



Northeast Service Delivery Area

# Adoption Practice Audit

Report Completed: February 2017

Office of the Provincial Director of Child Welfare and Aboriginal Services

Quality Assurance Branch

## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1. PURPOSE .....	3
2. METHODOLOGY .....	4
3. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS.....	6
3.1 Planning with Prospective Adoptive Parents .....	6
3.2 Adoption Planning for the Child and with Birth Parents.....	8
3.3 Consents, Post-Placement Services, and Adoption Completion .....	11
4. OBSERVATIONS AND THEMES.....	14
4.1 Strengths .....	14
4.2 Challenges.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5. ACTIONS TAKEN TO DATE .....	17
6. ACTION PLAN .....	18
<b>APPENDIX 1 – LISTING OF ADOPTION PRACTICE STANDARDS ASSESSED BY AUDIT .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2 – TIME INTERVALS OBSERVED FOR STAGES IN THE ADOPTION PROCESS .....</b>	<b>28</b>

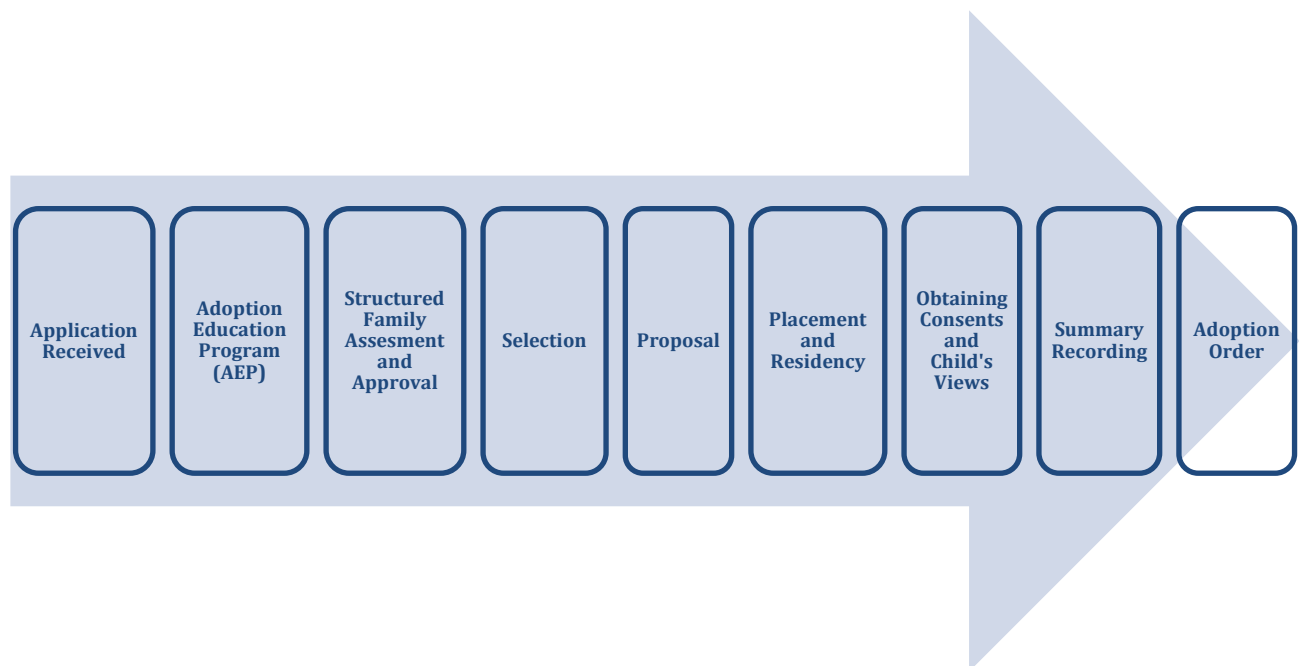
## INTRODUCTION

This section of the report provides information about the purpose and methodology of the Adoption practice audit that was conducted in the Northeast Service Delivery Area (SDA) in August through October 2016.

### 1. PURPOSE

Practice audits are conducted regularly by the Provincial Director of Child Welfare (PDCW) across the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) service lines and for those services provided by Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs) under the Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA). Practice audits are grounded in the Quality Assurance Standards (revised June 28, 2004) and Quality Assurance Audit Policy (effective June 1, 2016). These quality assurance audits examine compliance with legislation, policy, and operational standards, while providing a systematic approach to the evaluation and improvement of services. Practice audits also provide effective quality assurance oversight and public accountability, which in turn informs continuous improvements in practice, policy, and service delivery. Another intended outcome for practice audits is that children, youth, and families will receive quality, culturally safe and restorative services and programs.

The Adoption Home (AH) practice audit is designed to assess achievement of key components of the Practice Standards and Guidelines for Adoption (MCFD, 2001). These standards and guidelines were implemented in April of 2001 and outline both standards for practice and procedural guidelines for the duties and functions of delegated adoption social workers under the *Adoption Act (RSBC 1996)*. See Appendix 1 for a complete listing of the specific Adoption Practice Standards that were assessed by this audit.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

Two groups of Adoption Home (AH) file records were selected from data extracted from the Ministry's Management Information System (MIS) on June 30, 2016:

- **Open AH records** with a file start date after Dec 31, 2010, that were still open on March 31, 2016
- **Closed AH records** with a file start date after Dec 31, 2010 and a file stop date between April 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016

The audit is based on a review of AH file records for adoption homes using a census sampling technique, wherein all file records that met the selection criteria were drawn and included in the audit. The only exception was with the relatively small number of AH records with out of country, inter-provincial, and territorial involvement, and where the prospective adoptive parent(s) reside outside of British Columbia (BC). These records were removed from the sample because the key Standards and Guidelines for Adoption (MCFD, 2001) in the audit apply only to prospective adoptive parent(s) who reside in BC and apply for adoption of a child in care residing in BC or a child who is under the guardianship of another province, territory or country. When the application is from prospective adoptive parents residing outside of BC an adoption worker from that other jurisdiction assumes responsibility for guiding the adoption process. The procedures for the adoption of children in care outside their guardian province are set out in the Provincial/Territorial Protocol on Children and Families Moving Between Provinces (June 21, 2011) and the Provincial/Territorial Protocol on Children, Youth and Families Moving Between Provinces and Territories (April 1, 2016).

The audit sampling method and MIS data extracts were developed and produced with the support of the Modelling, Analysis and Information Management (MAIM) Branch.

The total number of AH files in the census sample for the Northeast SDA was 32. Seven of these AH files had been closed during the past 15 months (i.e., between April 1, 2015 & June 30, 2016), while 25 remained open as of March 31, 2016 when they were selected for auditing. None of these AH records selected for this SDA had to be removed from the audit because the prospective adoptive parent(s) reside outside of BC.

Physical file records as well as electronic records in the Management Information System (MIS), the Integrated Case Management (ICM) system and the Adoption Management System (AMS) were reviewed.

The selected records were assigned to a practice analyst on the provincial audit team for review. The analyst used the AH Practice Audit Tool to rate the records. The AH Practice Audit Tool contains 14 Adoption Critical Measures (ACM) designed to assess compliance with key components of the Adoption Standards using a scale with achieved and not achieved as rating options for measures ACM 1 and 2. A scale with achieved, not achieved, and not applicable as rating options is used for measures ACM 3 through ACM 14. The analyst entered the ratings in a SharePoint data collection form that included ancillary questions and text boxes, which were used to enter additional information about the factors taken into consideration in applying the critical measures.

In reviewing selected Adoption Home records, the analysts considered the entire practice that occurred during the life of the AH file leading up to the time when the audit was conducted in August – October 2016.

