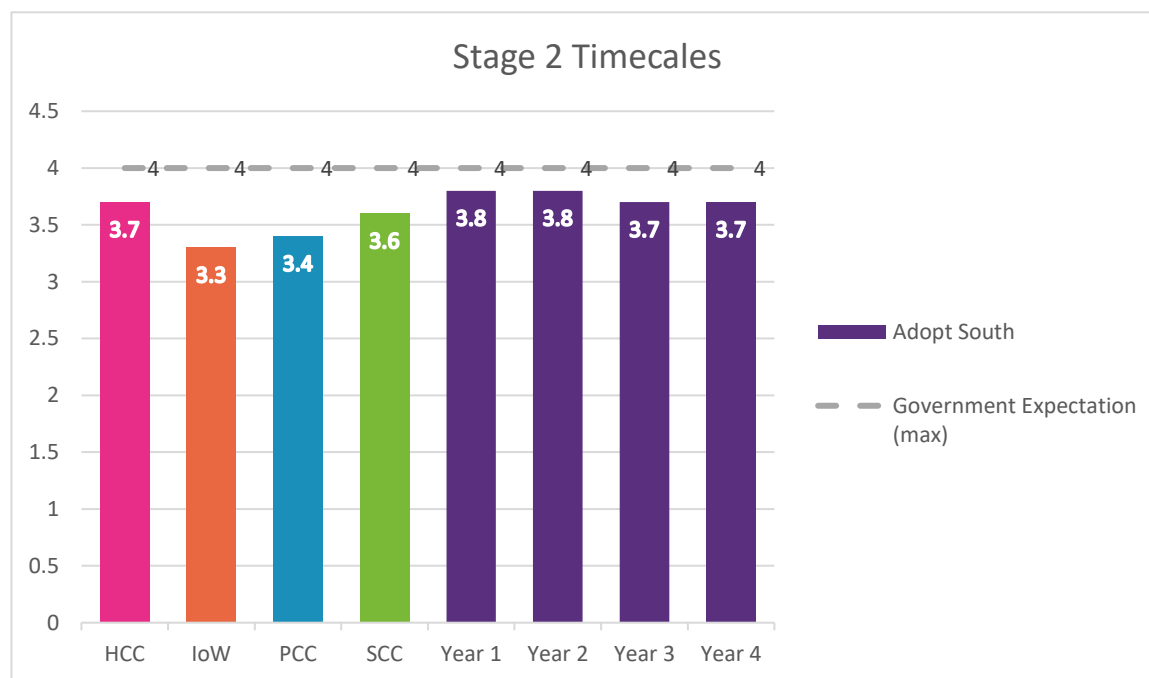
Commentary:

- Stage 1 timescales have continued to average well within government timescales during Adopt South’s fourth year (1.6 months).
- Similarly, Stage 1 timescales averaged well within government timescales during Adopt South’s first, second and third years.
- PCC and SCC averaged outside of timescales Pre-Adopt South.
- ***The ASGLB data (April 2021- March 2022) shows that out of the 32 Regional Adoption Agencies, Adopt South was the only RAA who achieved Stage 1 in the 2-month timescale last year.***



Timescales - Stage 2

Table 1.14

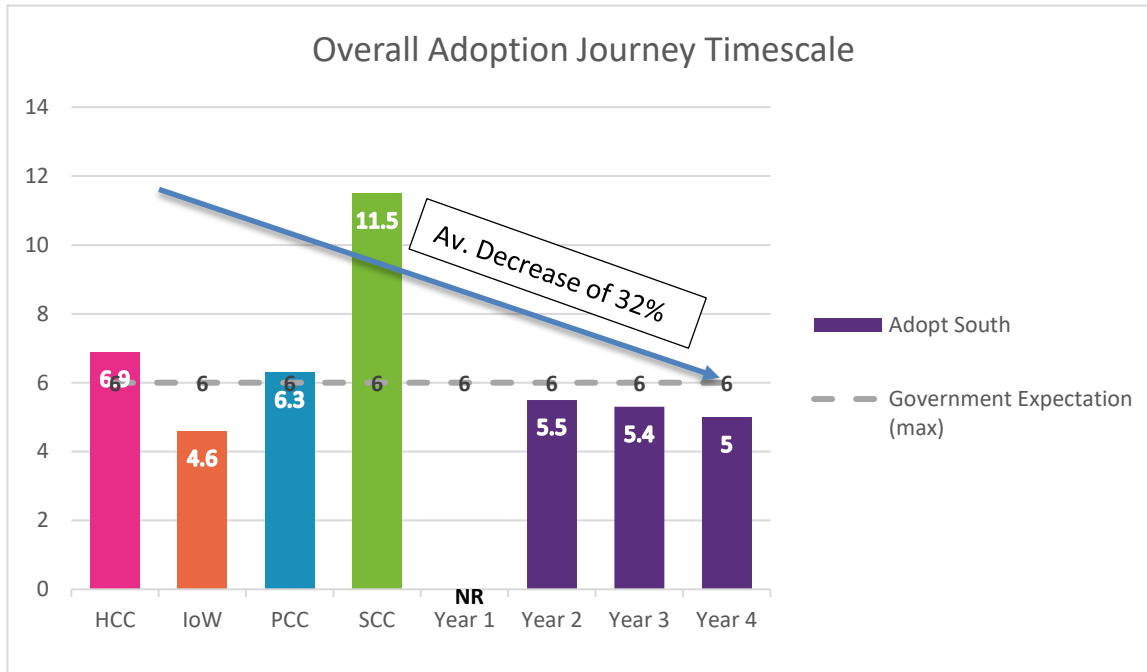


Commentary:

- Stage 2 timescales have continued to average well within government timescales during Adopt South's fourth year (3.7 months).
- Similarly, Stage 2 timescales averaged well within government timescales during Adopt South's first, second and third years.
- ***The ASGLB data (April 2021- March 2022) shows that last year, Adopt South was 1 out of just 4 RAA's who averaged Stage 2 in the 4-month timescale. We continued to be the only RAA who achieved both Stage 1 and Stage 2 in timescales.***

Timescales- Overall Adoption Journey

Table 1.15



Commentary:

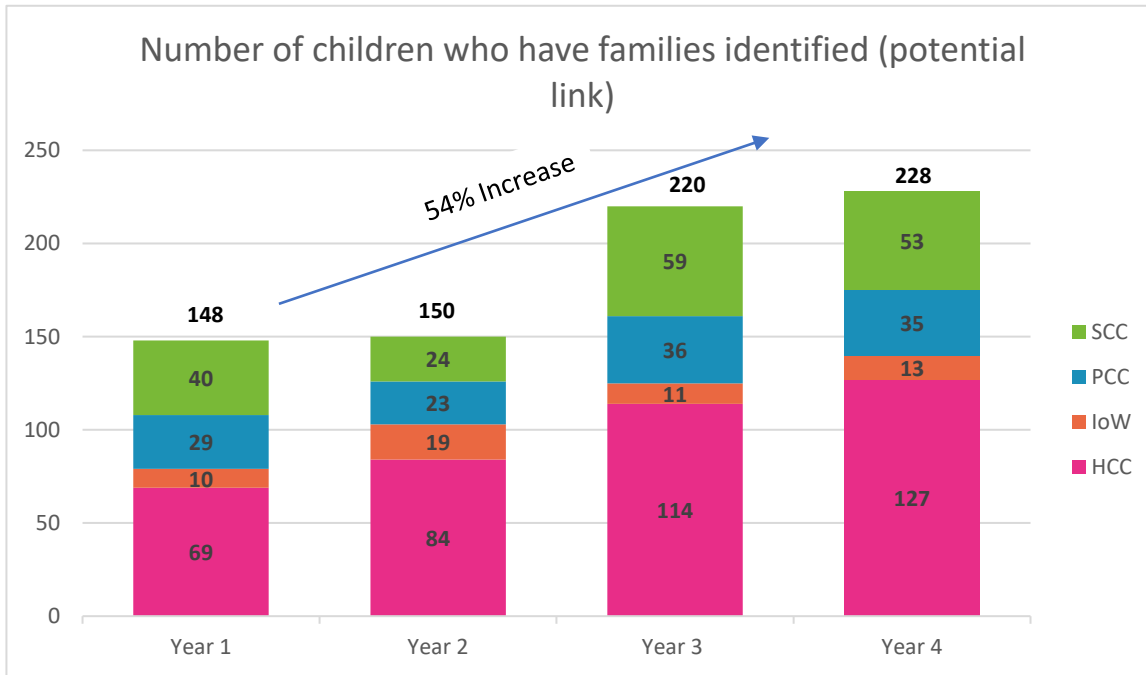
- The overall adoption journey continued to average well within government timescales during Adopt South's fourth year (5.0 months).
- Similarly, the overall adoption journey averaged well within government timescales during Adopt South's second and third years.
- ***The ASGLB data for last year (April 2021- March 2022) shows that Adopt South adopters had the shortest adoption journey from enquiry to approval than any other RAA.***



Family Finding

Children who have had families identified

Table 2.1



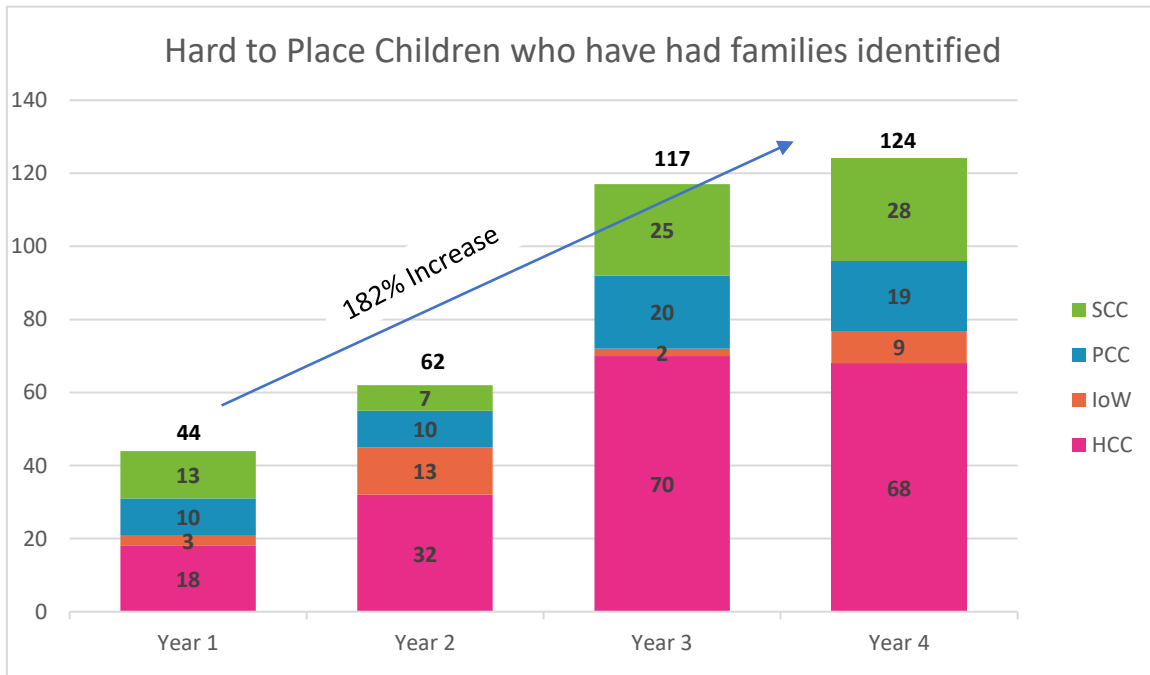
Commentary:

- **228** children had families identified during Adopt South’s fourth year. This includes both potential matches and those that have been confirmed or progressed to panel. (Out of the 228 identified matches, 150 have been confirmed/progressed to panel).
- This compares to **220** children having families identified during our third year; **150** during our second year, and **148** during our first year.



