

Fostering Quarter 2 Report

July-September 2023

Executive Report



Quarterly reports to the Executive Board are a requirement of the Fostering Service to meet Standard 25.7 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. They are a key part of the documentation considered by OFSTED when conducting a Service inspection.

Introduction

There continues to be significant development across the Fostering Service through the Fostering Service Transformation Plan. The plan includes,

- 1. Digital Transformation Programme** - remains ongoing. All initial enquiries are now forwarded to one area through our digital communications platform. The foster carer application form is now digital meaning swifter progress through the system to contact potential foster carers. Expenditure and mileage forms for foster carers are now digital meaning that foster carers are able to receive payments easier with a more timely process for them. The plans are nearing completion for a separate Kinship Care Website, which will enable all Kinship Carers to access information and contact the Kinship Care Team when they require support. There are currently plans to incorporate multiple referral forms for children and young people into one form through the ICT systems to reduce time and workload.
- 2. Recruitment of Foster Carers and Links with Communication Team-** Recruitment continues to be a priority across the service. There is now work being completed to look at the conversion rate from foster carer enquiry to foster carer assessment is currently 10%. This is a trigger point with recruitment of foster carers.
- 3. Retention of Foster Carers/Allowances-** The increase in all allowances to foster carers, short break carers and SGO (Special Guardianship Order) carers has now taken place. There is currently a review of parent and child allowances being undertaken.
- 4. Commissioning and Contract-** the Fostering Front Door is continuing to develop relationships across our Independent Fostering Agencies with a focus on the BBCL (Blackpool, Blackburn, Cumbria, and Lancashire) Framework. The focus now is on relationships with the providers that are closer to BWD and ensuring that placements are identified early and are made available to BWD.
- 5. Workforce Development-** There continues to be instability across the fostering service with some staff turnover, this is now stabilising however, and work is continuing to support the service using TRACK values.

Children in our Care and Fostering Overview:

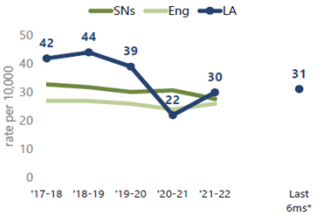
In the last 6 months the number of children becoming cared for by the local authority is 62 compared to the previous quarter where there were 41. The predominate reason for these children becoming looked after is due to abuse or neglect. There has been an increase in young people seeking unaccompanied asylum. The number of children being cared for in Blackburn with Darwen is above the average nationally. We have seen 63 children leave the care of the Local authority. In this quarter 9 children left care due to Special Guardianship Orders.

Children Looked After (CLA) started and ceased in the last 6 months

from 31/03/2023 to 30/09/2023

62 CLA started in the last 6 months

Rate of CLA started per 10,000 children

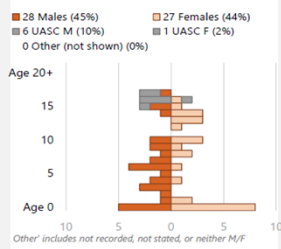


*Annualised rate for comparison purposes

7 of the 62 CLA starters were unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)

11%

Age and gender



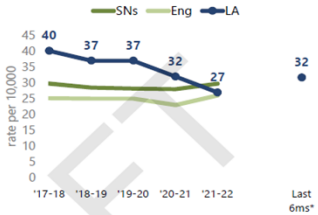
Other includes not recorded, not stated, or neither M/F