Quality assurance policy and procedures require that practice analysts identify for action any record that suggests a child may need protection under section 13 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*. During this audit, the practice analyst watched for situations in which the information in the records suggested that a child may have been left in need of protection. When identified, these records were brought to the attention of the appropriate team leader (TL) and community services manager (CSM), as well as the executive director of service (EDS), for follow up, as appropriate.

### 3. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The findings are presented in tables that contain counts and percentages of ratings of achieved and not achieved for all of the measures in the audit tool (ACM 1 to ACM 14). The tables contain findings for measures that correspond with specific components of the Practice Standards and Guidelines for Adoption. Each table is followed by an analysis of the findings for each of the measures presented in the table.

Thirty-two Adoption Home (AH) records were selected for this audit of the Northeast SDA. However, not every measure in the audit tool was applicable to all of the AH records audited. This is necessary as not all applications by prospective adoptive parents result in the placement of a child for adoption and the granting of an Adoption Order by the Court. Additionally, at least three-quarters of the AH files audited for this SDA remained open at the time of auditing and therefore by definition were still at some preliminary or penultimate stage of the adoption process.

The Tables shown below in this section present both the number of “not applicable” and the number of “applicable” records for each of the critical measures. The numbers and percentages for records rated “achieved” versus “not achieved” in each table are derived from the number of applicable records for that critical measure.

#### 3.1 Planning with Prospective Adoptive Parents

Table 1 provides compliance rates for measures ACM 1 through ACM 5, which relate to planning with prospective adoptive parents. These measures correspond with Adoption Practice Standard 43 - Providing Adoption Information and Accepting the Application to Adopt (ACM 1 & 2), Adoption Practice Standard 44 - The Home Study Process: The Adoption Education and Structured Family Assessment Components (ACM 3 & 4), and Adoption Practice Standard 47 - Keeping the Written Family Assessment Current (ACM 5). See Appendix 1 for details. The rates in the table are presented as percentages of all records for which the measures were applicable.

**Table 1: Planning with Prospective Adoptive Parents (N= 32)**

Measure	# of Not Applicable Records	# of Applicable Records	# Rated Achieved	% Rated Achieved	# Rated Not Achieved	% Rated Not Achieved
ACM 1: Providing Adoption Information	0	32	4	13%	28	87%
ACM 2: Accepting the Application to Adopt	0	32	11	34%	21	66%
ACM 3: Completing the Adoption Education Program (AEP) Component of the Home Study Process	2	30	20	67%	10	33%
ACM 4: Completing the Structured Family Assessment Component of the Home Study Process	10	22	15	68%	7	32%
ACM 5: Keeping the Written Family Assessment Current	28	4	2	50%	2	50%

**ACM 1: Providing Adoption Information**

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **13%**. The measure was applied to all 32 records in the sample; 4 of the 32 records were rated achieved and 28 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the AH record contains documentation confirming the adoption worker responded to the prospective adoptive parent(s) within seven working days and provided the prospective adoptive parent(s) with all of the information listed in Standard 43.

Of the 28 records rated not achieved, 17 did not have documentation that any information was provided to the prospective adoptive parent(s), 2 did not provide information to the prospective adoptive parent(s) that met all of the requirements listed in the standard, while 9 did not provide the required information within 7 working days and the information that was provided did not meet all of the requirements listed in the standard.

**ACM 2: Accepting the Application to Adopt**

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **34%**. The measure was applied to all 32 records in the sample; 11 of the 32 records were rated achieved and 21 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the AH record contains documentation confirming the adoption worker provided the prospective adoptive parent(s), within ten working days of receiving the application, the forms and information required for the structured family assessment component of the home study process, and then interviewed each applicant (in person) to determine eligibility and other relevant factors.

Of the 21 records rated not achieved, 5 did not provide the prospective adoptive parent(s) with the required forms and information for the structured family assessment component within 10 working days of receiving the application, 12 did not subsequently interview each applicant in-person and 4 did not provide the required forms and then interview each applicant in-person.

**ACM 3: Completing the Adoption Education Program (AEP) Component of the Home Study Process**

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **67%**. The measure was applied to 30 of the 32 records in the sample; 20 of these 30 records were rated achieved, while 10 records were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the AH record contains documentation confirming the prospective adoptive parent(s) completed the ministry-approved adoption education program (AEP) prior to the home study being completed and a certificate of completion is in the file, or in the case of a second adoption, the previous AEP was reviewed and any training deficiencies identified for the prospective adoptive parent(s) were upgraded.

Of the 10 records rated not achieved, 2 did not contain a certificate of AEP completion and 8 did not, in the case of a second adoption, review the previous AEP for training deficiencies and the prospective adoptive parent(s) did not receive upgrading.

This critical measure was not applied to 2 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 1 record had the application to adopt withdrawn before the AEP component was completed, while the other record had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before the AEP component was completed.

**ACM 4: Completing the Structured Family Assessment Component of the Home Study Process**

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **68%**. The measure was applied to 22 of the 32 records in the sample; 15 of these 22 records were rated achieved, while 7 were rated not achieved.

To receive a rating of achieved, the AH record contains a written structured family assessment (SFA) covering all of the required components and it was completed within the 4-month timeframe, or supervisory approval for an extension to the timeframe and the reasons for the extension are documented in the file.

Of the 7 records rated not achieved, 1 did not contain a written structured family assessment (SFA), 3 did not have a SFA that covered all of the required components, 2 did not have a SFA completed within the 4-month timeframe and there is no documentation of supervisory approval and reasons for the extension to the timeframe, and 1 did not have a SFA that covered all the required components and was also not completed within the 4-month timeframe.

This critical measure was not applied to 10 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 1 had not started the Structured Family Assessment (SFA) component because the AEP had not yet been completed, 1 had the SFA component still in progress, 1 had the application to adopt withdrawn before the SFA component was completed, and 3 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before the SFA component was completed.

#### **ACM 5: Keeping the Written Family Assessment Current**

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **50%**. This measure was only applicable to AH records where the initial SFA had been completed and approved for more than a year and the prospective adoptive parents were still awaiting the placement of a child. The measure was applied to 4 of the 32 records in the sample; 2 of these 4 records were rated achieved, while 2 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the AH record contains the required annual updates attached to the written structured family assessment (SFA) and includes the required information and supervisory approvals.

Of the 2 records rated not achieved, 1 did not have annual updates to the written structured family assessment (SFA), and 1 had annual updates to the SFA, but they did not include all of the required information and supervisory approvals.

This critical measure was not applied to 28 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 9 records did not have a written SFA that was fully completed and approved, 2 have an adoption application (AH record) that is in abeyance and has been for less than 2 years, 1 had an initial written SFA completed within the last year, 12 had an adoption occur within a year of the written SFA being completed and approved, 1 had the application to adopt withdrawn before the written SFA needed to be updated, and 3 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before the written SFA needed to be updated.

### **3.2 Adoption Planning for the Child and with Birth Parents**

Table 2 provides compliance rates for measures ACM 6 through ACM 10. These measures correspond with Adoption Practice Standard 26 - Selecting Prospective Parent(s) for a Child in Continuing Custody (ACM 6), Adoption Practice Standard 27 - Proposing the Adoption Placement of a Child to Prospective Adoptive Parent(s) (ACM 7), Adoption Practice Standard 50 - The Adoption Proposal and Preparing for Placement (ACM 8 & 9), and Adoption Practice Standard 37 - Transferring Care and Custody with a Birth Parent Pre-Placement Agreement (ACM 10). See



Appendix 1 for details. The rates in the table are presented as percentages of all records for which the measures were applicable.

