



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF: Executive Member for Children's Services

LEAD OFFICER: Director of Children's Services

DATE: 9 March 2017

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: Children's Services

WARD/S AFFECTED: All

KEY DECISION: YES NO

SUBJECT: Fostering Service Quarterly Report - October – December 2016

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information to the Council's Executive Board on the management and performance of the Local Authority's Fostering Service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:
Notes the quarterly report which is available on the Council Website.

3. BACKGROUND

The Fostering Service Regulations 2011 and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services requires the Council Executive to:

- a) Receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the Fostering Service every 3 months;
- b) Monitor the management and outcomes of the services in order to satisfy themselves that the Service is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children; and
- c) Satisfy themselves that the provider is complying with the conditions of registration.

The report has been written to address the issues identified above. It will be taken into account by OFSTED in inspecting the Service.

This report is for the third quarter of 2016 - 2017, covering the period from 1st October to 31st December 2016, and provides an overview of the Service.

4. KEY ISSUES

The number of children coming into care continues to increase, reaching 370 at the end of December compared to 335 at the end of December 12 months ago. Whilst this has increased the pressure on placements, the Service has managed to increase the proportion in foster care from 54% to 65% and the in house proportion from 39% to 41%. Between Quarter 2 and Quarter 3, there has been an

increase in the number of Family and Friends carers from 18 to 23 and the number of Family and Friends viability assessments has significantly increased from 12 to 23.

The Team is working flexibly across all functions of the service rather than 'specialising' as they did previously, to take account of these changes.

The total number of foster carers supported by the Fostering Service has increased from 113 this time last year to 125. The main reason for this is because the number of Family and Friends carers has increased by 12 over the year and increased by 5 between Quarter 2 and Quarter 3. Recruiting mainstream carers for hard to place groups of children continues to be a challenge especially as the biggest group of new referrals in Quarter 3 were in the 12 years+ age group. Even Independent Agency searches for this age group have produced very few placement offers. On a positive note, the support offer for carers is now achieving greater stability for placements once they have been identified. 6 new mainstream carers have been approved to date in 2016/17 and there are another 10 at initial visit or Stage 1 / 2 of assessment. Foster carer retention remains good.

The new conference style training for foster carers has been positively evaluated so far. The first two conferences have been well attended and the third, which is due to take place in May, is already fully booked. This is proving to be a more efficient way of delivering training and carers appear to like attending a few full days rather than short courses.

The Service is on track to meet its numerous priorities set for 2016/17.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

No policy implications identified.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications identified.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

This report is required to meet statutory requirements as outlined in section 3.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

No resource implications identified.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

None.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	2.0
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Alyson Hanson – Service Leader, Placement Services
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DATE:	23 rd January 2017
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Fostering Service Quarterly Report 1 st October to 31 December 2016
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