1 of the 62 CLA starters have previously been looked after

2%

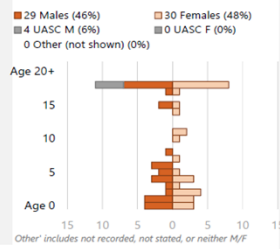
63 CLA ceased in the last 6 months

Rate of CLA ceased per 10,000 children



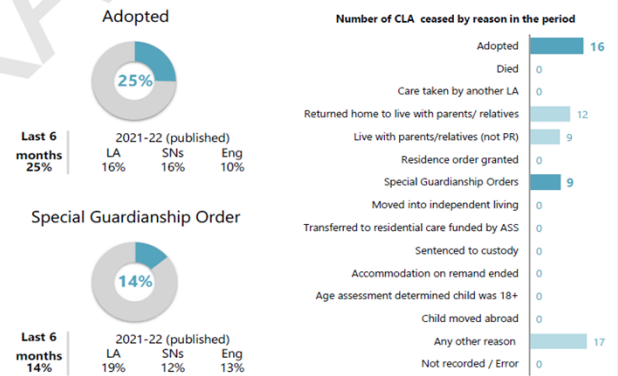
*Annualised rate for comparison purposes

Age and gender

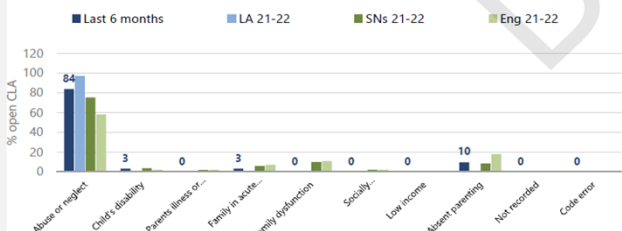


Other includes not recorded, not stated, or neither M/F

Reason episode of care ceased



Comparing the primary need of CLA starters

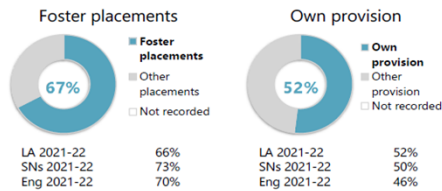


ChAT v7.11 - Data to Insight

Children Looked After (CLA) placements

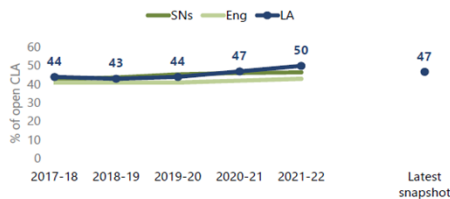
Snapshot 30/09/2023

CLA placements by type and provision

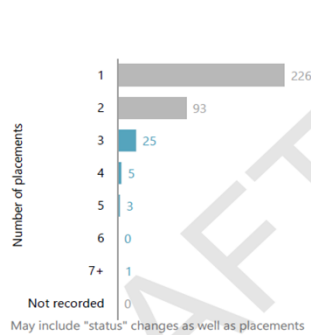


Placement type (open CLA)	Own LA	Private	Other	Total
Foster placement	170	60	7	237
Placed for adoption	11	1	13	25
Placed with parents	0	0	27	27
Independent living	0	2	0	2
Residential employment	0	0	0	0
Residential accommodation	2	31	0	33
Secure Children's Homes	0	0	0	0
Children's Homes	0	22	0	22
Residential Care Home	0	0	0	0
NHS/Health Trust	0	0	2	2
Family Centre	0	2	0	2
Young Offender Institution	0	0	1	1
Residential school	0	0	0	0
Other placements	0	0	2	2
Temporary placement	0	0	0	0
Total placements	183	118	52	353

CLA placements out of borough

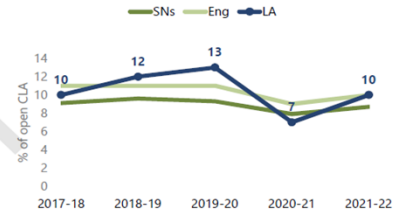


Number of placements in the last 12 months



May include "status" changes as well as placements

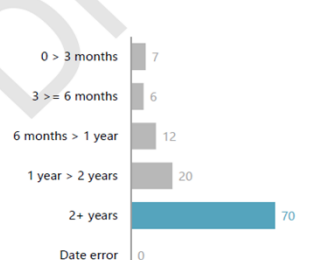
Comparing short term placement stability