**Table 2: Adoption Planning for the Child and with Birth Parents (N= 32)**

Measure	# of Not Applicable Records	# of Applicable Records	# Rated Achieved	% Rated Achieved	# Rated Not Achieved	% Rated Not Achieved
ACM 6: Selecting Prospective Parent(s) for a Child in Continuing Custody	18	14	2	14%	12	86%
ACM 7: Proposing the Adoption Placement of a Child to Prospective Adoptive Parent(s)	17	15	8	53%	7	47%
ACM 8: The Adoption Proposal and Preparing for Placement	18	14	13	93%	1	7%
ACM 9: The Timing of the Adoption Placement	18	14	14	100%	0	0%
ACM 10: Transferring Care and Custody with a Birth Parent Pre-Placement Agreement (Voluntary Relinquishments only)	31	1	0	0%	1	100%

**ACM 6: Selecting Prospective Parent(s) for a Child in Continuing Custody**

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **14%**. The measure was applied to 14 of the 32 records in the sample; 2 of these 14 records were rated achieved, while 12 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the AH record contains documentation confirming the child’s social worker reviewed the written structured family assessments (SFAs) and conducted a selection process involving at least the social worker’s supervisor and one other person involved in the child’s life (including but not limited to the foster parent, the guardianship worker, the adoption worker and a Supervisor/Team Leader).

Of the 12 records rated not achieved, 1 did not have documentation that confirms the child’s worker reviewed the SFAs, 2 did not have a selection process that followed the required processes and involved at least two other persons in the child’s life, and 9 did not confirm the child’s worker reviewed the SFA and involved at least two others in the selection process.

This critical measure was not applied to 18 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 13 had not yet selected a child for the prospective adoptive parent(s), 1 selected a child that was under a voluntary relinquishment, 1 had the application to adopt withdrawn before a child was selected, and 3 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before a child was selected.

**ACM 7: Proposing the Adoption Placement of a Child to Prospective Adoptive Parent(s)**

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **53%**. The measure was applied to 15 of the 32 records in the sample; 8 of these 15 records were rated achieved, while 7 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the AH record contains documentation confirming the child’s social worker has completed all of the requirements outlined in the standard prior to the child being proposed to the prospective adoptive parent(s).

Of the 7 records rated not achieved, 6 did not have all the requirements outlined in the standard completed prior the child being proposed, and 1 had all the requirements completed, but only after the child was proposed to the prospective adoptive parent(s).

This critical measure was not applied to 17 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 13 had not yet proposed a child to the prospective adoptive parent(s), 1 had the application to adopt withdrawn before a child was proposed, and 3 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before a child was proposed.

#### **ACM 8: The Adoption Proposal and Preparing for Placement**

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **93%**. The measure was applied to 14 of the 32 records in the sample; 13 of these 14 records were rated achieved, while 1 was rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the AH record contains documentation confirming the required information was shared with the prospective adoptive parent(s), and a letter of acknowledgement was signed by the prospective adoptive parent(s).

In the 1 record rated not achieved, the required information was not shared with the prospective adoptive parent(s) and the file record did not contain a letter of acknowledgement signed by the prospective adoptive parent(s).

This critical measure was not applied to 18 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 13 had not yet proposed the placement of a child to the prospective adoptive parent(s), 1 had proposed a child, but the prospective adoptive parent(s) have never signed a letter of acknowledgement, 1 had the application to adopt withdrawn before a child was proposed, and 3 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before a child was proposed.

#### **ACM 9: The Timing of the Adoption Placement**

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **100%**. The measure was applied to 14 of the 32 records in the sample; and all 14 of these records were rated achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the AH record contains documentation confirming the adoption placement of a child with the prospective adoptive parent(s) occurred within six months of signing the letter of acknowledgement, or if the adoption placement occurred more than six months after signing the acknowledgement letter, the reasons for the extension and supervisory approval of the extension are documented in the record.

This critical measure was not applied to 18 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 13 had not yet proposed the placement of a child to the prospective adoptive parent(s), 1 had proposed a child, but the prospective adoptive parent(s) have never signed a letter of acknowledgement, 1 had the application to adopt withdrawn before the placement of a child, 3 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before the placement of a child.

#### **ACM 10: Transferring Care and Custody with a Birth Parent Pre-Placement Agreement**

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **0%**. This critical measure is specific to situations where the birth parent(s) is voluntarily relinquishing the child for adoption under the Adoption Act. The measure was applied to just 1 of the 32 records in the sample; and this 1 record was rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the AH record contains documentation confirming the

child’s best interests were reviewed, a birth parent pre-placement agreement was completed and signed, and the supervisor approved the agreement.

In the 1 record rated not achieved, a birth parent pre-placement agreement was not completed and signed, nor did it have the supervisor’s approval.

This critical measure was not applied to 31 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 13 had not yet proposed the placement of a child to the prospective adoptive parent(s), 14 had proposed a child who is under a continuing custody order (CCO), 1 had the application to adopt withdrawn before the placement of a child, and 3 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before the placement of a child.

### 3.3 Consents, Post-Placement Services, and Adoption Completion

Table 3 provides compliance rates for measures ACM 11 through ACM 14. These measures correspond with Adoption Practice Standard 39 - Required Consents (ACM 11), Adoption Practice Standard 57 - Post-Placement Responsibilities of the Adoption Worker to the Child and the Adoptive Parent(s) (ACM 12), Adoption Practice Standard 60 - Preparing the Report on a Younger Child’s Views (ACM 13), and Adoption Standard 61 - Preparing the Summary Recording (ACM 14). See Appendix 1 for details. The rates are presented in the table as percentages of all records for which the measures were applicable.

**Table 3: Consents, Post-Placement Services and Adoption Completion (N= 32)**

Measure	# of Not Applicable Records	# of Applicable Records	# Rated Achieved	% Rated Achieved	# Rated Not Achieved	% Rated Not Achieved
ACM 11: Obtaining Required Consents	18	14	14	100%	0	0%
ACM 12: Post-Placement Responsibilities of the Adoption Worker	22	10	4	40%	6	60%
ACM 13: Preparing the Report on a Younger Child’s Views	30	2	2	100%	0	0%
ACM 14: Preparing the Summary Recording	24	8	7	87%	1	13%

#### ACM 11: Obtaining Required Consents

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **100%**. The measure was applied to 14 of the 32 records in the sample; and all 14 of these records were rated achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the AH record contains documentation confirming that all required consents for a child under a CCO or a Voluntary Relinquishment have been obtained prior to placement, or there is documentation the adoption worker has properly dispensed with obtaining consents.

This critical measure was not applied to 18 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 14 had not yet proposed a child and had the child accepted by the prospective adoptive parent(s), 1 had the application to adopt withdrawn prior to the placement of a child and, 3 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before the placement of a child.

**ACM 12: Post-Placement Responsibilities of the Adoption Worker**

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **40%**. The measure was applied to 10 of the 32 records in the sample; 4 of these 10 records were rated achieved, while 6 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the AH record contains documentation confirming the adoption worker contacted the adoptive family within one working day after the adoption placement, visited the adoptive family home within seven days after the adoption placement, and conducted at least two subsequent home visits during the placement period, and all of these visits met the requirements set out in the standard (i.e., assisting the adoptive family in meeting the child's specific needs as described in the plan of care, and consulting with the child about his or her views of the adoption placement).

Of the 6 records rated not achieved, 3 did not have documentation confirming the adoption worker visited the child within the required timeframes after placement, 2 had one or more of the visits with the child that did not meet the requirements set out in the standard, and 1 did not have documentation confirming all the visits occurred and one or more of the visits did not meet the policy requirements set out in the standard.