Hard to Place Children who have had families identified

Table 2.2



Commentary:

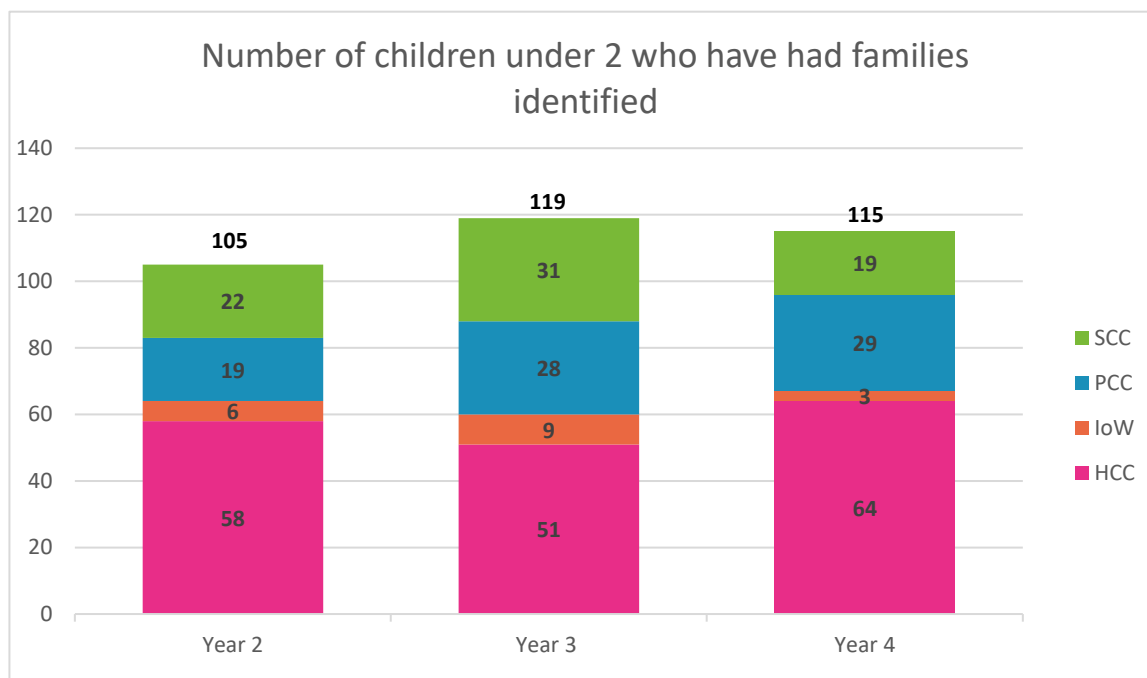
- Of the 228 children who had families identified during Adopt South’s fourth year, **124** were Hard to Place, including 38 sibling groups and 20 children over the age of 5 years. Similarly, these include both potential matches and those that have been confirmed or progressed to panel.
- Of the 220 children who had families identified during Adopt South’s third year, **117** were Hard to Place, including 37 sibling groups and 18 children over the age of 5 years.
- This compares to identifying families for **62** children who were Hard to Place (out of the 150 children) in Year 2 and **44** (out of the 148) in Year 1.



Ages of Children who have had families identified

Number of Children under the age of 2 years

Table 2.3



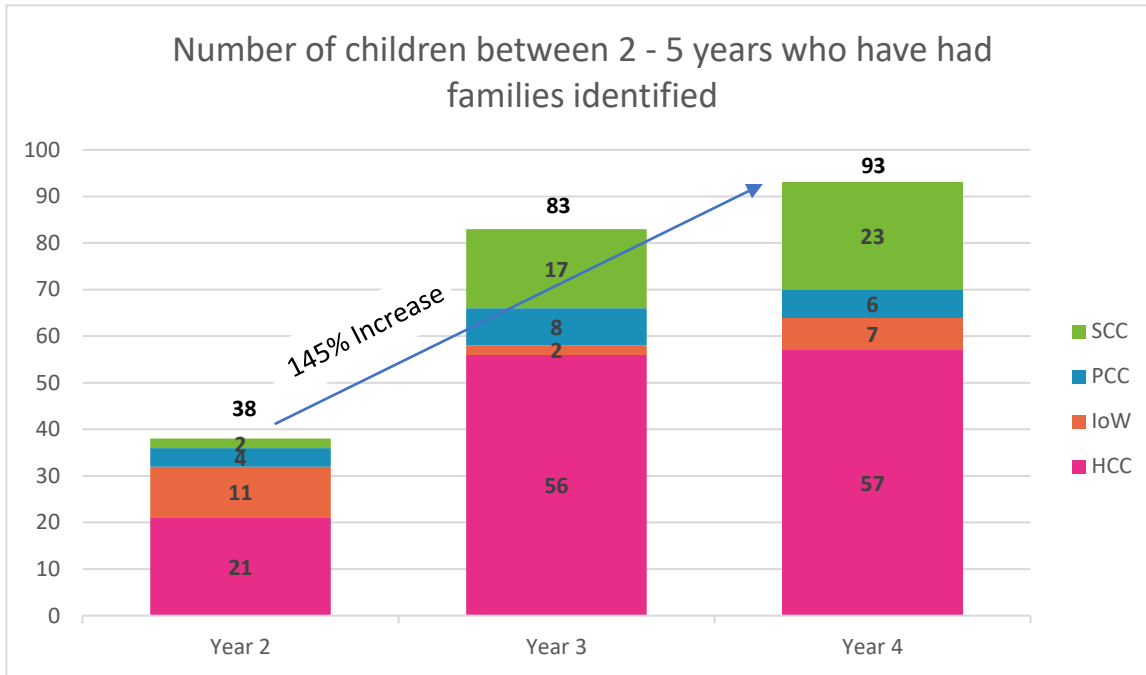
Commentary:

- **115** children under the age of 2 had families identified during Adopt South's fourth year.
- This compares to **119** children under the age of 2 having families identified during Adopt South's third year and **105** children during Adopt South's second year.



Number of Children between 2 – 5 years

Table 2.4



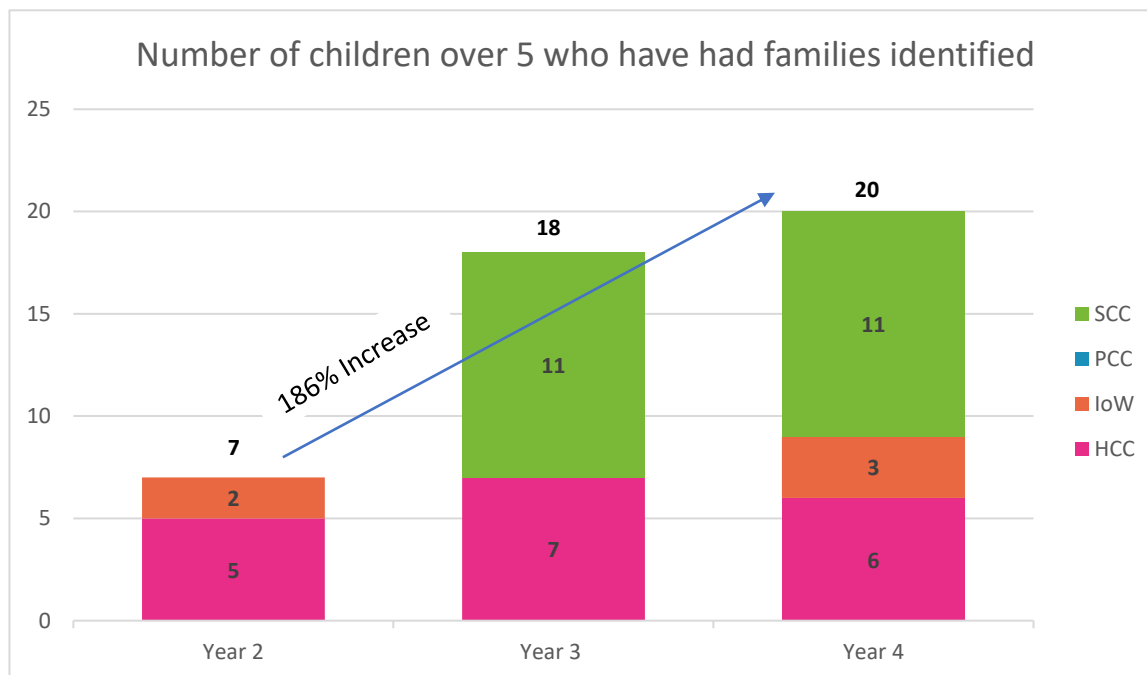
Commentary:

- **93** children between 2- 5 years had families identified during Adopt South’s fourth year.
- This compares to **83** children between 2- 5 years having families identified during Adopt South’s third year and **38** children during Adopt South’s second year.



Number of Children over 5 years

Table 2.5



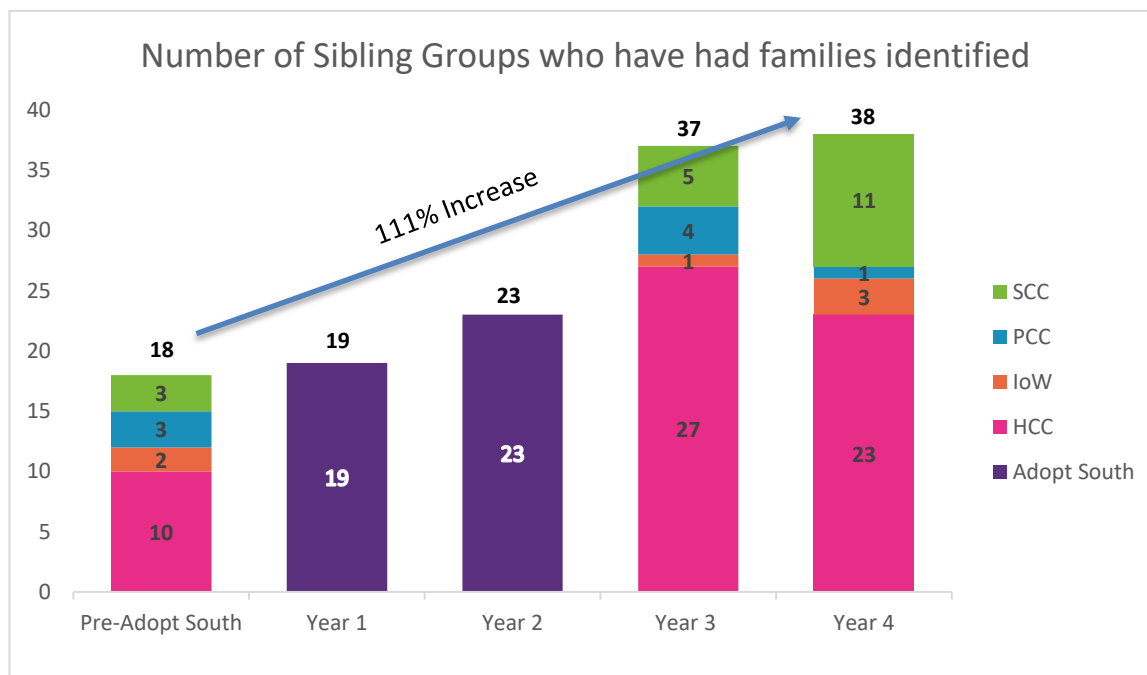
Commentary:

- **20** children over the age of 5 years had families identified during Adopt South’s fourth year. (Out of the 20 identified matches, 16 have been confirmed/progressed to panel).
- This compares to **18** children over the age of 5 years having families identified during Adopt South’s third year and **7** children during Adopt South’s second year.