Due to limited data in the Annex A dataset, ChAT does not present short-term stability alongside published statistics

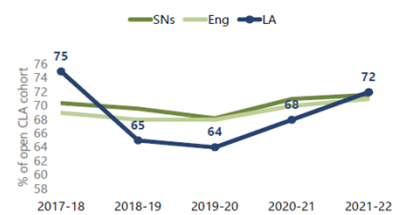
Duration of placements

Duration of latest placement for each current CLA aged under 16 who have been looked after for 2½ years or more



May include "status" changes as well as placements

Comparing long term placement stability



Due to limited data in the Annex A dataset, ChAT does not present long-term stability alongside published statistics

ChAT v7.11 - Data to Insight

As with previous quarters, the highest cohort of children and young people in our care who remain the most difficult to place children and young people are aged between 11-16. This is an ongoing, persistent trend both locally and nationally. In BWD we continue to see large sibling groups needing to be placed in foster care, this presents as a challenge in trying to keep siblings together wherever possible, meaning there is a need for fostering exemptions above the normal limit of 3 children in placement.

Recruitment remains ongoing for foster carers to care for children with disabilities, as primarily these children are currently placed in residential settings as opposed to fostering. There is an ongoing campaign to try to recruit foster carers for children with Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND), but this remains a local and national challenge. The Fostering Team are working in collaboration with the Children with Disabilities Teams to be creative and solution focussed and to also look at how adaptations can be utilised to expand the choice of foster placements, for example for children with physical needs.

There is also ongoing recruitment of carers who wish to provide PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence) and Remand placements. This has been an area of significant struggle, which again is a challenge nationally and not specific to BWD. Despite these challenges, it remains positive that most of our children who are looked after in Blackburn with Darwen are placed in foster care.

The Foster Carer Register is produced weekly, and Senior Managers meet with the Fostering Service to look at placement availability, data, and vacancies. The fostering service continues to utilise the 'Fostering Front Door' offer whereby an experienced Social Worker is supporting the Recruitment Officer with applications, but also coordinates placement searches both in-house and on the framework with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's). This remodel has been positive in that the Social Worker has a solid overview along with the Team Manager of the placement vacancies in the team and will liaise directly with foster carers, offering at times an enhanced support offer to them at the point of placement.

The BBCL (BwD, Blackpool, LCC and Cumbria) collaborative sub-regional framework continues to be the framework in which we source foster placements when we cannot provide our own in house foster carers. This framework has helped to generate some success with 'closer to home' placements in the Lancashire footprint. Work has been undertaken with Fostering Front Door to build and improve on relationships with providers. The Fostering Front Door worker is now undertaking quarterly meetings with providers to identify and pre-empt placements that will become available, to ensure that we are being prioritised with those independent fostering households that are local to us.

Placement Stability

The Department uses a definition of placement stability based on 3 or more placements in a 12-month period that is calculated on a cumulative basis over the year. Placement stability has been increasing since 2019-2020 and is the same when compared to national statistics.

Reasons for placement instability remain the same as in previous quarters and includes the disruption of placements for teenagers displaying challenging behaviours, missing from home episodes and an influx of larger sibling groups all posing challenges for foster carers to manage in the longer term. Babies and under 2's are placed in parent and child foster placements. There is currently a review being undertaken of the support offered to Parent and Child Placements which includes, assessment, training, support, and financial support.

Changes in educational placements also impact significantly upon placement stability, this is mainly due to the child investing in secure teacher and peer relationships and then suffering the loss of these. It can also be challenging for the young person to emotionally invest in further foster placements when the first has disrupted. This is when the service refers to the REVIVE service where consultations and assessments take place to support this group of young people and their carers to offer therapeutic interventions.

