



# EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

**REPORT OF:** Executive Member for Children's Services  
**LEAD OFFICER:** Director of Children's Services  
**DATE:** 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017

**PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:** Children's Services

**WARD/S AFFECTED:** All

**KEY DECISION:** YES  NO

**SUBJECT:** Fostering Service Quarterly Report - Quarter 1 April 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017

## 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 first Quarter of 2017- 2018, covering the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017, and provides an overview of the Service.

## 4. KEY ISSUES

1. Whilst the number of children entering care in Quarter 1 reduced from the previous Quarter, the increase across the region in recent months has put the availability of placements under great pressure. In-house foster placements are generally full with only baby placements available and

searches for independent agency foster placements have little success. This has pushed adolescents in particular into residential placements prematurely, and these are scarce and costly. Overall, the number of children in mainstream foster care placements has remained constant and the numbers in agency placements and family and friends placements have increased.

2. Feedback from children and young people in mainstream foster placements continues to be positive.

3. The recruitment of mainstream foster carers remains challenging. To improve this, the Service has appointed a new Marketing and Recruitment Officer with the skills set needed to run effective digital campaigns and events. However, the successful candidate has been working a long notice period and is not due to start until September. This has meant that no one has been leading on recruitment for several months.

There has been a natural reduction in the number of in-house carers through retirement and resignations, and the Service has been unable to replace them in sufficient numbers. However, the loss of mainstream carers has been partly offset by the increase in family and friends carers.

4. The capacity of the Fostering Service has been stretched by the significant increase of family and friends assessments with challenging court deadlines. The Team members have improved their skills in this area of work.

5. Placement stability continues to be good and better than the England average and slightly better than this time last year.

6. Engagement with foster carers is good with regular Foster Carer Association meetings and a foster carer champions group helping to sustain positive relationships.

7. The number of allegations against foster carers and the number of specific incidents are low. There is a higher than usual number of missing from home incidents but 10 of these relate to one young person.

## 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.

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1.0</b>
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Alyson Hanson – Service Leader, Placement Services
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<b>DATE:</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> August 2017
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	Fostering Service Quarterly Report 1 <sup>st</sup> April to 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2017 – Quarter 1
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