Number of Sibling Groups who have had families identified

Table 2.6



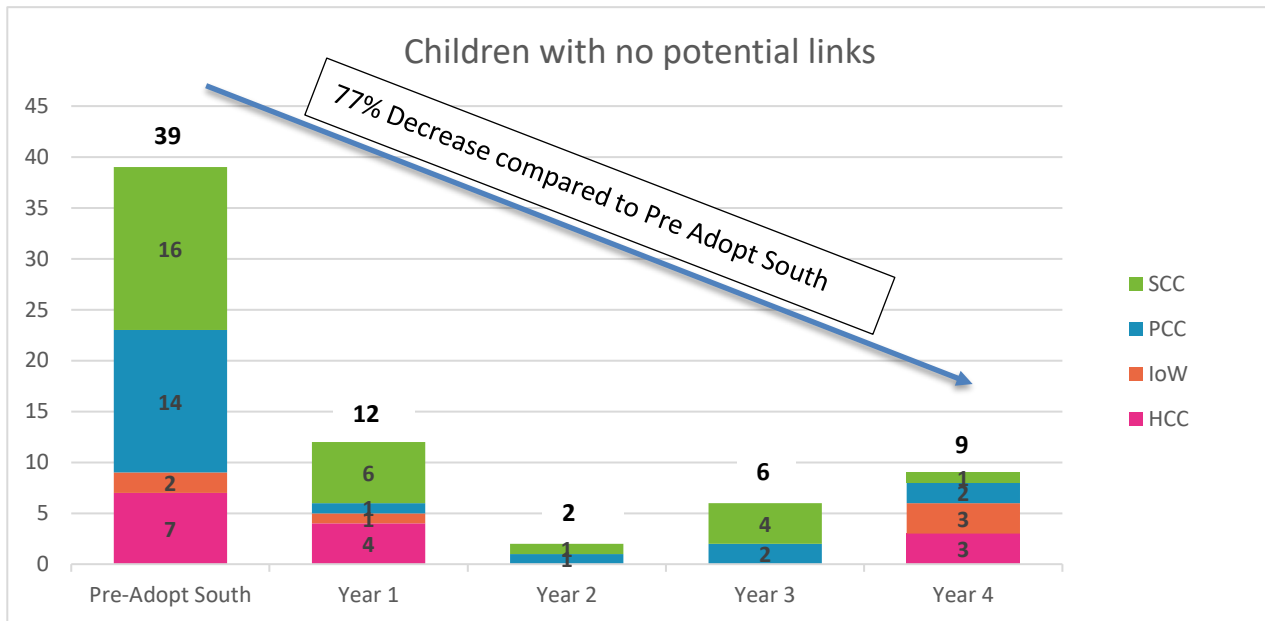
Commentary:

- There has continued to be a steady trend of increasing sibling groups, which has continued during Adopt South's fourth year, with **38** sibling groups having families identified, **7** with a sibling group of 3. (Out of the 38 identified matches for sibling groups, 21 sibling groups have been confirmed/progressed to panel, including 4 sibling groups of 3).
- **37** sibling groups had families identified during Adopt South's third year, **23** sibling groups during Adopt South's second year and **19** in our first year.
- There is a significant challenge nationally to recruit adopters for siblings.
- Additional costs include a higher need for Adoption Support.
- ***Specifically targeting to recruit adopters for sibling groups has continued to have much success as we have ended our fourth year, with 39% of new adoptive households being approved for siblings.***



Children with no potential links

Table 2.7



Commentary:

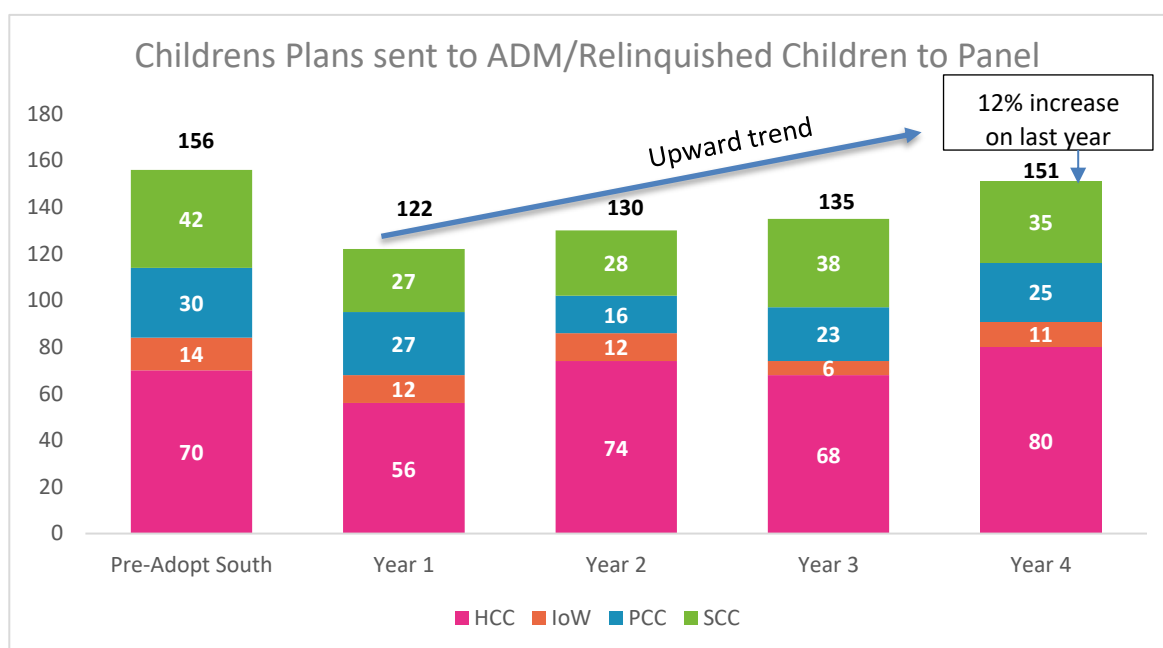
- There are just 9 children with Placement Orders who currently have no potential links. This includes two sibling groups of three male children (HCC – 1 sibling group; IoW – 1 sibling group). There are also three single children which include a 6-year-old; all have complex or medical needs.
- At the inception of Adopt South, there were 39 children who had no potential matches. This reduced to 12 at the end of Year 1 and to just 2 at the end of Year 2, an average reduction of 82%.
- At the end of Quarter 2, Year 3, this increased to 15, due to the high number of sibling groups referred. However, the strategies implemented have had a positive impact and the number of children without potential links reduced to 6 at the end of Year 3 (seeing 15 sets of siblings proceed to confirmed matches during the last two quarters of Year 3). A further 21 sets of siblings (including four sibling groups of 3) have proceeded to confirmed matches during Year 4.
- ***The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that Adopt South had the lowest number of children waiting out of all 31 RAA's.***



Children's Information: Children's Plans to Adoption Order

Children's Plans referred to ADM/Relinquished Children to Panel

Table 3.1



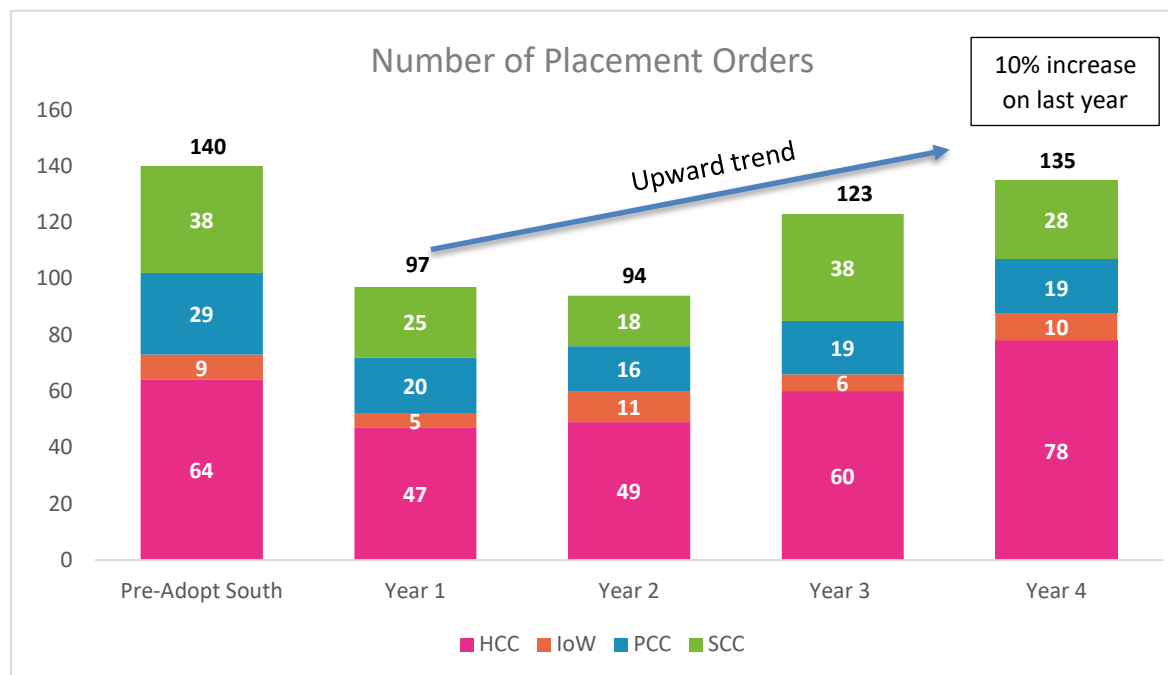
Commentary:

- Year 4 has seen a significant increase in Children's Plans, with 151 being referred to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) across the region, compared to 135 last year.
- Hampshire and the Isle of Wight have seen the steepest increase. Hampshire has had 80 Children's Plans referred during the year, compared to 68 last year, **an increase of 18%**. The Isle of Wight has had 11, compared to 6 last year, **an increase of 83%**.
- Although there was a reduction in Children's Plans in Year 1 as was the national trend, Year 2 saw a rise. Adopt South's third year continued to see a rise, with Southampton's numbers seeing a particularly steep increase.
- Year 2 saw a rise especially for Hampshire from Year 1 to Year 2 of 41%.
- The LA Children's Adoption Teams have continued to report an increase in Parallel Planning and a further increase in Children's Plans is likely to follow.
- **The data for last year (April 2020- March 2022) shows that only 7 RAA's had more ADM/Children's Plans than Adopt South which gives an indication of how Adopt South fits with others in size.**



Summary of Placement Orders

Table 3.2



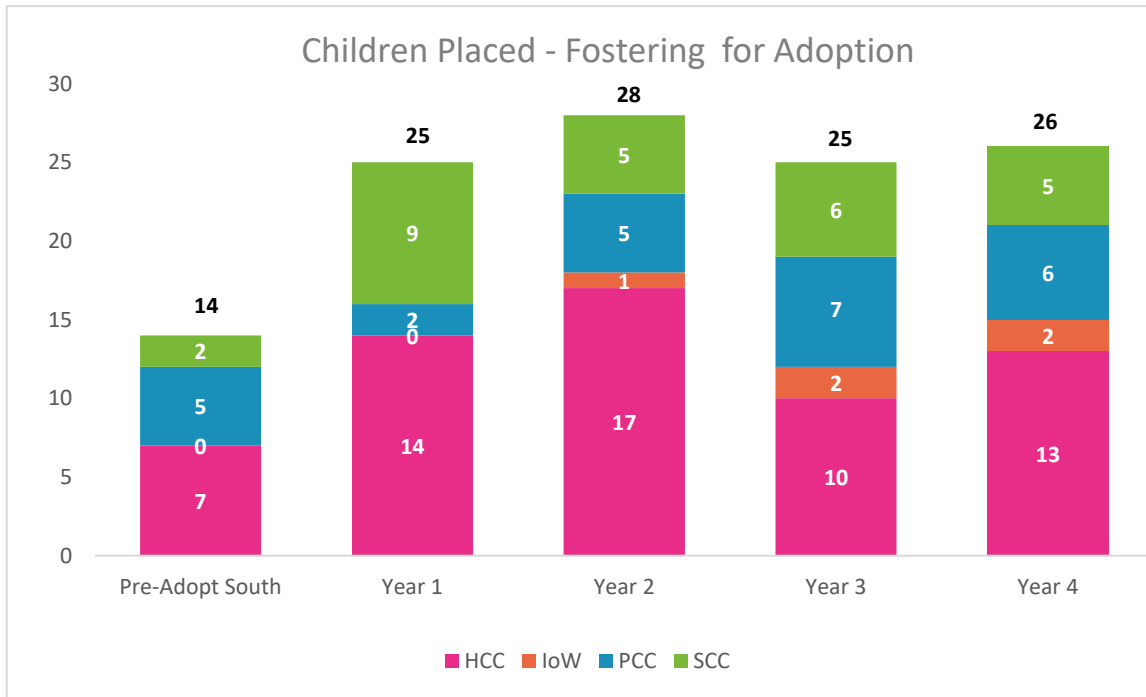
Commentary:

- There have been 135 Placement Orders granted during Year 4, compared to 123 last year.
- Hampshire and the Isle of Wight have seen steep increases. Hampshire has seen 78 Placement Orders granted during the last year, compared to 60 last year, **an increase of 30%**. The Isle of Wight has seen 10, compared to 6 during last year, **an increase of 67%**.
- Adopt South's third year saw a significant increase from the previous two years, with Hampshire and Southampton seeing especially high numbers, with 60 Placement Orders being granted in Hampshire and 38 in Southampton.
- COVID had impacted on the courts and cases had been delayed, which had led to Placement Orders not increasing in line with the rise in Children's Plans.
- The LA Children's Adoption Teams are continuing to report an increase in Parallel Planning and a further increase in Children's Plans and Placement Orders are likely to follow.