This critical measure was not applied to 22 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 13 had not yet proposed the placement of a child to the prospective adoptive parent(s), 1 had not yet placed a child with the prospective adoptive parent(s), 4 had a child in a 6-month placement period that has not concluded, 1 had the application to adopt withdrawn prior to the placement of a child, and 3 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before the placement of a child.

**ACM 13: Preparing the Report on a Younger Child's Views**

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **100%**. The measure was applied to 2 of the 32 records in the sample; and both of these records were rated achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the AH record contains documentation confirming the adoption worker met with the child in private and gathered the required information, completed a full report, and the report was approved by the supervisor.

This critical measure was not applied to 30 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 13 had not yet proposed the placement of a child to the prospective adoptive parent(s), 1 had not yet placed a child with the prospective adoptive parent(s), 4 had a child in the 6-month placement (or residency) period, 7 involved a child who is less than 7 or over the age of 12, 1 had the application to adopt withdrawn prior to the placement of a child, 3 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before the placement of a child, and 1 had child less than 7 or over 12 and the child's placement period had also not concluded.

**ACM 14: Preparing the Summary Recording**

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **88%**. The measure was applied to 8 of the 32 records in the sample; 7 of these records were rated achieved, while 1 was rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the AH record contains documentation that after the 6-month placement (or residency) period expired, a current prior contact check (PCC) was conducted and a Summary Recording was completed and placed in the AH file record.

The 1 record rated not achieved on this critical measure did not have a Summary Recording completed and placed in the AH file record after the placement (or residency) period expired.

This critical measure was not applied to 24 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 13 had not yet proposed the placement of a child to the prospective adoptive parent(s), 1 had not yet placed a child with the prospective adoptive parent(s), 6 had a child in the 6-month placement (or residency) period that had not yet expired, 1 had the application to adopt withdrawn prior to the placement of a child and, 3 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before the placement of a child.

**Records Identified for Action**

Quality assurance policy and procedures require practice analysts to identify for action any record that suggests a child may need protection under section 13 of the Child, Family and Community Service Act. No records were identified for action during the course of this audit.

## 4. OBSERVATIONS AND THEMES

This audit reviewed 32 AH files that had been opened by the Northeast SDA during the 5-year period between January 1, 2011 and March 31, 2016. Twenty-five of these files remained open as of June 30, 2016, while 7 had been closed sometime between April 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016. Among the closed AH files, 3 concluded with a completed adoption and the granting of an Adoption Order. The remaining four closed files either had the application withdrawn by the prospective adoptive parents (1) or the application process was terminated by the MCFD Adoption worker (3).

Among all 32 AH files reviewed for this audit, 16 involved a general application by prospective adoptive parents (54%), 1 involved a birth parent(s) voluntarily relinquishing their child and consenting to an adoption placement (3%), while 8 were foster to adopt applications (25%) and 7 were child specific applications involving family members (21%).

This section summarizes the observations and themes arising from the record reviews and audit findings and analysis. The observations and themes relate to identified strengths and areas needing improvement. Some relate to specific critical measures and corresponding standards and policy requirements, while others are informed by themes that emerged across several measures. The purpose of this section is to inform the development of an action plan to improve practice.

The SDA overall compliance rate for all 14 critical measures was **55%**.

### 4.1 Strengths

There was a moderate (67%) compliance rate for the critical measure associated with completing the adoption education program (AEP) component of the home study process (ACM 3). A majority (20 out of 30) of the applicable records had certificates of AEP completion or an official notice on the file record that the AEP program had been completed.

The critical measure associated with the completion of the structured family assessment (ACM 4) also had a moderate (68%) compliance rate. A majority (15 out of 22) of the applicable records had a completed structured family assessment that was based on the SAFE model. However, there were 7 applicable records where a structured family assessment was not completed properly. With most of these records (6), a structured family assessment was on the file record, but it was not completed within the required timeframe or had not been sufficiently reviewed/updated from a previous adoption home study or a prior caregiver home study.

The critical measure associated with the adoption proposal and preparing for placement (ACM 8) had a very high (93%) compliance rate. The majority (13 out of 14) of the applicable records contained documentation confirming the required information was shared with the prospective adoptive parent(s) and an acknowledgement letter was signed subsequently by the prospective adoptive parents. Similarly, there was an extremely high (100%) compliance rate for the critical measure associated with the timing of the adoption placement (ACM 9). All of the applicable records (14 out of 14) contained documentation confirming the adoption placement occurred within the six months after the signing of the acknowledgement letter.

The critical measure associated with obtaining required consents (ACM 11) also had an extremely high (100%) compliance rate. All of the applicable records (14 out of 14) contained documentation

confirming the required consents for a child under a CCO or a Voluntary Relinquishment were obtained prior to the placement. Similarly, there was an extremely high (100%) compliance rate for the critical measure associated with preparing the report on a younger child's views (ACM 13). All of the applicable records (2 out of 2) contained documentation confirming the adoption worker met with the child in private, gathered the required information, and completed a full report that was approved by a supervisor.

Finally, the critical measure associated with preparing the summary recording at the end of the placement (or residency) period (ACM 14) had a high (88%) compliance rate. Most of the applicable records (7 out of 8) had a current prior contact check and a summary recording completed and placed on the AH file record immediately after the 6-month placement period expired.

## 4.2 Challenges

The critical measure associated with the provision of adoption information (ACM 1) had an extremely low compliance rate (13%). Most (28 out of 32) of the records audited did not contain sufficient documentation confirming the adoption worker responded to the prospective adoptive parents within 7 working days and provided the prospective adoptive parent(s) with all the information listed in the standard. In these records there was either no documentation of any information being provided to the prospective adoptive parents (17 out of 28), or the information provided to the prospective adoptive parent(s) did not meet all of the requirements listed in the standard (2 out of 28), or the information was not provided within 7 working days and the information that was provided did not meet all of the requirements listed in the standard (9 out of 28). Subsequent measures do indicate that prospective adoptive parent(s) did have some contact with an adoption worker. The file records indicate a general lack of documentation immediately following initial contact with potential adoptive parent(s) either through email correspondence or in the case notes entered by Adoption workers. This theme concerning documentation is noted in several other critical measures discussed below.

The critical measure associated with accepting and responding to the application to adopt (ACM 2) had a low compliance rate (34%). Two-thirds of the records (21 out of 32) did not have documentation confirming the adoption worker provided the prospective adoptive parent(s) with the forms and information required for the structured family assessment (SFA) component of the home study within 10 working days of receiving the application,, and then subsequently interviewed each applicant in-person to determine eligibility and other relevant factors. Of the 21 records rated not achieved, 5 did not provide the forms within 10 working days, 12 records did not have documentation of in-person interviews being conducted with each applicant, and the remaining 4 records had the SFA forms not being provided within 10 working days and no documentation of in-person interviews being conducted. Among the 9 records where SFA forms had not been provided within 10 working days, the analyst was unable to find documentation with 5 records of the date when the application was received by MCFD. With the 4 other records where such a date was determined by the analyst, the number of days beyond the 10-day requirement was 21, 85, 319 and 594 respectively. A lack of file documentation concerning the initial and early contact with prospective adoptive parents was evident in these records.

The critical measure associated with keeping the written family assessment current (ACM 5) had a moderately low compliance rate (50%). This measure was only applicable to AH records where the initial SFA had been completed and approved for more than a year and the prospective adoptive parents were still awaiting the placement of a child. Half of the applicable records (2 out of 4) did not contain the required annual updates attached to the written structured family assessment (SFA), as well as all the required information and supervisory approvals. One of these records was missing some information and did not have a supervisory approval, while the other record had not been updated annually.

