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Health Board

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25 January 2012
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Corporate Services

Children and Young People Committee AD02

Inquiry into Adoption

Sent by email to:

cypcommittee@wales.gov.uk

Committee Clerk
Children and Young People Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Dear Sir / Madam

Inquiry into the Adoption Process

Thank you for your letter received on 12 December 2011, in relation the Children and Young People Committee inquiry into the adoption process.

As you will be aware, Cwm Taf Health Board was established on 1 October 2009 and is responsible for the provision of health care services to over 325, 000 people principally covering the Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff Local Authority areas. The Health Board response to the questions posed for professionals is set out below.

What action is needed to ensure that delays in the adoption process can be kept to a minimum?

As a Health Board, our main responsibility is to ensure timely medical assessments for both the child and the prospective parents. This is often a challenge due to competing priorities and workloads of consultant paediatricians.

What action is needed to increase the number of successful outcomes once children are considered for adoption?

As a rule, the Health Board does not have any input when children are placed for adoption other than assisting in the organisation of adoption medicals and transferring any required services. However in terms of what action is needed to increase the number of successful outcomes once children are considered for adoption, feel there should be a targeted service for children considered for and subsequently placed for adoption in terms of health.

A specialist nurse/health visitor would be ideally placed to undertake this role, being involved in the matching process, developing the adoption plan and liaising closely with adoption services.

Looked after children are more likely to have been neglected, abused and developmentally delayed and as such they receive a multi agency approach to meeting their needs in foster care. When a child is placed for adoption, usually out of area, this service is no longer available. Universal services may be able to develop greater awareness of, and be able to place greater emphasis on, supporting children placed for adoption; however there is little evidence of this currently.

The Health Board would anticipate that a service dedicated to children placed for adoption would work with prospective parents on understanding the specific needs of the child, issues of parenting and supporting the transition from foster care to adoptive family. This early intervention would be crucial to the success of the placement as the early days and months of the process can be particularly difficult for both the prospective parents and the child. In addition to this, many adoptions breakdown during the teenage years and this suggests that adoptive parents continue to require targeted support and advice as their child's needs change over the years.

I trust that you find this information useful. Should you require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allison Williams".

Allison Williams
Chief Executive