Children Placed- Fostering for Adoption

Table 3.3



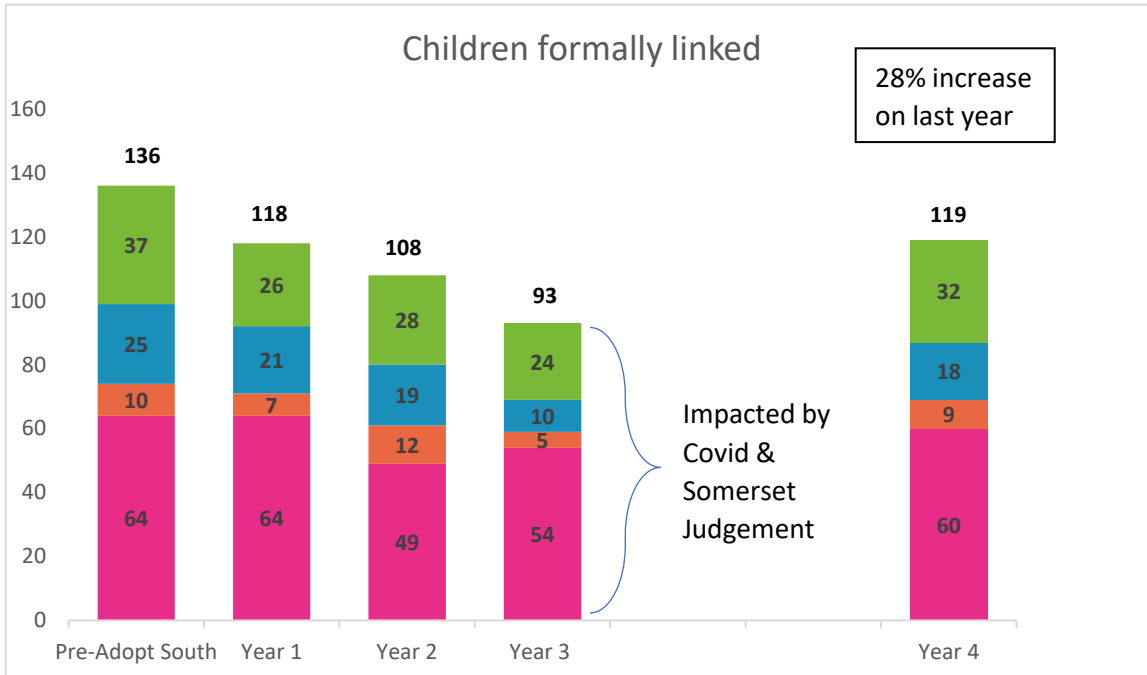
Commentary:

- 26 children have been placed in FfA placements during Year 4.
- This compares to 25 children being placed in a FfA placement during Adopt South's third year.
- Although numbers were slightly lower during Year 3, there has been, overall, a continued rise in children being placed in FfA placements since the start of Adopt South.
- The impact for the LA is a freeing up of fostering placements and a reduced cost.
- ***The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that between April 2020 – March 2021, only two other RAA's placed more children in FfA placements than Adopt South. The data for last year (April 2021- March 2022) shows similar comparisons. Only 5 RAA's placed more children in FfA placements than Adopt South last year.***



Children formally linked

Table 3.4



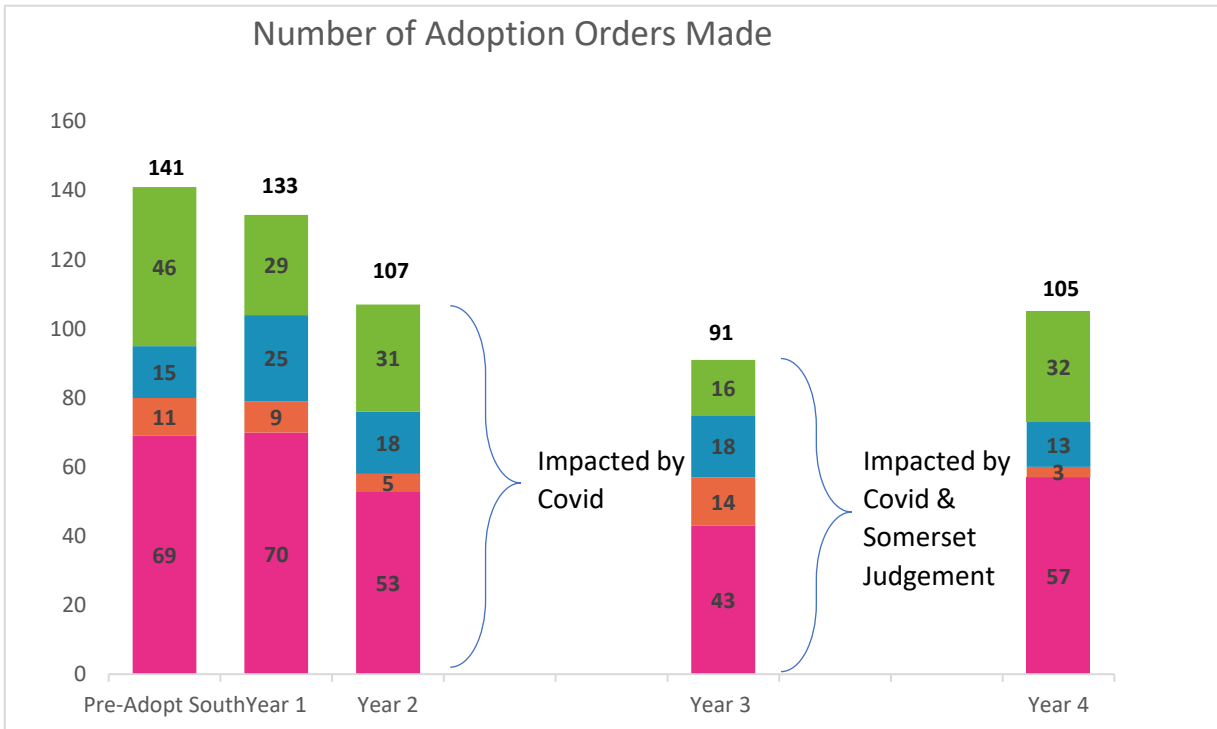
Commentary:

- **119 children were linked with 97 families during Adopt South's fourth year. This includes 19 sibling groups (16 sibling groups of 2, and 3 sibling groups of 3). It also includes 9 children over the age of 5 years (7- SCC; 1- HCC; 1- IOW), all linked with in- house adopters, except for a sibling group of 2.**
- This compares to 93 children linked with 77 adoptive families during Adopt South' third year.
- The number of children linked in Year 3 was impacted by the Somerset Judgement. In total, there were 18 cases paused for 19 children. These have all now been presented to Panel.
- 118 children were linked with 104 adoptive families in Year 1 and 108 children linked with 96 adoptive families in Year 2.
- **Since the launch of Adopt South, 438 children have been linked. Of these, 227 have been HCC children; 33 IOW children; 68 PCC children; 110 SCC children.**



Adoption Orders

Table 3.5



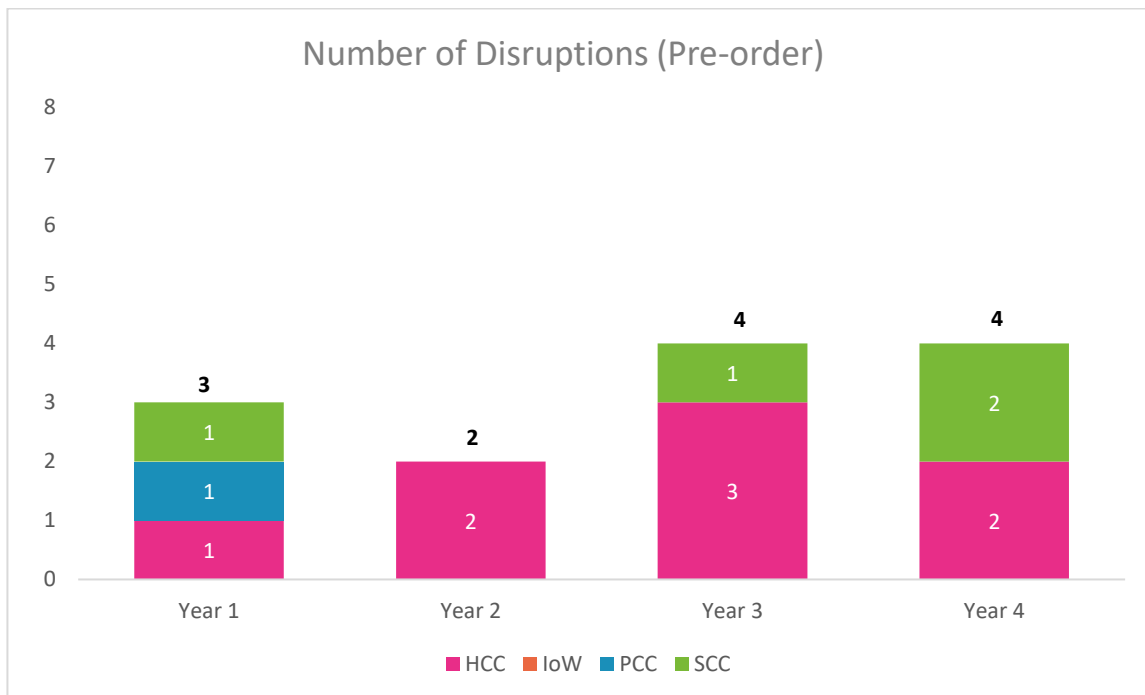
Commentary:

- 105 Adoption Orders were made across the region during Year 4, compared to 91 during Year 3.
- Adoption Orders have continued to be impacted by the courts only holding bi-monthly hearings.
- ***The ASGLB data for last year (April 2021- March 2022) shows that Adopt South had the lowest timescale out of all 32 RAA's from Placement to Adoption Order. (The Government expectation is 274 days- Adopt South averaged 198 days; England's average was 280 days).***



Disruptions - Pre-Adoption Order

Table 3.6



Commentary:

- There have been 4 disruptions during Adopt South's fourth year.
- A 5-year-old placed with his 3-year-old brother where sadly the Prospective Adopters felt unable to manage the competing needs of the two children and struggled with the 5-year-old in particular. An updated sibling assessment concluded the brothers should be separated. The plan for the older child remains one of adoption with contact with his younger sibling.
- A brother and sister aged 5 and 6, who had been placed in two separate adoptive families. The Prospective Adopters felt unable to manage their complex behaviours and the care plans of both children are currently being reviewed.
- The further disruption concerned an older sibling who had been placed alongside their younger sibling. The Prospective Adopters felt unable to manage the older sibling's challenging behaviours and the child's care plan is, similarly, now being reviewed.
- There were 4 disruptions (1 sibling group of 2 and 2 single children) during Adopt South's third year.
- A further sibling group of two remained with their adopters and although the placement didn't disrupt, they had their care plan changed as the Prospective Adopters no longer felt able to adopt them.