The critical measure associated with selecting prospective parents for a child in continuing custody (ACM 6) had an extremely low compliance rate (14%). The majority of the applicable records (12 out of 14) did not contain documentation confirming the child's social worker reviewed the written structured family assessments (SFAs) and then conducted a selection process involving at least the social worker's supervisor and one other person involved in the child's life (i.e., including but not limited to the foster parent, the guardianship worker, the adoption worker and a Supervisor). Among the 12 records that that were rated not achieved on this measure, 1 record had no indication that the child's worker reviewed the SFA, 2 records did not follow a selection process that involved at least two others, and 9 records had neither reviewed the SFA or followed a selection process that involved at least two others.

The critical measure associated with proposing the adoption placement of a child to prospective adoptive parent(s) (ACM 7) had a moderately low compliance rate (53%). Approximately half (7 out of 15) of the applicable records had no documentation on the AH file record confirming the child's social worker completed all of the requirements outlined in the standard prior to the child being proposed to the prospective adoptive parent(s), or all of the requirements were completed, but only after the child was proposed to the prospective adoptive parent(s). Among the records rated not achieved on this measure, 6 did not have the child's worker completing all the requirements prior to proposal, and 1 completed all of the requirements but this occurred after the proposal was made.

The critical measure associated with transferring the care and custody of a child with a Birth Parent Pre-Placement Agreement (ACM 10) had an extremely low compliance rate (0%). This critical measure is specific to situations where the birth parent(s) is voluntarily relinquishing the child for adoption under the Adoption Act. The measure was applied to just 1 of the 32 records in the sample. This one record was rated not achieved because the file record did not contain documentation confirming a birth parent pre-placement agreement was completed and signed, or received the approval of the supervisor.

Finally, the critical measure associated with the post-placement responsibilities of the adoption worker (ACM 12) had a low compliance rate (40%). Among the applicable records rated not achieved (6 out of 10), the AH file records did not contain documentation confirming the adoption worker contacted the adoptive family within one working day after the adoption placement, visited the adoptive family home and child within seven days after the adoption placement, conducted at least 2 subsequent home visits during the placement period, and that all visits met the requirements set out in the standard. More specifically, 2 records had one or more visits with the child that did not meet requirements set out in the standard, 3 records did not have the adoption worker visiting the child within the time frames during placement, and 1 record had neither visits that met



requirements or that occurred within the time frames. The analyst noted that a lack of consistent file documentation by the Adoption workers likely influenced the low compliance rate for this measure.

## 5. ACTIONS TAKEN TO DATE

In October of 2016 the Centralized Services Hub in Victoria commenced with screening and assessing all prospective caregivers on behalf of the SDAs, including those applying to become adoptive parents. By March of 2017 this screening work will be extended to all 13 SDAs across the province. This Hub is intended to provide ease of access for the public across a broad continuum of in-care and out-of-care services and will lessen the workload of front line staff by moving some administrative functions from district offices.

On October 31, 2016 MCFD launched a new online Adoption tool province-wide that will streamline the adoption process for waiting families and help ensure children in care find a permanent home and family sooner. This new online tool 'Adopt BC Kids' provides a personalized user-friendly portal for prospective adoptive families to view information about adoption, view their application process, track what documents have been received and processed by MCFD, and better understand the next steps. Once approved, prospective adoptive parents can also browse the photos and videos of children waiting to be adopted. Anyone interested in becoming an adoptive can begin their journey through the online portal at [www.gov.bc.ca/adoptkids](http://www.gov.bc.ca/adoptkids).

The introduction of the Adopt BC Kids web portal and the enhanced role of the Centralized Services Hub in screening general adoption applications is expected to have a positive impact on the ability of SDAs to consistently meet the requirements set out in Adoption Practice Standards 43 and 44 (i.e., *Providing Adoption Information and Accepting the Application to Adopt* (ACM 1 & 2), and *The Home Study Process: The Adoption Education and Structured Family Assessment Components* (ACM 3 & 4).

## 6. ACTION PLAN

Action Plan Items	Person responsible	Date to be completed	Anticipated Outcome
<p>1) The adoption consultant for the SDA will review the findings of this practice audit, as well as the applicable Adoption Practice Standards, with the adoption team leader and both adoption workers (1.5 FTEs) to clarify and reaffirm policies and general expectations for practice with prospective adoptive parents. Confirmation of completion will be sent, via email, to the Manager of Quality Assurance (audit). <i>(Addresses ACMs 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12)</i></p>	Cindy Gabriel, EDS	May 31, 2017	Adoption workers have a clear understanding of the audit findings and identified areas for improvements to practice with prospective adoptive parents.
<p>2) The adoption team in the SDA will confirm they have a standardized Adoption Information Package, in accordance with the requirements set out in Adoption Practice Standard (APS) 43, which will be given or sent routinely to persons expressing an interest in adopting a child.. Confirmation will be sent, via email, to the Manager of Quality Assurance (audit). <i>(Addresses ACM 1)</i></p>	Cindy Gabriel, EDS	June 30, 2017	The SDA has an efficient process for distributing information about adoption, and prospective applicants are well informed about the process of adopting a child.
<p>3) The adoption consultant for the SDA will meet with the adoption team leader and both adoption workers to review documentation requirements and the use of the Adoption Management System (AMS) in: providing adoption information, accepting the application to adopt and interviewing applicants, per APS 43; keeping written family assessments current, per APS 47; selecting prospective adoptive parents for a child, per APS 26; proposing the adoption placement of a child to prospective adoptive parents, per APS 27; and post-placement responsibilities of the Adoption Worker to the child and adoptive parents, per APS 57. Confirmation of completion will be sent, via email, to the Manager of Quality Assurance (audit). <i>(Addresses ACMs 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 12)</i></p>	Cindy Gabriel, EDS	July 31, 2017	Adoption workers have a clear understanding of the documentation requirements under key Adoption Practice Standards, as well the effective use of AMS. Ongoing interactions and communications with prospective adoptive parents are better reflected in case file documentation.

## Appendix 1 – Listing of Adoption Practice Standards Assessed by Audit

### Adoption Practice Standard 43: Providing Adoption Information and Accepting the Application to Adopt

**When prospective adoptive parent(s) contact the ministry expressing an interest in adoption, you must respond within 7 working days and:**

- clarify your responsibilities under the *Adoption Act* and the *CFCSA*, including giving paramount consideration to the child's best interests in all circumstances
- provide them with information about adoption, including:
  - eligibility requirements
  - pre- and post-placement services provided by the ministry
  - services available through licensed adoption agencies, and adoption support groups
  - the regulation of payment of birth parent expenses
  - the children awaiting placement
  - post-adoption assistance
  - the adoption process, including time frames and requirements
  - the home study process, explaining that it consists of an education component and an objective, structured family assessment with no guarantee of approval or of an adoption placement
  - openness and access in adoption
  - the importance of preserving the Aboriginal child's cultural identity, and
  - the fee schedule for applicable services

You must personally interview each applicant to determine:

- whether the applicant is eligible to adopt a child in British Columbia
- in the case where they are applying for a child with special service needs, whether the applicant(s) have a reasonable understanding of the long-term impact of these needs and are prepared to accept the significant behavioural and emotional issues associated with these needs, and
- whether the applicant is Aboriginal

**When prospective adoptive parent(s) submit an application to the ministry for children awaiting placement, you must:**

- register the application with Adoption Branch [in the Adoption Management System]
- begin the home study process for:
  - those applying for a specific child in continuing custody awaiting placement
  - those applying for a child in care with special service needs where you have determined that they understand the long-term impact of those needs and are prepared to accept the issues associated with them

- within 10 working days, provide them with the applicable forms and information required for the structured family assessment component of the home study process, and
- advise Adoption Branch of the decision to begin the home study process

If the application is for a child with no special service needs or a child with only special placement needs, wait for Adoption Branch to request that you begin the home study process.

