

Report subject	<b>Aspire Adoption Annual Report 2023-2024</b>
Meeting date	30 October 2024
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The appended report is the seventh annual adoption report presented by Aspire Adoption, summarising the work of the agency in the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. It has been written to ensure and provides the Council with an opportunity to satisfy itself that the requirements of the Statutory Adoption Guidance 2013 and the Adoption Minimum Standards 2014 are met.</p> <p>This report provides a summary of the comprehensive self-evaluation of Aspire Regional Adoption Agency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aspire were able to recruit adopters for those children who are identified as having characteristics that make them 'harder to place' such as sibling groups, those with additional learning and health needs, and older children.</li> <li>• The close partner relationships and tracking Aspire undertake with BCP and Dorset means that by the time the Placement Order is made, we will know whether Aspire has suitable adopters or not and can immediately look elsewhere to avoid delay for children.</li> <li>• 85% of all the children placed for adoption were placed with Aspire adopters.</li> <li>• Aspire placed 37 children in early permanence placements meaning children were placed once with a family who was likely to become their permanent family, resulting in less moves and more stability for those children.</li> <li>• Aspire have improved the timeliness of the adoption journey for children, performing better than the national average and our statistical neighbours. Which also means minimal delay for those children whose plans are adoption and to be settled in a 'forever' family.</li> <li>• Aspire have been able to provide support to adopters and Special Guardians via direct support and using the Adoption and Special Guardian Support Fund(ASGSF), meaning less disruptions for adopters and special guardians.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were 965 applications made to the ASGSF fund in 2023/24 which relates to £730,525.60 of funding for therapeutic input for those Adoptive and Special Guardian's within the area.</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <p><b>Cabinet Approve Aspire Adoption Annual Report and Statement of Purpose</b></p>
Reason for recommendations	Cabinet is satisfied that the Aspire Statement of Purpose accurately describes the activities that the agency discharges on behalf of BCP Council and the Annual Report satisfies that these activities were discharged to a high standard in the last year.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton– Lead Member for Children and Young People, Education and Skills, BCP
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director, Children's Services
Report Authors	Allan Charlton, Service Manager for Aspire Adoption Services
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	Public

## Background

1. BCP Council has a duty under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 to establish and maintain an adoption service for its area.
2. BCP Council along with Dorset Council discharges this duty through a delegation of functions to Aspire Adoption, a Regional Adoption Agency. BCP retains overall responsibility for its adoption and special guardianship services, continuing to have parental responsibility for its own Children in Care but most adoption and some special guardianship functions are delegated to Aspire Adoption. BCP Council Host Aspire Adoption Services as the Regional Adoption Agency.

## Options Appraisal

3. This is a retrospective Annual report and therefore there are no options for Cabinet to consider.

## Summary of financial implications

4. Aspire Adoption Agency delivered services for the financial year 2023 to 2024 over the agreed budget. Aspire Executive Board will have access to the full financial report.

### **Summary of legal implications**

5. There are no legal implications directly arising from this report. However, it should be noted that BCP Council did set up a council owned company "Aspire Adoption Limited" which has always been a dormant company and is in the process of being closed with Companies House.

### **Summary of human resources implications**

6. There are no human resources implications directly arising from this report

### **Summary of sustainability impact**

7. There are no known sustainability impacts directly arising from this report.

### **Summary of public health implications**

8. There are no public health implications directly arising from this report.

### **Summary of equality implications**

9. The service promotes permanence for children through Special Guardianship and Adoption and services to support adopters and Special Guardians. It commissions an independent birth parent service.

The statement of purpose outlines the services commitment to dignity, equality and respect for all who come into contact with the service.

### **Summary of risk assessment**

10. HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as: LOW

Current Risk: LOW

Residual Risk:LOW

### **Background papers**

N/A

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - **Aspire Adoption Annual Report 2023 to 2024**

Appendix 2 - **Aspire Adoption Statement of Purpose 2024 to 2025**