- There were 2 disruptions during Adopt South's second year and 3 disruptions during Adopt South's first year.
- There have, therefore, been 13 disruptions since the launch of Adopt South, a disruption rate of 2.96% (13/438 children linked). Comparisons show that this is low, ie, HCC's disruption rate Pre-Adopt South was 3.1% (2/64 children linked); One Partnership RAA who are a similar size to Adopt South have advised of a 4.4% disruption rate in their first year (2020/2021), 4/96 children linked.

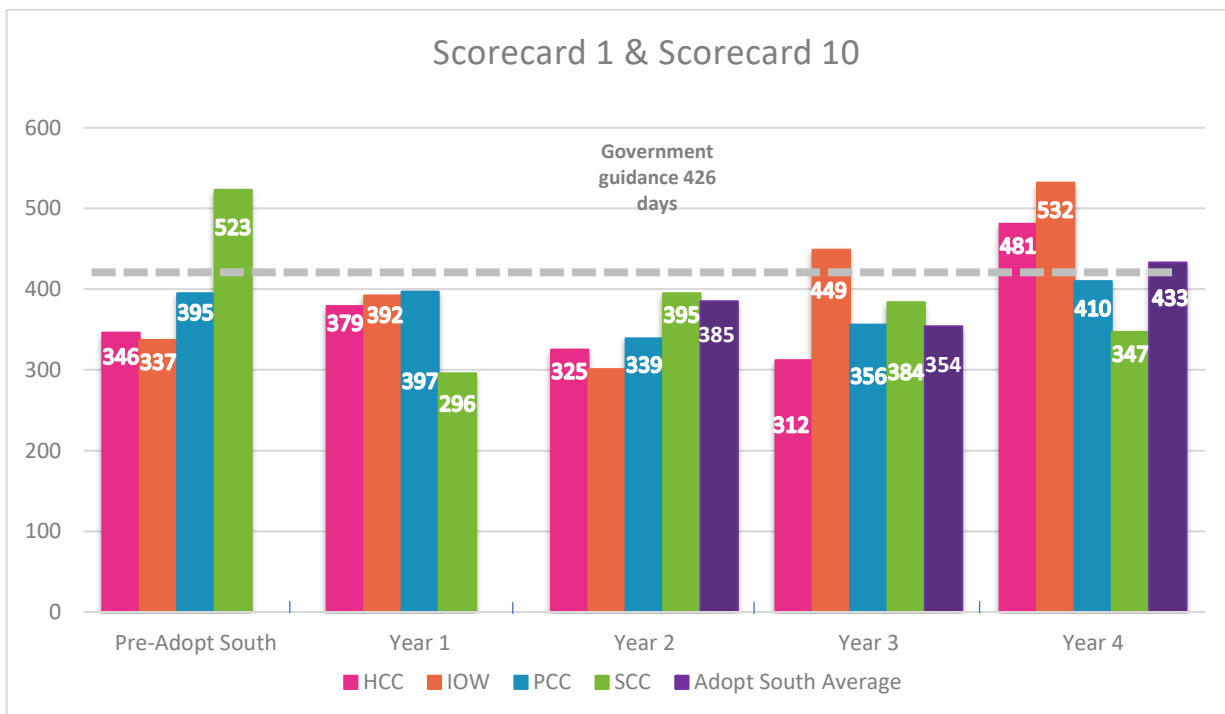


Comparison of Scorecard 1/Scorecard 10

Scorecard 1 - Average Time between the child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. (no longer used)

Scorecard 10 - Average Time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family, adjusted for foster carer adoptions, for children who have been adopted, and for Fostering for Adoption placements.

Table 3.7



Commentary:

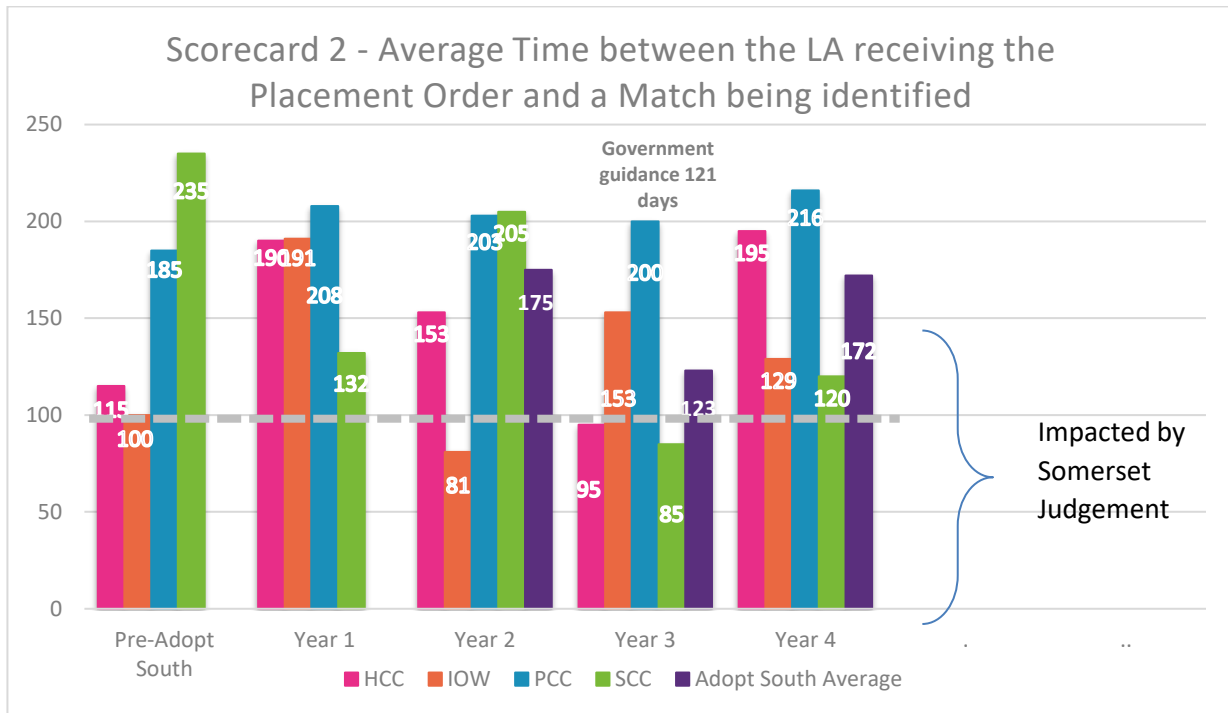
- Scorecard 1 has now been superseded with Scorecard A10. This new scorecard has been adjusted from Scorecard 1 to take into account foster carer adoptions and FfA placements.
- During Year 4, the average for all 4 LA's combined is 433 days, just seven days above the government guidance for Scorecard A10.
- Both Portsmouth and Southampton have averaged well within the government guidance.
- Hampshire averaged 55 days above the government guidance and the Isle of Wight 106 days above the guidance.
- The higher timescale for Hampshire is due to prolonged care proceedings for a number of children, in addition to delays due to the complexities of the children, including the increase in sibling groups and older children, where family finding has taken longer.



- The higher timescale for the Isle of Wight is due to just 3 children being adopted in Year 4, and one child having a care journey of 913 days, being made subject to a Care Order and then placed with his mother, firstly in a parent and child placement and then in the community. He remained looked after for the whole period.
- During Adopt South's third year, all the Local Authorities for Scorecard 10, averaged scorecards well below the government's guidance, with the exception of the Isle of Wight, who averaged just 23 days above the government's guidance. Hampshire and Southampton continued to see an improvement on the low scorecards of the previous year.
- The higher timescale for the Isle of Wight was due to one of the children who had an Adoption Order having cerebral palsy and it taking longer to find a family for him. The good news is that a family was found, and the Adoption Order now made.
- Adopt South's Year 3 saw an overall average across the 4 Local Authorities of 354 days for Scorecard 10, well below the government's guidance.
- Average timescales were well within the government guidance for all 4 Local Authorities during Adopt South's first and second year. The 4 Local Authorities together averaged 385 days in Year 2, significantly under the government guidance.
- SCC averaged timescales outside of the government expectation Pre-Adopt South.
- ***The ASGLB data (April 2021- March 2022) shows that Adopt South is 1 out of just 2 RAA's where Scorecard 1 is in timescale. (The last 3 years have been averaged for this timescale- rather than just 2021/22. The Government expectation is 426 days- Adopt South averaged 368 days. England's average was 445 days).***

Comparison of Scorecard 2

Table 3.8



Commentary:

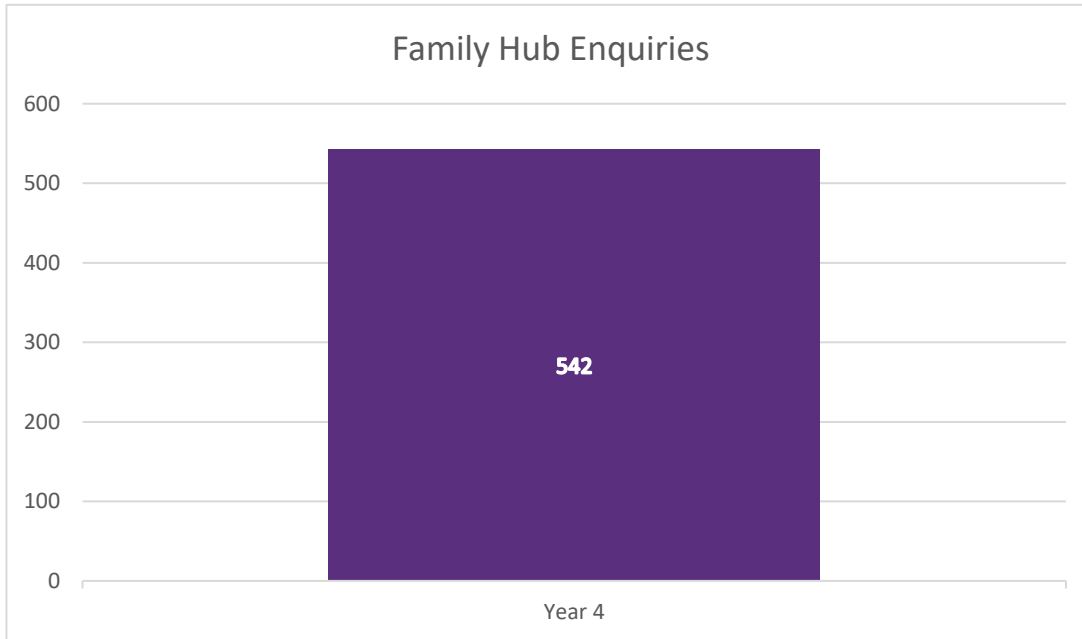
- During Year 4, the average for all 4 LA's combined is 172 days for Scorecard 2.
- Southampton has averaged within the government guidance.
- Hampshire and Portsmouth have averaged significantly above the government guidance, whilst the Isle of Wight has averaged just slightly above (8 days).
- The higher timescales for all three Local Authorities reflect the impact of the Somerset Judgement and placements being put on hold whilst the way forward was being addressed. The majority of the children were placed in Fostering for Adoption placements, however, and, therefore, their adoption journey's were not delayed.
- In addition, the delays have been due to the complexities of the children across all three Local Authorities, including the increase in sibling groups, older children and children with significant needs, where family finding has taken longer.
- During Adopt South's third year, Hampshire and Southampton averaged scorecards well below the government's guidance. The slightly higher scorecards for the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth reflected the hard-to-place children who although it took longer, families were found.



- Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton continued to see an improvement on their scorecards the previous year.
- Year 3 saw an average across the 4 Local Authorities of 123 days, just 2 days outside of the government's guidance. This compared to 175 days in Year 2.
- ***The ASGLB data (April 2021- March 2022) shows that Adopt South was the 5th lowest for Scorecard 2. As with Scorecard 10, the last 3 years have been averaged for this timescale. (England's average was 196 days; Adopt South averaged 163 days).***

Adoption Support- Family Hub Activity Referrals/Enquiries to Adopt South’s Advice and Support Line

Table 4.1



Commentary:

- The Advice and Support Line provides a main point of contact to adoptive families, adoptees, birth relatives and professionals across the region.
- A total of 542 enquiries have been received by the Family Hub during Adopt South’s fourth year.