You must make contact annually with applicants waiting for the home study process to begin.

### **Adoption Practice Standard 44: The Home Study Process: The Adoption Education and Structured Family Assessment Components**

**In order to approve applicants for adoption, you must complete the education component and structured family assessment component of the home study process.**

For the educational component of the home study, you must ensure that the prospective adoptive parent(s) complete a ministry-approved education program.

For the structured family assessment, you must conduct the assessment according to ministry-prescribed guidelines.

When conducting the structured family assessment, you must:

- gather the following documents:
  - results of prior contact checks
  - the results of all criminal record searches
  - physician’s reports
  - a minimum of four references
- conduct a fair and impartial assessment process that includes:
  - individual and joint interviews if there are two applicants
  - interviews of any young children living in the home as part of the interview with their parent(s)
  - interviews separate from those with the parent(s) of any child 7 years of age or older to determine the child’s views about the proposed adoption
  - separate, in-person interviews with other members of the household
  - at least one interview with all members of the household together so that you can assess how they relate to each other
  - at least one interview held in the prospective adoptive parent(s) home
- allow for sufficient time to determine the readiness of the prospective adoptive parent(s) to adopt a child with the special service and/or placement needs for which they have applied, and
- complete the requirements for approval as described in Practice Standard 46

Once the education component and structured family assessment have been completed, you must complete a written family assessment that:

- describes the preparation of the prospective adoptive parent(s) as required in the Adoption Regulation
- summarizes the structured family assessment, and
- includes a recommendation as to the prospective adoptive parent(s)' ability to parent by adoption a child with the special service and/or placement needs for which they have applied, and identifies the number and ages of children they are approved to adopt

You must complete the written family assessment at least 3 months and no longer than 4 months after all required documentation, as described above, has been gathered. If the written family assessment cannot be completed within 4 months, you must:

- document the reasons for the delay, and
- obtain the approval of your supervisor/team leader.

#### **Adoption Practice Standard 47: Keeping the Written Family Assessment Current**

After prospective adoptive parent(s) have been approved for adoption and until an adoption placement occurs, you must request updated information from them:

- annually
- when there has been a change in their circumstances, and
- when they change their request for the age or special needs of a child or in the number of children

The updated information must be attached to or incorporated into the original written family assessment.

In addition, you must:

- reassess prospective adoptive parent(s) and revise their written family assessment recommendation when there is a change in their circumstances or a change in their request for the age or special needs of a child or in the number of children
- conduct a prior contact check and request new criminal record searches from prospective adoptive parent(s) every two years as part of the yearly update
- attach any yearly updates to the written family assessment
- where there are significant changes in the family's circumstances or when two years has passed since the family's approval, integrate the update into the written family assessment, and
- obtain your supervisor's signature on any updates that require a reassessment or new recommendation or that are integrated into the written family assessment

In order to keep all information on prospective adoptive parent(s) current, you must begin a new home study process:

- when a new child becomes part of the prospective adoptive family either through birth or through adoption, and/or
- when a written family assessment has been in abeyance and/or closed for a total of 2 years

### **Adoption Practice Standard 26: Selecting Prospective Parent(s) for a Child in Continuing Custody**

When selecting prospective adoptive parent(s) for a child in continuing custody, you must:

- determine whose views you will consider when deciding which prospective adoptive parent(s) will meet the child's special service and placement needs, and at a minimum include your supervisor/team leader and one other person
- obtain and review the written family assessments to determine the characteristics and abilities of the prospective adoptive parent(s) you are considering
- weigh all relevant factors as outlined in section 3 of the *Adoption Act* and Practice Standard 1 to determine if adoption placement with the prospective adoptive parent(s) being considered would be in the child's best interests
- obtain and consider the views of those you are involving in the selection process, and
- when there is more than one plan which may meet the child's needs and there is disagreement about which plan can best meet the child's needs, involve your regional manager responsible for adoption

### **Adoption Practice Standard 27: Proposing the Adoption Placement of a Child to Prospective Adoptive Parent(s)**

Prior to proposing the adoption placement of a child in continuing custody with prospective adoptive parent(s), you must:

- ensure that the child is thoroughly prepared and ready for an adoption placement
- participate in the review of the child's comprehensive plan of care and complete the "Specific Needs" and "Desired Outcome" categories in the child's comprehensive plan of care, including both present and future needs
- determine whether the prospective adoptive parent(s) agree to the level of openness you have determined is in the child's best interests
- obtain the approval of your supervisor/team leader to propose the child to the prospective adoptive parent(s)

When proposing the child to the adoption worker for the prospective adoptive parent(s), you must share the following, after removing identifying information:

- the comprehensive plan of care completed for the proposal, as described above
- the child's previous comprehensive plan of care
- the child's written placement history and life experiences (refer to Practice Standard 22), and
- all relevant information about the child and the birth family

When the prospective adoptive parent(s) have agreed to accept the adoption of the proposed child, you must:

- obtain from the adoption worker for the prospective adoptive parent(s) the completed and signed comprehensive plan of care and letter acknowledging information they have received
- determine with the adoption worker for the prospective adoptive parent(s), your supervisor/team leader and their supervisor/team leader whether the prospective adoptive parent(s) understand and have the capacity to meet the special service and placement needs of the child, and
- obtain your supervisor's/team leader's approval of the completed comprehensive plan of care before beginning pre-placement visits.

### **Adoption Practice Standard 50: The Adoption Proposal and Preparing for Placement**

When an adoption placement of a child is proposed, you must:

- ensure that all information on the child provided by the child's worker is shared with the prospective adoptive parent(s) and their physician
- ensure that prospective adoptive parent(s) have the opportunity to consult with medical professionals and/or others about the child's care
- assess the prospective adoptive parent(s)' ability and readiness to meet the specific needs of the child
- complete a statement, for the prospective adoptive parent(s) to sign, that acknowledges the documentation and information that has been provided about the birth parent(s) and the child
- unless the child proposed has been voluntarily placed under the Adoption Act and has no special service needs as defined in section 26(c) of the Adoption Regulation :
  - as participants in the review of the child's comprehensive plan of care, determine with the prospective adoptive parent(s) their plan to meet the child's needs
  - complete the "Description of services to be provided based upon the child's needs and "Target date" categories of the child's non-identifying comprehensive plan of care
  - obtain your supervisor's/team leader's approval and signature on the comprehensive plan of care.

After the prospective adoptive parent(s) have confirmed their interest in parenting the child you must:

- forward to the child’s worker:
  - a copy of the prospective adoptive parent(s)’ letter of acknowledgement
  - the completed comprehensive plan of care, if required
- if the child has special service needs, determine with the child's worker and both your supervisors/team leaders whether the prospective adoptive parent(s) can meet the special needs of the child
- if the child does not have special service needs, obtain the approval of your supervisor/team leader for the placement to proceed
- negotiate the terms of openness agreements and where possible complete openness agreements involving children in care, and
- arrange pre-placement visits and placement with the child’s/birth parent’s worker according to the written plan
- conduct a new prior contact check (including a check for protocol investigations) if the one completed at time of proposal is more than 30 days old

When it has been determined that the prospective adoptive parent(s) can meet the needs of the child, the placement of the child must occur within 6 months. If the child cannot be placed within 6 months, you must document the reasons and obtain the approval of your supervisor/team leader.