There is currently development around the process of Disruption Meetings with a view to develop these to be more collaborative and to follow the Systemic Model. This piece of work is being jointly undertaken through the Fostering Service, The Independent Review Service and through the Children in Our Care Service with the plan to provide detailed analysis on placement disruptions across the service to inform future learning to prevent further placement disruptions. Disruption Meetings are planned to take place across all placements including short and long-term foster placements, Kinship Care placements including SGO placements.

Engagement with Children and Young People

The VOICE group meet both in person and virtually with children in our care and care leavers to gather views, ideas, and feedback. Young people and care leavers are regularly involved in the recruitment to social care posts and consist of a panel which provides information to the interview and recruitment process. Young people are involved in the 'Journey to Foster' training and we are currently in the application process for a care experienced young person to attend Fostering Panel as a panel member. There are plans to introduce visits with young people to potential foster carers to inform the assessment process. During this review period children and young people from the Voice group have co-produced a Children and Young People guide for children coming into care. We have two designated Participation Champions from the Mainstream and Kinship Care Teams who attend the Voice Participation Group.

Feedback is gathered from children in our foster placements regularly as part of the foster carer annual review, and at other events. Feedback is gathered to support the co-design of service delivery and to ensure children and young people with lived experience help shape services now and, in the future, that services are fit for purpose and appropriately meet need. The Participation Champions are currently developing a feedback form that will be accessible via a QR code, this has been co-produced with children and young people and will be in place by the next quarter.

Feedback from mainstream foster carers:

FC compliment: "My supervising social worker has supported me with any questions and concerns, and has been a consistent level of support for me throughout the process of becoming a foster carer and supporting children"

A foster carer reported at their annual review in August, that although their supervising social worker is off, they are still able to contact duty and managers, who support them with any issues and concerns and feel fully supported by the fostering service.

Feedback from kinship foster carers:

Two Regulation 24 foster carers who have recently been granted an SGO for their grandson, have thanked the SSW (Supervising Social Workers) for all the support they have had throughout the assessment and court process.

A friends and family fostering couple have welcomed the support they have received from the Kinship Care Team over the past year when they have had their nephew in placement with them. He has recently turned 18 and they have therefore resigned but have said the experience was a positive one and are therefore considering fostering in their local area.

Feedback from SGO carers from the Kinship Care Support Group

Carer's have voiced that they value the introduction of the support groups and the direct support that is provided by the SGO Support Worker Kate and other Supervising Social Workers in the team.

Feedback from Children in Foster Care:

A 15-year-old person seeking asylum was happy and emotional to see his brother when he came to the UK and is being cared for by his brother and wife under a Regulation 24 placement. This young person told a harrowing account of travelling across multiple countries to come to the UK to be with his brother and family.

A 16-year-old has voiced that she feels that living with her foster parent is like 'living with a family, he is like a dad to us'. A 9-year-old in the same placement reports that living with his foster dad, foster sister and foster brother is nice and feels like home.

Feedback from Independent Review Officer (IRO) regarding a Foster Carer:

'S in particular maintained excellent contact with the team around GH regarding his move and fully invested in the process, delivering everything that was requested to support the transition. It is noted that this was a very emotionally demanding and physically tiring process, however, S did an excellent job for GH and it is clear that she has huge compassion for the children she looks after.'

Engagement with Foster Carers:

Blackburn with Darwen has a Foster Carer Association (FCA), they meet regularly, and have an Elected Committee. The Chair of the FCA sits on the Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group amongst other groups. The FCA are currently updating their website, which is used to communicate messages and news updates about events. The foster carer support group also meets regularly and is attended by the Children's Services Elected Member. The FCA also meets bimonthly with Senior Managers and Team Managers from Fostering.

Two Meet and Greet engagement sessions took place in July to gather feedback regarding the ongoing transformation plan. These were successful sessions and well attended by Foster Carers. The feedback from these sessions has been analysed and is being used in driving forward improvements across the fostering service with a focus on digital transformation, foster carer training and further engagement.

Promoting Children's Health, Emotional Development, Education and Leisure:

Overall attendance for the Virtual School was 91%, this is higher for our children/young people in foster care in comparison to other types of homes.