Adoption Support Offer - Comparison Table

Table 4.2

	HCC	IOW	PCC	SCC	Adopt South
Dedicated adoption support duty line during office hours	✓				✓
Mentor system for post adoption parents	✓				✓
Virtual Reality	✓				✓
One off consultations- 36 across the county/region	✓				✓
Video Interaction Guidance	✓				✓
Educational Psychologist Consultation	✓	✓			✓
Support Groups	✓	✓	✓		✓
Adolescence 2 session programme -3 hours each				✓	✓
Understanding your child's world through play				✓	✓
Life story workshop	✓		✓	✓	✓
Managing challenging behaviour (bite size)				✓	✓
Therapeutic Parenting (bite size)				✓	
FASD Workshop (bite size)				✓	✓
Education Matters (bite size)				✓	✓
Feelings Workshop			✓		✓
Attachment and Trauma Bite Size				✓	✓
Talking about Adoption (bite size)			✓		✓
Internet safety (bite size)				✓	✓
Secondary Trauma (bite size)				✓	✓
Sensory Workshops			✓		✓
Theraplay workshop	✓				✓
Stay and Play sessions	✓				✓
Soft Play exclusive use	✓				✓
Social events for adoptive families	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Groundworks Fusion activities for young people - on average 3 a month	✓				✓
Parenting Programmes					
<i>Adopting Changes</i>	✓				✓
<i>Trauma Course</i>	✓				✓
<i>Knowing Me, Knowing You</i>	✓				✓
<i>Nurturing Attachments</i>					✓

Commentary:

- Year 4 has seen the new Family Hub commencing a scoping exercise with the adoption community to redesign a core and universal support offer that meets the most current needs of families in our region.



Family Hub events and services delivered in Year 4

Table 4.3

Service	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Parenting & Family Support				
Advice and Support Line one off advice & support	140	139	106	157
Parents attending virtual Q&A / Chat Sessions (monthly)	0	9	13	28
Parent Support Groups (offered monthly)	4	4	8	6
Virtual consultation Sessions (3 offered per month)	7	5	12	19
Families receiving direct work support	62	22	10	23
Families supported by an Adopt South Mentor	34	23	28	31
Workshops offered 3 x per year				
Setting Screen Time and Surviving Social Media Workshop	0	0	9	12
Attachment: Strengthening Relationships Workshop	7	0	8	8
Theraplay Workshop	0	15	0	6
Understanding Sensory Regulation Workshop	6	0	0	8
Terrific Teens Workshop	2	0	11	5
Our Lives Our Stories Workshop	6	11	0	8
Parenting Programmes				
Nurturing Attachments Programme	0	0	11	11
Adopting Changes Programme	0	12	0	0
Therapeutic Support				
Educational Psychologist Consultations	16	6	14	15
Video Interaction Guidance	15	1	0	0
Logins to Guest Speaker events	42	0	0	50
Family Activities (throughout the year)				
Parents & Children Under 5's Stay and Play Sessions	13	10	43	24
Soft Play Exclusive Use Sessions for under 12's	25	0	29	20
Groundworks Fusion Activities for Young People	0	0	2	8
Social Events for Adoptive Families	0	260	0	240

Commentary:

During Adopt South's Year 4;

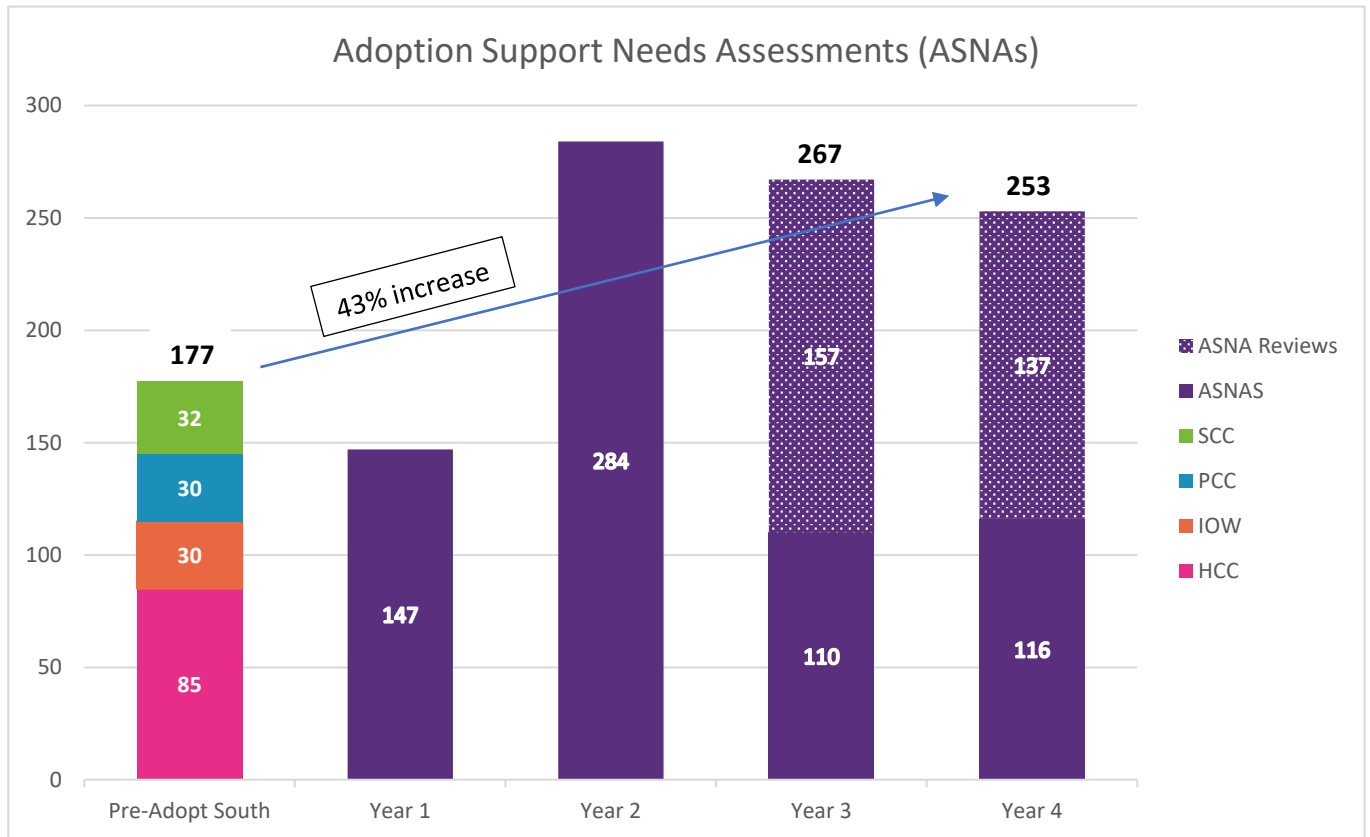
- **542** new enquiries were received.
- **122** families accessed a workshop.
- Adopt South consultations have continued to be well used, with **43** consultations taking place.
- **92** parents attended virtual guest speaker webinars.



- *164 families have accessed a family activity event.*
- *51 Educational Psychologist consultations have been provided.*
- *500 parents and children attended our summer and winter Family Fun Days.*
- *34 parents have attended a therapeutic parenting programme.*
- *16 Video Interaction Guidance packages have been allocated.*
- *5 families attended a joint information event (with the Virtual School) on the Isle of Wight.*
- *10 Groundworks Fusion activities for young people have taken place.*
- *Access to 'Catch' online resources have been provided to Adopt South families.*

Adoption Support Needs Assessments (ASNA's), including ASNA Reviews

Table 4.4



Commentary:

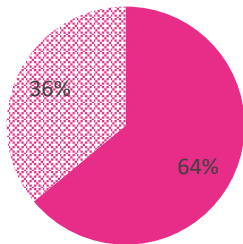
- During Adopt South's fourth year, 116 new Adoption Support Needs Assessments (ASNA's) were undertaken, a 5% increase from Year 3. 137 ASNA reviews were completed, a decrease of 13% from last year.
- A total of 253 ASNA and ASNA reviews were, therefore, completed in Year 4.
- At the end of Year 4, there were 387 adoption support cases open, an increase of 6% on last year, when 367 cases were open.
- A total of 493 children were allocated to a Social Worker within the year.



Adoption Support Needs Assessments – Timescales

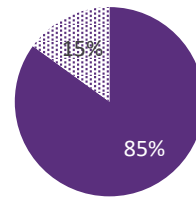
Table 4.5

% of ASNAs within and outside of timescales (Hampshire 2018/19)



■ % of ASNAs within timescales of 45 days
▨ % outside of timescales

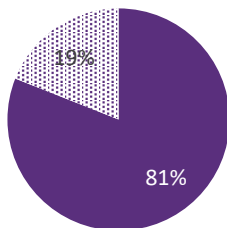
% of ASNAs within and outside of timescales of 45 days (Adopt South - Years 1 & 2)



■ % of ASNAs within timescales of 45 days
▨ % outside of timescales

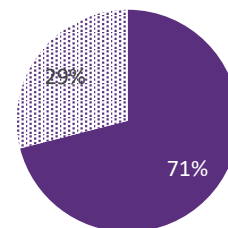
Hampshire was the only Local Authority measuring timescales prior to Adopt South

% of ASNAs within and outside of timescales of 45 days (Year 3)



■ % of ASNAs within timescales of 45 days
▨ % outside of timescales

% of ASNAs within and outside of timescales of 45 days (Year 4)



■ % of ASNAs within timescales of 45 days
▨ % outside of timescales

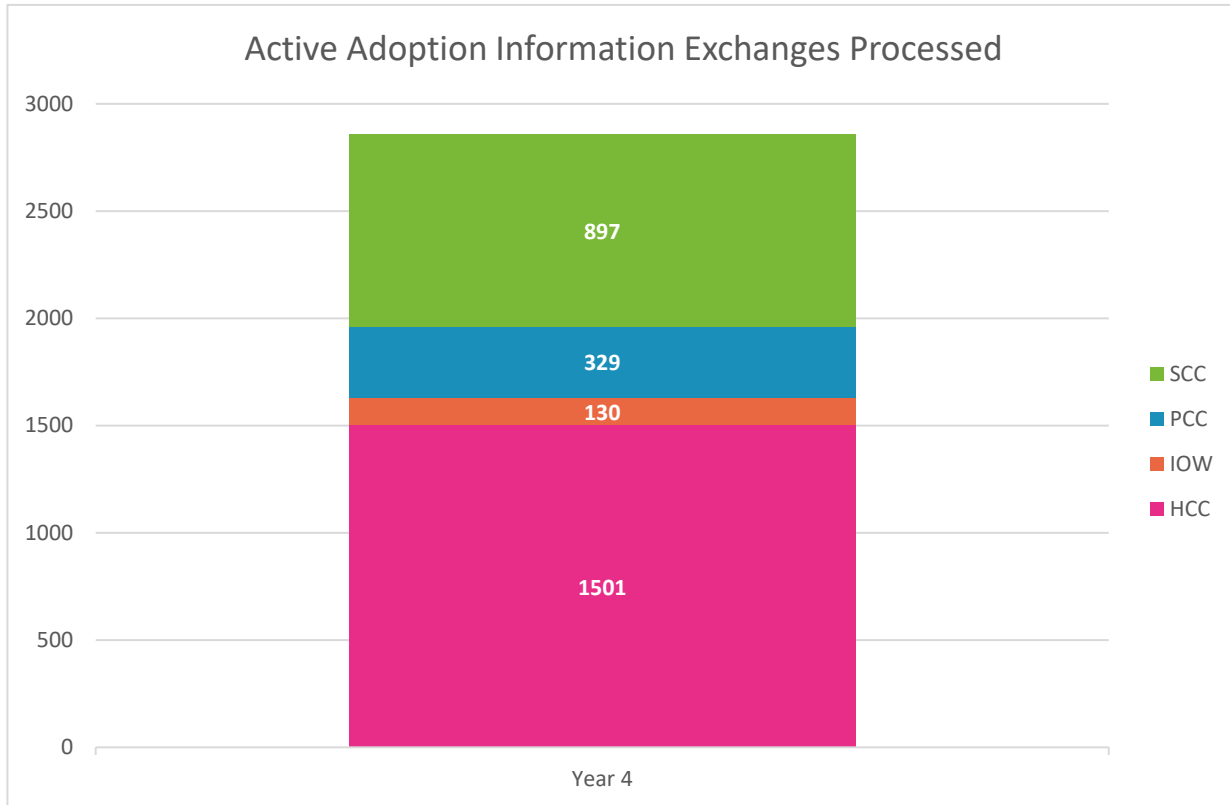


Commentary:

- During Adopt South's fourth year, 71% of ASNA's were completed within the 45-day timescale.
- Unfortunately, timescales dipped in Quarter 1 with only 59% completed within timescales.
- In Quarters 2, 3 and 4, there has been a real focus on expectations regarding timescales and a new tracking process put in place. As a result, there has been a significant improvement with 80% of ASNA's being completed within the 45-day timescale in Quarters 2 and 3, and 70% being completed within timescales in Quarter 4.
- A timely response to assessment and support reduces the number of cases that escalate to statutory teams across our partnership.
- The calculation of post adoption breakdowns across the region during Year 4 will be available at the beginning of Year 5. Currently those children/young people who have returned to care are being identified, and then their ongoing care plan will be reviewed to see whether it fits the criteria for a disruption. (A child leaving their adoptive family with no plan for a rehab home).
- At the end of Year 4, we were aware of 2 adoption breakdowns (1 HCC child and 1 SCC child) which the Adoption Support Service had been involved with during the year.
- Adopt South's combined rate of post adoption breakdowns in Year 2 was 0.6%, which was 81% lower than the national average of 3.2%.