### **Adoption Practice Standard 37: Transferring Care and Custody with a Birth Parent Pre-Placement Agreement**

You must ensure the birth parent(s) transfer care and custody to the Director of Adoption with a Birth Parent Pre-placement Agreement if they have made one of the following interim adoption placement plans:

- to place the child with prospective adoptive parent(s) prior to the signing of adoption consents, or
- to place the child temporarily with caregivers prior to the signing of adoption consents.

Prior to entering into a Birth Parent Pre-placement Agreement to place the child temporarily with caregivers, you must:

- determine that placing the child with caregivers is in the child’s best interests
- advise the birth parent(s) of their right to obtain independent legal advice
- determine the length of the Birth Parent Pre-placement Agreement, and
- ensure your supervisor/team leader reviews and agrees to the proposed agreement.

After placement of the child with caregivers, you must:

- involve the birth parent(s) in decisions affecting the child and inform them in a timely manner about significant developments in the child’s life, and



- unless birth parent(s) have indicated in writing that they do not wish to be notified, make reasonable efforts to promptly notify them in the following circumstances:
  - if it is determined that the placement will not proceed in a home chosen by the birth parent(s) or guardian
  - if it is determined that the placement will not proceed because an adoption home for the child is not available
  - if the child dies, or
  - if the child develops a serious condition or has an injury that may result in the child's death or may cause serious or permanent impairment of the child's health.

If the child remains in care under a Birth Parent Pre-Placement Agreement or by adoption consents longer than 30 days prior to an adoption placement, a comprehensive plan of care is required.

### **Adoption Practice Standard 39: Required Consents**

Before placing for adoption a child:

- who is in the continuing custody of a director under the *CFCSA*, or
- who is under the guardianship of a director pursuant to section 29 of the *Family Relations Act* (now under Section 51 of the *Family Law Act*)

you must obtain the consent of the child, if he or she is 12 years of age or over and has the capacity to consent. (If it is determined that the child does not have the capacity to consent, refer to Practice Standard 41)

Before placing for adoption a child whose birth parent(s) are voluntarily planning adoption under the *Adoption Act* you must:

- obtain the consent of the child, if he or she is 12 years of age or over, and
- make reasonable efforts to obtain the consent of each of the following:
  - the birth mother
  - the father, as defined in section 13(2) of the *Adoption Act* and
  - any person appointed as the child's guardian

Before completing all adoptions you must obtain all required consents for the court, including the consent of the Director of Adoption, unless:

- an individual is not capable of consenting
- an order has been granted dispensing with a consent, or
- you are applying to dispense with consent

In a direct placement or in an adoption under section 48 of the *Adoption Act* you must advise prospective adoptive parent(s) that it is their and their lawyer's responsibility to determine who must consent and obtain the required consents.

### **Adoption Practice Standard 57: Post-Placement Responsibilities of the Adoption Worker to the Child and the Adoptive Parent(s)**

In exercising your guardianship role with the child, you must ensure that the rights of the child in care are affirmed and respected and that all applicable guardianship duties and responsibilities as specified in Practice Standards for Guardianship are carried out, including but not limited to:

- maintaining regular contact with the child and prospective adoptive family by:
  - contacting the prospective adoptive parent(s) by telephone or visit within one working day after placement
  - visiting the child and prospective adoptive family in their home within 7 calendar days after placement
  - contacting prospective adoptive parent(s) of a child with special service needs at least once each month, either by telephone or in person, and visiting the child and prospective adoptive family in their home at least 2 additional times within the 6 month post- placement period
  - visiting an infant with no special needs and the prospective adoptive family in their home at least 2 additional times within the 6 month post-placement period
  - if the post-placement period extends beyond 6 months, visiting the child and prospective adoptive family in their home at least every 90 days
- assisting the prospective adoptive family in meeting the child's specific needs as described on the comprehensive plan of care prepared at the time of proposal
- consulting with the child about his or her views of the adoption placement and, if the child is at least 7 years of age and less than 12, ensuring that a written report on the child's views is prepared for the adoption completion, and
- reviewing the child's comprehensive plan of care

### **Adoption Practice Standard 60: Preparing the Report on a Younger Child's Views**

After a child who is at least 7 and less than 12 years of age has been placed for adoption and before applying to the court for an adoption order, you must privately interview the child, so that the child's views on the adoption can be heard and recorded.

When conducting the interview and writing the Report on a Younger Child's Views, you must:

- determine the child's views and understanding of the following:
  - the effect and meaning of adoption
  - the proposed adoption and any proposed change of the child's name

- relationships with other persons who are significant in the child's life
- where applicable, how his or her racial, cultural, linguistic and spiritual identity can be maintained
- provide the above information within the report and in addition include:
  - your name and occupation
  - confirmation that you met with the child at a place and in a manner that allowed the child to freely express his or her views about the adoption
  - identifying information about the child and the prospective adoptive parent(s), and particulars respecting the interview, and
- obtain your supervisor's/team leader's approval and signature on the report.

You must submit the report to the court when applying for an adoption order.

### **Adoption Practice Standard 61: Preparing the Summary Recording**

Before completing the Summary Recording, you must complete a current prior contact check on the prospective adoptive parent(s).

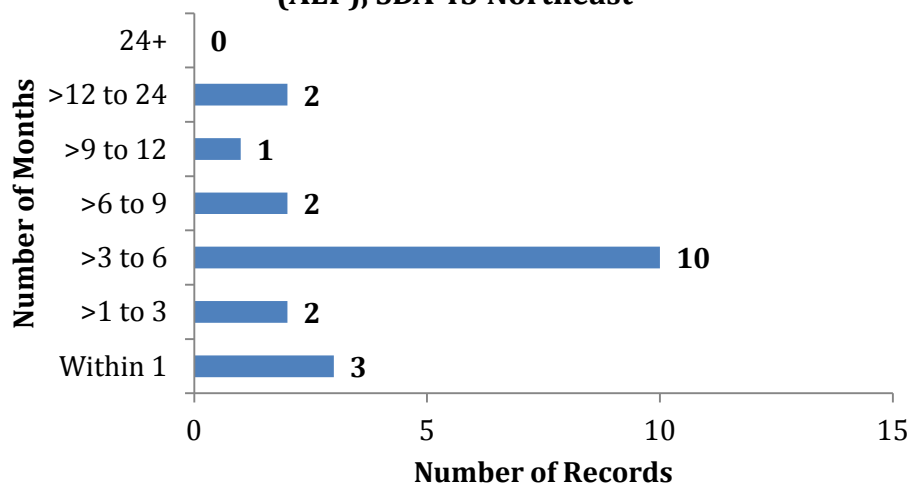
To assist the Director of Adoption in making a recommendation to the court as to whether an adoption order should be made, you must prepare a Summary Recording containing:

- the observations, assessments and facts upon which the Post-placement Report is established, and
- information as to whether the requirements of the *Adoption Act* have been met.

## Appendix 2 – Time Intervals Observed for Stages in the Adoption Process

In reviewing the 32 AH files (both open and closed) for this audit, the practice analysts on the provincial audit team made a number of observations about the time intervals for some of the stages in the adoption process. These observations are unrelated to the compliance ratings for the fourteen separate Critical Measures presented in the body of this report. However, the four bar charts displayed below do provide some insight into the time it takes for Adoption workers in the Northeast SDA to guide prospective adoptive parents through the adoption process.