Letterbox Club has continued this quarter for all CIOC from Reception to Y6 to encourage reading at home. Books, games etc are sent out monthly which are age appropriate. Again, feedback has been very encouraging from the children who have stated that they enjoy receiving their parcels and carers have stated that they are encouraging their children to read.

We have 38 children and young people attending the extra provision provided by Kip McGrath services.

GCSE results have not yet been validated and we will share them in the next report.

Nomination Forms for our annual Celebration of Achievement of CIOC and Care Leavers were sent out to all Carers, Schools, and Social Workers, IRO's, Leaving Care Personal Advisor's and other relevant professionals. We have received a higher number of nominations this year. The event will be held on 22nd November at Ewood Park Premier Suite.

There is a Designated Nurse, who takes an active role in following up health issues and assisting with health promotion work. Figures for Quarter 2 show that 88% of all Children in our Care have an up-to-date health assessment. 85% of children who are looked after having had a dental check up in the last 12 months which a significant improvement on previous quarter which was 69% is demonstrating the work that has been undertaken across the service to improve in this area.

Foster carers have a Health Passport for each child in their care, which is a record of all the child's health details. Foster carers are provided with the relevant training and support to meet the specific needs of the child in placement, and they can access support from the

Children with Disabilities Team with aids and adaptations, Disability Links registration, information, and advice where needed.

In relation to emotional wellbeing, Children in our Care have access to Clinical Psychology and related services through REVIVE and the East Lancashire Child and Adolescent Service (ELCAS) also known as Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The REVIVE Service is a partnership between Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's Children's Services and East Lancashire Hospital Trust to provide emotional health support for children known to the Local Authority and is based at Duke Street. REVIVE delivers consultation to Foster Carers, training and direct intervention on emotional health and well-being. The Team consists of Clinical Psychologists, a Play Therapist and Mental Health Practitioners.

The Limes in Darwen continues to be used to provide therapy and is now a hub which is used by foster carers along with children and young people.

Transitions

The most recent weekly data from 18th September 2023, tells us we have 338 care leavers who are open to the Leaving Care Team either as an allocated Personal Advisor, under 18 years or as the Allocated Worker post 18 years. This number changes on a daily/weekly basis due to closures/step away's and new young people opening to the service at 15 ¾.

In August 2023, Care Leavers in suitable accommodation for 17-18 year olds was recorded at 88%, this decreased by 3% since January 2023. This has been explored and relates to 3 young people; we are satisfied that appropriate plans are in place to support these young people with securing a permanent home. Care Leavers in suitable accommodation for 19-21 year olds decreased by 1% at 88% since May 2023. In Staying Put placements, we currently have 22 young people with 4 more placements predicated next year.

We are working with young people on a new condensed Pathway Plan which is due to be live by January 2024.

The Fostering Service

Workforce

Currently on the Mainstream Team we have one social worker (3 days) from the supervision and support team on sick leave. One 4-day social worker and one full time social worker from the supervision and support team have resigned. Both supervising social worker posts are currently being recruited to and are being covered by agency social workers. We have recruited to the Advanced Practitioner post in the mainstream team with the new worker starting in December.

The Permanence Team have now changed their name to the Kinship Care Team. There has been some movement on the team over this quarter. We have appointed internally to the new Advanced Practitioner post on 07.08.2023, which resulted in a second vacant Supervising Social Worker post. A previous student was successful at interview and has been appointed to one of the vacant Supervising Social Worker posts as an ASYE, she started in the role on

18.09.2023. There remains one vacancy for a Supervising Social Worker which is out for advert. The vacant Special Guardianship Social Worker post remains unfilled, we interviewed one candidate but did not appoint. The role continues to be advertised, this is part-time, 4 days. The Fostering Support Officer and Social Work Apprentice on the team has also resigned with an agreed move to adults to complete her apprenticeship

Kinship Care

At the end of this quarter, there are 36 family and friend fostering households, 27 fully approved and a further 9 households approved under Regulation 24. This is the same in terms of figures from the last quarter however, it has been a busy quarter and there has been plenty of movement across the service with new Regulation 24, Family & Friend carers, and Special Guardians.

