



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF: Executive Member for Children's Services

LEAD OFFICER: Director of Children's Services

DATE: 15th June 2017

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: Children's Services

WARD/S AFFECTED: All

KEY DECISION: YES NO

SUBJECT: Fostering Service Quarterly Report - January to March 2017 (end of year)

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 fourth quarter of 2016 - 2017, covering the period from 1st January to 31st March 2017, and provides an overview of the Service. It is also the end of year report.

4. KEY ISSUES

There has been a significant increase in Family and Friends work for the Fostering Service due to court decision making. The result of this shift means that there are more Family and Friends carers to supervise and support, more Viability and Regulation 24 assessments and more full Family and

Friends assessments. This involves the team working in closer partnership with the Safeguarding teams and undertaking more complex assessment work. Family and Friends carers are subject to the same regulations and standards as all foster carers but it can be harder to ensure that they attend the required training and maintain accurate records. Despite these difficulties, the team have embraced new ways of working and are developing their skills in this area.

The Service has approved 7 mainstream foster carers this year. Whilst recruitment activity across the year has generated interest and a reasonable number of initial enquiries particularly in Quarters 3 and 4, converting expressions of interest into applications has been a challenge. The Fostering Front Door initiative which commenced in February and is outlined in the report should address the conversion issue. The total number of mainstream foster carers has remained fairly constant from quarter to quarter as the low number of resignations and deregistrations has balanced out the number of new approvals. However, numbers need to increase and the recruitment of carers will continue to be a priority for the coming year. A new post has been created (Marketing and Recruitment Officer) to lead on all aspects of recruitment.

Placement stability has improved and is now much better than the national average. The creation of the Revive Service and the Fostering Support service have worked well to stabilise a number of fragile placements and the feedback from carers and young people is positive.

Over the year, the service has experienced a number of significant changes. The Deputy Manager post was disestablished and a manager took voluntary redundancy. The Deputy Manager was able to move into the Manager role and is developing well. The main and review Fostering Panels both have new Chairs and new Panel Advisors so the team and foster carers have been through a period of adjusting to them. The team lost 3 experienced social workers at the start of Quarter 4. They have been replaced but one is newly qualified and the other two are experienced social workers who are new to Fostering so again there has been a period of adjustment. The service has coped well with the changes overall.

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:	1.0
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Alyson Hanson – Service Leader, Placement Services
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DATE:	3 rd May 2017
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Fostering Service Quarterly Report January to March 2017 (end of year)
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