



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF: Executive Member for Children's Services

LEAD OFFICER: Director of Children's Services

DATE: 8th March 2018

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: Children's Services

WARD/S AFFECTED: All

KEY DECISION: YES NO

SUBJECT: Quarter 3 Fostering Service Report – 1 October 2017 – 31st December 2017

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide information on the management and performance of the Local Authority's Fostering Service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

Notes this 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 2017- 2018, covering the period from 1st October to 31st December 2017, and provides an overview of the Service.

4. KEY ISSUES

1. The overall number of foster carers has increased in Quarter 3 despite a reduction in the number of mainstream carers as the number of family and friends carers has continued to grow.

2. Although the challenge of recruiting mainstream carers for specific groups is replicated across the region, the work of the new Marketing and Recruitment Officer has generated a great deal of interest. There are currently 12 prospective sets of foster carers in assessment which is approximately the same number of approvals achieved over the last 2 years. Whilst this is encouraging, capacity in the service to undertake assessments of prospective mainstream carers continues to be compromised by the demands to assess large numbers of family and friends carers.

3. The increase in the number of children coming into care is causing increased pressure on placements (fostering and residential) across the region resulting in further increases in the number of commissioned placements.

4. Issues around placement stability have continued during the Quarter; however, Blackburn with Darwen is still performing better than the national average.

5. Whilst the fostering service is operating within budget the commissioning budget is overspent and under increased pressure as a result of the issues highlighted above.

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 set out in the 'National Minimum Standards for Fostering'

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:	V2.0
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Alyson Hanson – Service Leader, Placement Services
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DATE:	30 th January 2018
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Fostering Service Quarter 3 Report – 1 October 2017 – 31 st December 2017
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