There have been 11 new Regulation 24 households approved over the past three months, providing placements for an additional 16 children. Similarly, in total during this quarter, 11 households have ceased to be approved under Regulation 24. 3 placements have disrupted, with 1 young person moving into a residential placement. 2 children moving into foster care and 1 child to another family member, this is unusual and may be reflective of the urgency of Regulation 24 assessments needing to take place. There has also been 1 young person become subject to a home placement agreement due to their parent moving into the fostering household resulting in the Regulation 24 ending, and 1 ceased due to SGO being granted. Additionally, 6 Regulation 24 carers have become fully approved family and friends fostering households. There have been 2 resignations of family and friend foster carers due to becoming Special Guardians.

There have been 47 referrals and initial assessments completed within this quarter, this is 6 less from quarter one, but much pressure on the need for Regulations 24 placements over Initial Assessment's. 22 referrals have progressed to full combined assessment, a little up from quarter one. Assessments continue to take place all over the UK for e.g., Lancashire, Wales, Fylde, Bolton, Birmingham, and Manchester. 6 assessments have been presented to fostering panel to be approved as full family and friends fostering households. In total there have been a further 6 special guardianship households made during this quarter, 2 from friends and family, 2 from Regulation 24 and 2 private applications, providing permanence for 8 children.

SGO support

We have a RAG rating system in place, whereby cases that have the potential to breakdown are rated 'Red' those needing medium level of support 'Amber' and those rated lower are green. At the end of September, there were 17 open cases. We currently have no cases that are rag rated red which is positive and an improvement from previous quarters. There is an action plan in place to identify and pre-empt SGO disruptions. Part of the plan is the development of the SGO Support offer which includes, training, direct support, access to The Adoption Support Fund, escalation to other services and the development of the Kinship Care Support Group. These support groups are now in place and are taking place monthly. The

attendance at these groups has been high with collaboration with attendees to develop the group going forward.

The SGO Panel is held every fortnight to consider all assessments where the permanence plan is that of SGO. This includes assessments during care proceedings, the PLO (Public Law Outline) process and for children placed under a care order. The Kinship Care Team Manager's attend this panel and the Service Lead for Placements chairs the panel which is also made up of other professionals from children's social care including the IRO Service Manager and a legal representative.

Analysis of ethnic breakdown of carers

Ethnicity

82% of Carers are White British
 15% are Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Asian, Other)
 3% not recorded or other

Religion

13% of Carers are recorded as Muslim
 51% Christian
 36% undisclosed or not recorded

If we look at that in context of **Children in Foster Care:**

250 Children in Foster Care
 83% are White (British and Irish)
 6% Mixed Race
 8% Asian
 3% Other or refused to say

Focus on any issues that have arisen from ethnic matching

Fostering Front Door liaises with the Social Worker following a successful offer of placement match. Where there are ethnic discrepancies, Fostering Front Door will ensure the Social Worker is aware and they are in an agreement with proceeding. If not, it is at the Social Worker's discretion whether to consider the placement as an option or not. Should a non-cultural matched placement be made, specific support is offered on a case-to-case basis, training is provided around non cultural matched places for Foster Carers.

Foster Carer Recruitment and Assessment

Currently there are 3 assessments of foster carers that are ongoing. 2 Initial visits are due to take place with the hope that these will proceed to assessment. There are 3 assessments that are on hold as the applicants has made the decision to put their application on hold for the current time however, we are staying connected with these applications. We have approved 6 households since April 2023. Our aim remains to approve 12 households in this financial year.