Adoption Information Exchange

Table 4.6



Commentary:

- The Adoption Information Exchange came into scope of Adopt South in Year 3.
- During Adopt South’s fourth year, a total of 2,857 Exchanges were processed. (HCC-1501; IOW- 130; PCC- 329; SCC- 897)



Table 4.7

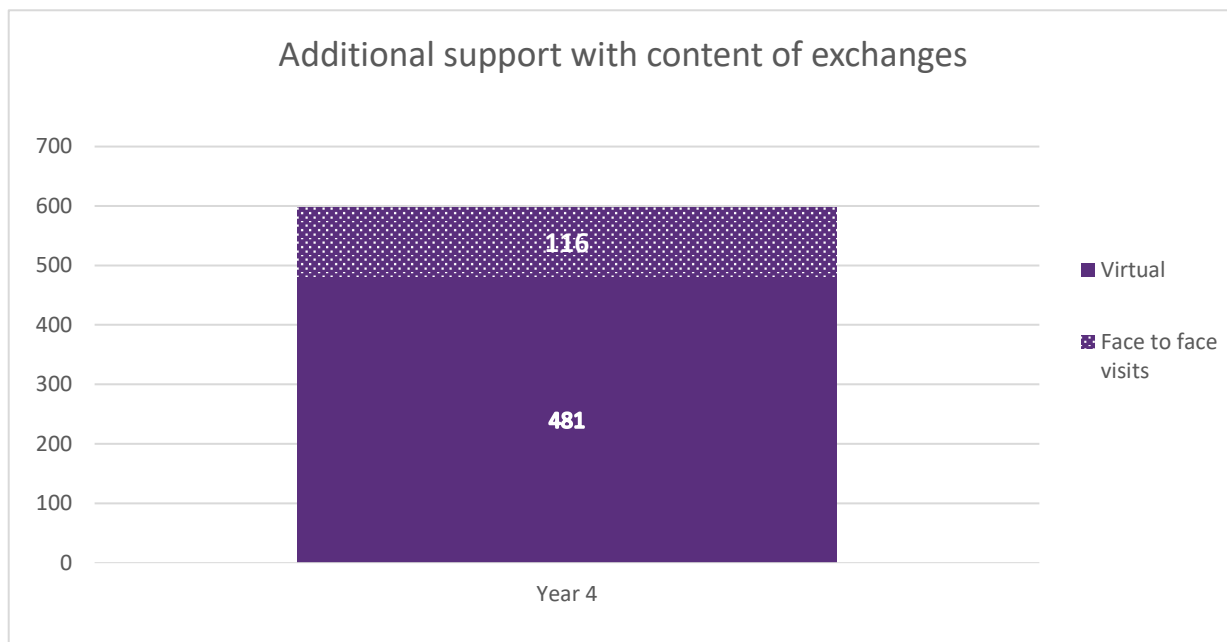


Commentary:

- During Adopt South’s fourth year, 21 direct contacts have been supervised by Adopt South staff.
- Adopt South staff undertook the planning, including mediation, risk assessments and offering advice and support, of a further 32 direct contacts, which were facilitated by the families directly.
- These contacts included 6 birth fathers, 7 birth mothers, 23 siblings, 6 maternal grandmothers, 4 paternal grandmothers, 1 paternal grandfather and one maternal great grandmother. (HCC – 5 birth mothers, 3 birth fathers, plus 2 contacts where both birth mother and father attended; IOW- 0; PCC- 0; SCC - 1 birth father, 0 - birth mother contacts).



Table 4.8



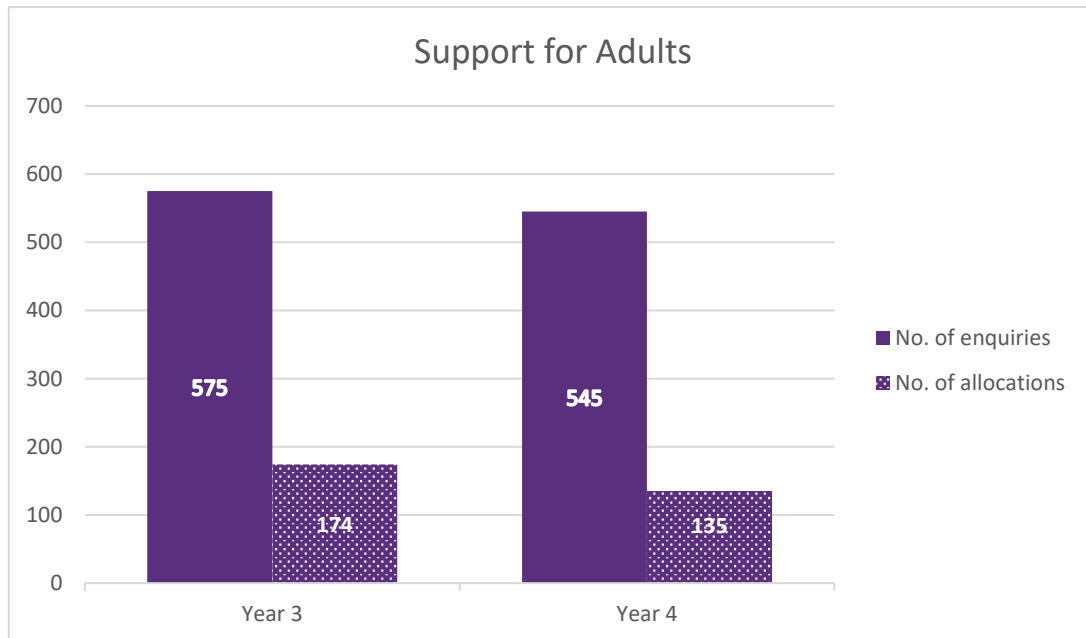
Commentary:

- Additional support is available to birth parents and adoptive parents to ensure the exchanges are child focussed.
- During Adopt South’s fourth year, additional support has been provided to 597 birth and adoptive families. This has consisted of 116 face-to-face visits and 481 virtual appointments.



Adoption Support for Adults

Table 4.9

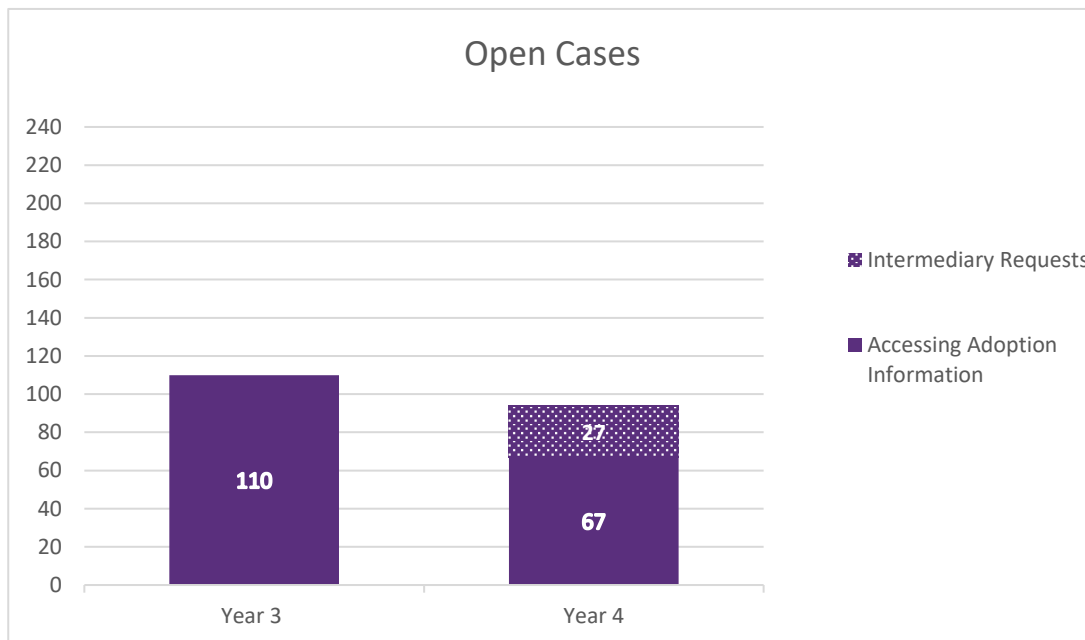


Commentary:

- Adoption Support for Adults came into scope of Adopt South at the beginning of Year 3.
- There are two distinct areas of work provided by the service, which includes supporting adult adoptees in accessing adoption records, and providing an intermediary service to adult adoptees and birth relatives.
- During Adopt South's fourth year, 545 enquiries have been received, resulting in 135 cases being allocated.
- This compares to Year 3, when 575 enquiries were received, resulting in 174 cases being allocated.



Table 4.10



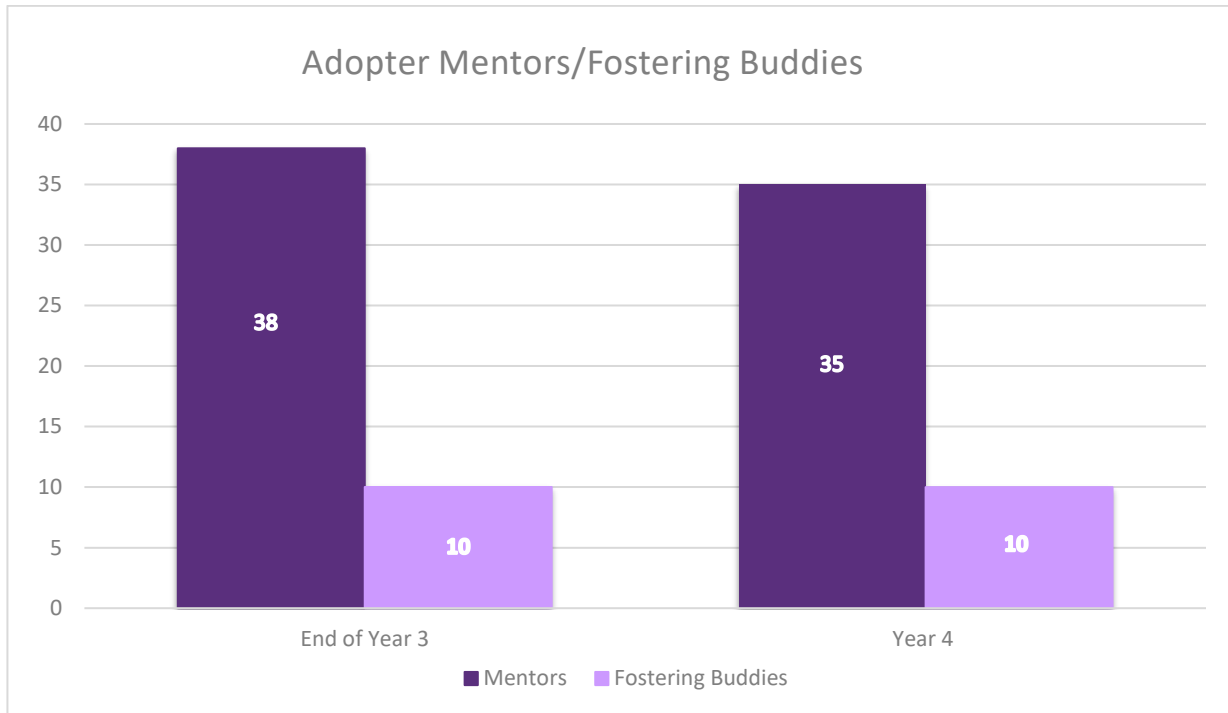
Commentary:

- At the end of Adopt South’s fourth year, there were 94 open cases (67 cases involved accessing adoption information and 27 cases regarded an intermediary service for adult adoptees and birth relatives).
- This compares to Year 3, when there were 110 open cases.