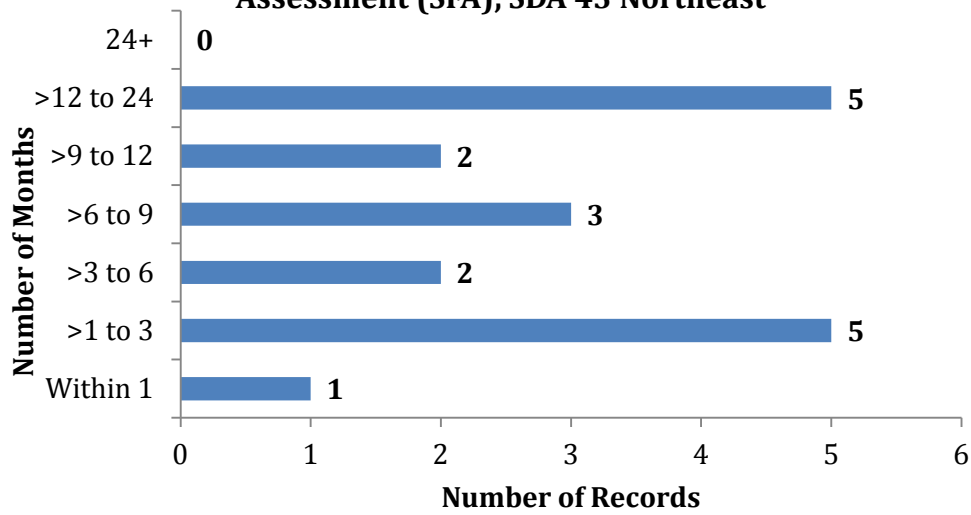
**Figure 1: Time from Opening of AH Record to the Completion of the Adoption Education Program (AEP), SDA 43 Northeast**



Note:

1. Figures are based on adoption MIS/AMS open/closed records with start date after Dec 31, 2010 (N=32) with close dates between April 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016 or still open on March 31, 2016.
2. N=20 of 32 records are included in this time calculation. Includes all of the records rated Achieved on ACM 3.
3. No completion dates for 12 records due to: second adoption & the AEP not being upgraded (8), or no certificate confirming completion (2), or adoption terminated by MCFD before AEP (1), or withdrawn before AEP (1).
4. Three AH records had completion dates for the AEP within a month of opening the AH record because the applicant(s) had either commenced with the AEP prior to submitting an adoption application (2) or had previously completed the AEP under another adoption application (1).

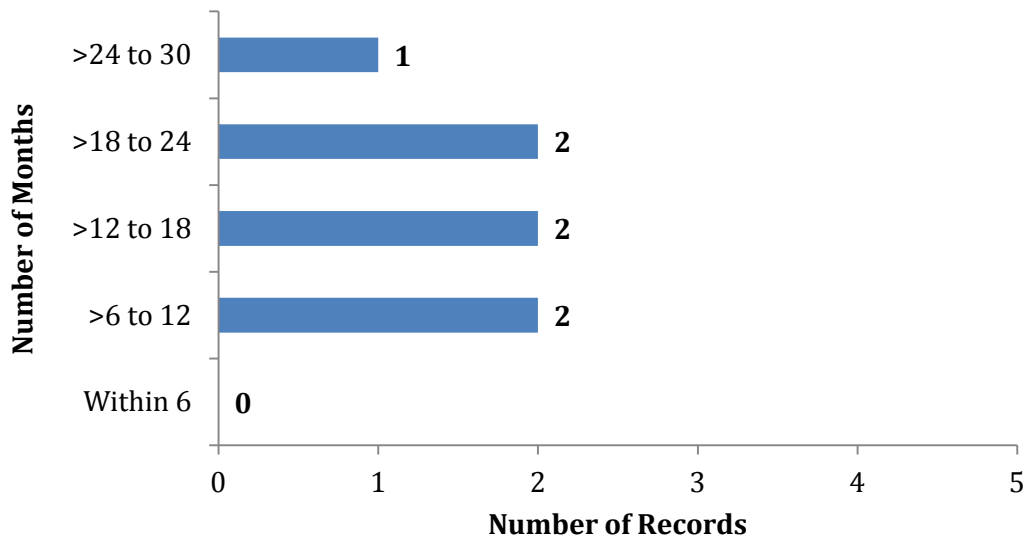
**Figure 2: Time from Opening of AH Record to the Completion and Approval of the Structured Family Assessment (SFA), SDA 43 Northeast**



Note:

1. N=18 of 32 records are included in the time calculation. Includes the 15 records rated Achieved on ACM 4, plus 3 records rated Not Achieved on ACM 4 because the SFA was not completed within the 4-month timeframe.
2. No approval dates for 14 records due to: no written SFA in file (1), or SFA was incomplete (3), or application to adopt was terminated by MCFD before SFA completed (3), or withdrawn before SFA completed (1), or written SFA not started & AEP not yet completed (1), or written SFA still in progress (5).
3. One AH record had a completion date for the SFA within a month of opening the AH record because the applicant(s) had recently completed the SFA under another adoption application.

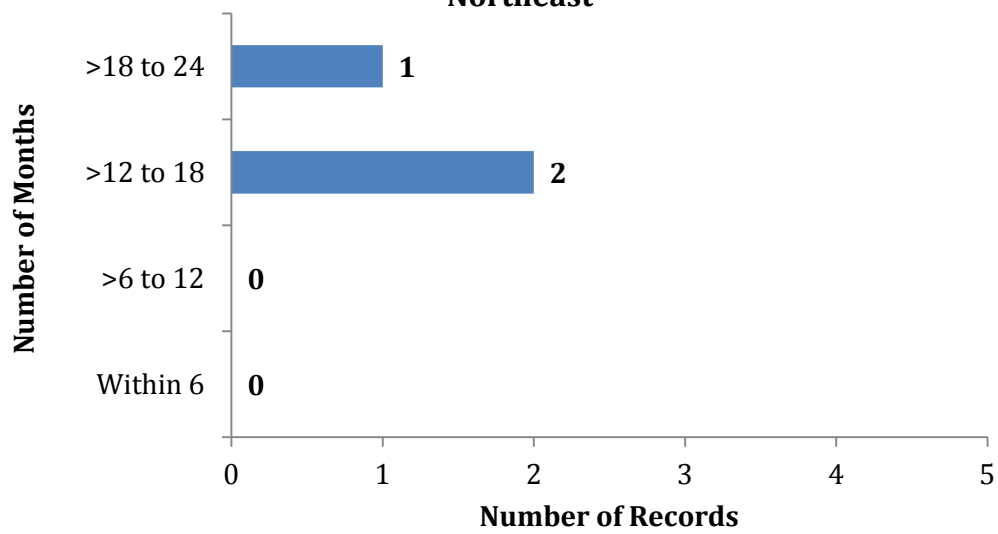
**Figure 3: Time from Opening of AH Record to Completion of the Summary Recording, SDA 43 Northeast**



Note:

1. N=7 of 32 records are included in this time calculation. Includes all 7 records rated Achieved on ACM 14.
2. No completion dates for 25 records due to: no summary recording in file (1), or 6-month placement period had not yet expired (6), or a child has not yet been proposed to the prospective adoptive parent(s) (13), or application to adopt was terminated by MCFD (3), or was withdrawn (1), or child not yet placed with prospective adoptive parent(s) (1).
3. Summary recordings are completed at the conclusion of the adoption placement and are required documentation before a Court package can be prepared and submitted.

**Figure 4: Time from Opening of AH Record to the Closing of the AH Record, for Completed Adoptions, SDA 43 Northeast**



**Note:**

1. N=3 of 32 records are included in this time calculation. Includes only AH records that have been closed because an Adoption Order was obtained and the adoption completed.
2. This calculation includes any AH file closed in MIS (as of June 30, 2016). Closure dates are either before or after the Adoption Order is granted.