2023/24	Enquiries	ROI		IV		Assessment		Approval
Q1	66	16	24%	13	20%	0		4
Q2	101	6	6%	2	2%	9		2

Paid adverts during this quarter are reaching an average of 1200 people per day, we had daily posts go out for the woman's world cup. This was part of a wider group of Local Authorities trying to push fostering with local authority over Independent Fostering Agencies.' We are seeing an increase in the number of enquiries from our Facebook adverts. The number of enquires for September was 32.

In July 2023, we attended the Royal Lancashire Show. Due to poor weather the number of attendees was low compared to previous years. Our Recruitment Officer also went LIVE on the Sunday at the show for 15 minutes during a 'cold plunge' as part of the event. 628 people from the UK clicked onto the Live Feed. 4 other fostering providers were in attendance over the weekend who spoke about the low numbers of interest in terms of recruitment. Overall reach for quarter 2 on Facebook was 42,159 and 5,681 on Instagram. This is a respectable number of people seeing our content.

We still have Bus Stop adverts up within the borough. These are due to be updated with some fresh images. New radio adverts started in September. These will run until November before they will be changed again for Christmas. New fixed banners have gone up at the Ice Arena as part of our deal with Blackburn Hawks. In September, the new season started and tickets for Blackburn Hawks games have been sent out to foster carers so they can attend the home games for free. This has been popular with a small group of carers.

Fostering Panel

The Service coordinates two fostering panels, the main fostering panel and annual review panel. The 4 Team Managers across the service act as Panel Advisor and maintain the panel members list along with their training. The two panels are independently chaired. Feedback and evaluation are collated from both panels to inform service delivery. Meetings are now taking place regularly with the Independent Panel Chairs to inform learning and development for the panels and the Fostering Service.

During this quarter we had 2 mainstream fostering households presented to panel approved to offer a short break placement and a transfer to BWD from an IFA (independent fostering agencies). 2 households have returned to panel for 1st annual review and 1 fostering household returned to panel following an allegation, recommendation was to not to continue approval as foster carers. 5 households were presented to panel with a recommendation for approval as family and friend's carers.

There have been 20 fostering households presented to panel for annual review.

In relation to feedback, forms are sent to all attendees including social worker and the return rate has improved. Feedback is positive.

Training for Foster Carers:

During this Quarter period, our carers continue to access the online training offer through Me-Learning,

The Scils and Eils online training continues to be offered, along with mandatory safeguarding training. The Essentials of Fostering training was delivered on 15th September to 24 foster carers. Health colleagues delivered Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Looked after Children on Thursday 28th September and attendance was particularly good. (25 carers)

Paediatric First Aid training was delivered in July with the Paediatric update delivered on 15th August.

Regarding the service training offer for 2023, this has been made available to carers with a plan of both online and classroom training sessions offered to our carers. This includes conference style days where carers can attend and be offered training by several services in one day. Foster carers feel this would be beneficial to those who work alongside their fostering role.

Complaints

There have not been any complaints during this quarter.

Compliments

We have had 2 compliments this quarter one from a foster carer who relayed she felt the fostering front door social worker was exceptionally good at his job.

The other compliment was from a foster carer who provided this: 'TO is very thorough helpful and I feel she will be a good supporting social worker. T seems to like her, and we are happy for her to be part of our journey.'

Allegations

There have been no allegations during this quarter

Specific Incidents and Restraints

There have been 1 incident recorded where a Young Person went missing from home. The correct procedure was followed, and the Young Person returned to placement.

Bullying Reports

There have been no reports of bullying over Quarter 2

Serious illness and accidents

There has been no serious illnesses or accidents during this quarter

Exemptions

We have had 3 new exemptions during this quarter, 1 of which has now ceased as the children moved to a new foster home.

Short Break Placements

There are currently 9 approved short break carers. During this quarter we have had 10 children accessing short breaks

Commissioned Placements and Budget

All children and young people placed in commissioned placements are part of the Case Tracking and Commissioning Panel which continues to have strategic oversight and monitoring of placements. This panel also provides oversight and planning to ensure that there are robust plans for those children and young people that could be brought back to in-house provision, as well as ensuring timely decision making to achieve permanence.