Peer Mentoring Scheme and Fostering Buddy Scheme

Table 5.1



Commentary:

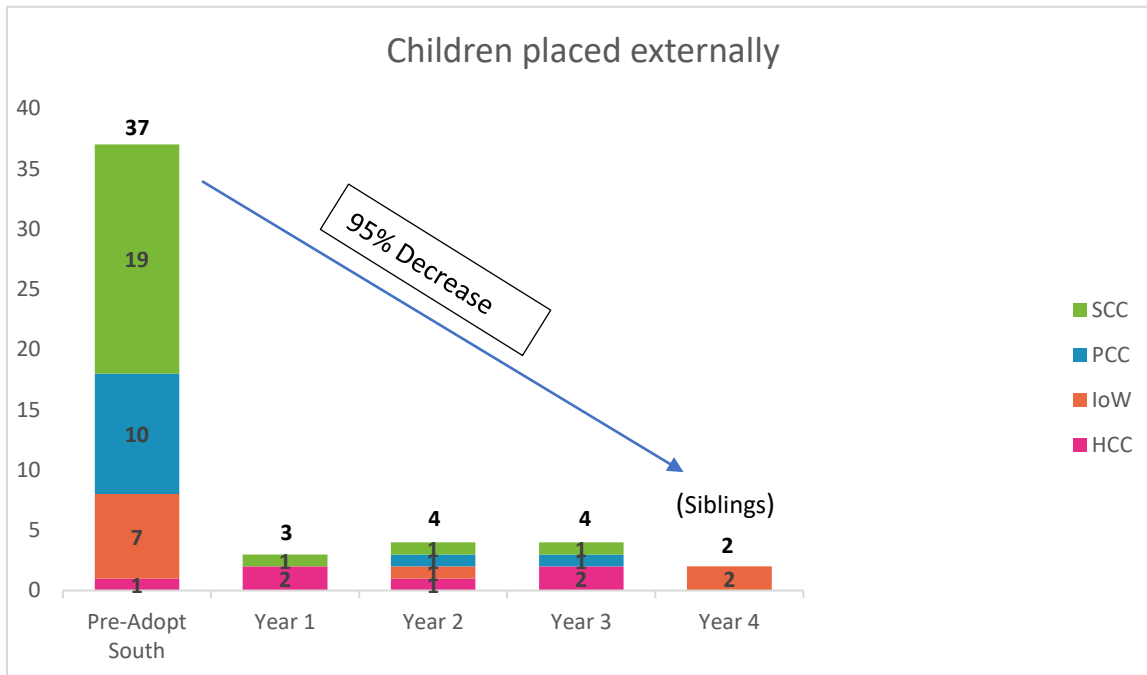
- Adopt South’s Mentoring Scheme provides peer support to families both in the assessment/placement stage of adoption and post adoption order.
- There were 35 mentors overall in post at the end of Year 4.
- At the end of Year 4, there were 245 families receiving mentoring support, of which 214 were in the assessment/placement stage and 31 were post adoption order.
- Positive feedback has continued to be received about the scheme and of how much it is valued by both Prospective Adopters going through their adoption journey and by Adopters needing additional support post adoption.
- The Fostering Buddy Scheme offers one-off consultations with a registered Foster Carer to chat about topics such as child development, routines and the importance of introductions.
- At the end of Year 4, we had 10 experienced Fostering Buddies who offered chats to our Prospective Adopters.
- The Fostering Buddy Scheme was offered to 103 families during Adopt South’s fourth year, and all but one family took up this offer.



Spending and Potential Saving Comparisons

Children Placed Externally

Table 6.1



Commentary:

- During Adopt South's fourth year, a sibling group of 2 children have been placed externally.
- 37 children were placed externally Pre-Adopt South (out of a total of 136), compared to 3 (out of a total of 118) in Year 1, 4 (out of a total of 108) in Year 2, and 4 (out of a total of 93) in Year 3.
- **Comparisons with the other 31 RAA's show that last year, Adopt South placed more in-house than any other RAA and spent significantly less on external placements. Across the RAA's, there was an average of 31% of children placed eternally, compared to just 3.7% for Adopt South. A number of RAA's placed 50% of their children externally.**
- **Year 4 has seen just 1.7% placed externally (2 out of a total of 119).**



Interagency

Table 6.2



Commentary:

Income

- The current income target for sold adopters is £135,000, based on 5 placements of children from other RAA's with Adopt South adopters.
- The total income generated during Adopt South's fourth year is £124,000. 4 placements were sold, with 5 children placed. This comprised of:
 - £27,000 for 1 child placed from Adopt South West
 - £27,000 for 1 child placed from West Bay Adoption Services
 - £43,000 for 2 children placed from One Adoption West Yorkshire
 - £27,000 for 1 child placed with Adopt East Midlands

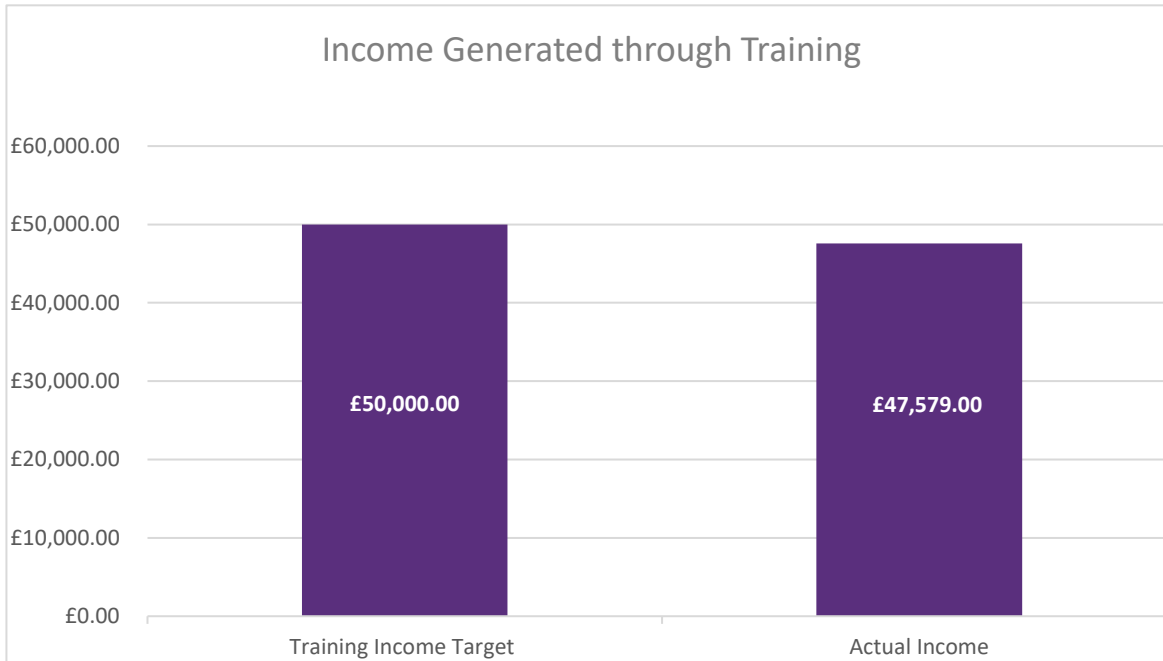
Purchases

- During Year 4, just 1 interagency placement has been purchased, for a sibling group of 2 at a cost of £54,630.



Income Generated through Training

Table 6.3



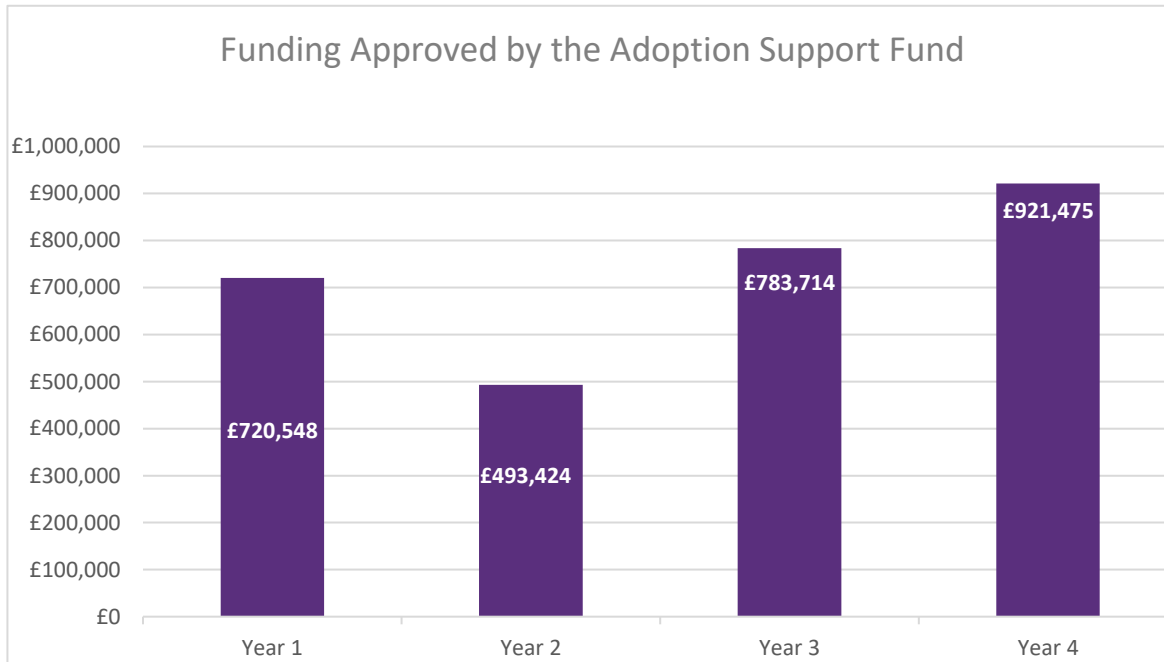
Commentary:

- The training income target was revised during the year to £50,000.
- The total income received in Adopt South's fourth year was £47,579 (just 4.8% below the income target set).
- This income was as a result of therapeutic parenting courses provided to adopters (Adopting Changes and Nurturing Attachments), which have been funded by successful applications to the Adoption Support Fund.



Adoption Support Fund

Table 6.4



Commentary:

- During Adopt South’s fourth year, there have been 371 applications approved by the Adoption Support Fund, totalling £921, 475.19.
- This compares to 313 applications in Year 3, totalling £783,714.82.
- In Year 2, £493,424.16 was approved in relation to regular applications for therapeutic interventions and a total of £572,555 when taking the COVID-19 ASF Scheme into consideration.
- During Adopt South’s first year, £720,548 was approved.
- ***Since the launch of Adopt South, a total of £2,919,161 has, therefore, been approved by the Adoption Support Fund.***