There continues to be significant pressures due to challenge of recruiting and securing placements for teenagers and large sibling groups both in fostering and residential placements. The financial position across both areas is closely monitored throughout the year.

The local authority continues to take its quota of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) (0.1% of the population). There are referrals at least bi-weekly, via the Northwest Regional Strategic Migration Partnership. We currently have 22 children and young people seeking asylum open to Children in Our Care (CIOC), all who are living in appropriate accommodation. These children are placed with IFA and residential placements due to there not being enough foster care placements in house. Although the local authority receives funding for UASC, this does not cover the weekly costings of their placements and places additional financial pressure on the commissioning budget.

Total number of commissioned foster placements *used* in this period – 74

- **46 placements** x Non long term matched including:-
 - **3** x ICO's including sib pair and 1 parent and child placement
 - **5** x Section 20's including 2 UASCs of which one moved on in Q2, and sibling group of 3 under PLO of which 1 moved to a new placement in Q2.
 - **9** x Placement Orders:
 - sibling group of 3 of which 2 moved to their adoptive placement in Q2
 - sibling pair who moved to their adoptive placement within Q2;
 - another pair await an adoption placement being identified;
 - 2 individual children of which 1 in a concurrent placement was matched at adoption panel during Q2

(5 moved to their adoptive placements in Q2 in total out of 9)

- **56** x FCO's, including:
 - 26 long-term matched
 - 30 non long term matched of which:
 - 14 to be long term matched or otherwise seem likely be in these placements long term.
 - Sibling pair await SGO being granted to their IFA carer.
 - Sibling group of 4 await their long-term plan being determined which may be rehab but otherwise likely to remain.
 - 1 x UASC
 - 1 parent and child placement where long term plan to be determined still.
 - Sibling group of 4 children split over 2 placements who will need long term foster care but 2 will not be in these placements.
 - 1 male who is likely to be here long-term.
 - 3 ended (one young person used 2 placements)
 - 2 who have been in their placements long term, but it is unstable

Number of new commissioned foster placements made in this period – 8

- 2 x sibling groups of 2 – FCO x 2 and ICO x 2
- Sibling group of 3 – S20/PLO
- 1 FCO – young male

Number of ended commissioned foster placements – 10

- 2 x sibling groups of 2 moved to adoptive placements, and 1 concurrency became adoptive
- 1 x UASC
- 3 x FCOs (1 FCO used 2 placements)

Number of long-term matched commissioned foster placements used in Q2 – 26 x FCO's;

- There were 2 new long-term matches made within this period for individual children.
- No long-term matched placements ceased

Additionally, another placement was under a retainer for an individual female who nearly moved from in-house placement, however, was never taken up as her placement was stabilised.

There were **37** ongoing non-long-term matched placements at the end of Q2:

- 27 x FCO's
- 3 x ICO's
- 4 x PO's
- 3 x S20's

There are **26** FCO's in long term matched placements at the end of Q2.

Service Priorities for the Next Quarter., these priorities remain the same as the previous quarter.

1. The management team will continue to monitor compliance with Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards and will increase the number of case file audits completed each month.
2. The transformation plan for the fostering service remains a priority. This plan and the key priorities will drive forward placement sufficiency and stability as well as recruitment and quality assurance.
3. Placement sufficiency and stability will continue to be a key area of focus. The relationships with independent fostering providers are the key element which will be the area of development in the next quarter to ensure that we are able to provide local placements to our children and young people within this framework.
4. Recruitment will focus upon our offer to potential foster carers for us to be competitive. The recruitment drive will focus on foster carers who can support teenagers, to respond to the increasing demand for urgent placements. This will also enable a support package of short breaks to be considered for those young people who are more challenging to place and/or in fragile placements currently and will seek to assist with placement stability alongside our Revive offer.