

EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



REPORT OF: Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education

LEAD OFFICERS: Director of Children's Services & Education

DATE: 14th November 2019

PORTFOLIO(S) AFFECTED: Children's Services, Young People & Education

WARD/S AFFECTED: (All Wards);

KEY DECISION: N

SUBJECT:

Quarter 1 Fostering Service Report from 1st April 2019 to 30th June 2019

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information on the management and performance of the Local Authority's Fostering Service and is revised each quarter. Quarter 1 provides analysis of data from 1st April to 30th June 2019, and notes any patterns within the Service to determine areas for development and progress.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

Notes the Quarter 1 Fostering Service Report 2019 which is available on the Council's website.

3. BACKGROUND

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

- 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;
- c) Satisfy themselves that the provider is complying with the conditions of registration.

The report has been written to address the areas identified above. It will be taken into account by OFSTED when inspecting the service.

The report is for the first quarter of 2019, covering the period from 1st April to 30th June 2019, and provides a comprehensive overview of the service overall.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

1. The number of children and young people becoming Looked After continues to be high, with the total for the end of quarter 1 being 408. This has a significant impact upon the demand for in-house and Agency placements and also the Commissioning budget overall.
2. The number of babies and sibling groups continues to be a challenge for the Local Authority to meet demand for placements.
3. The age group 11-15 years continues to be the highest cohort of young people, specifically males, who are a challenge for the Local Authority to place.
4. There is a consistently high number of Independent Fostering Agency and Commissioned residential placements being used due to the high demand of children in our care and specifically an increased demand for parent and child placements.
5. Fostering Fortnight was held in this quarter which is a recruitment drive held annually; the Service is focusing upon the offer made to the Borough's Foster Carers to assist with a boost in recruitment.
6. The impact of a high proportion of Agency commissioned placements to meet demand is significant upon the Commissioning budget.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

No policy implications identified

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The fostering budgets are closely monitored as part of the regular portfolio budget review. The financial implications of the increased pressures outlined above lie within the commissioned placements budget, which at the end of quarter 1 is facing a significant overspend to meet demand.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

This report is required to meet statutory requirements as set out in the 'National Minimum Standards for Fostering.'

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Service is clear that a review of the offer for Foster Carers, existing and potential carers, is required to enhance recruitment in the Borough and to remain competitive.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below.

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.

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.

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.

CONTACT OFFICER:	Pamela Price, Service Lead – Placement Services
DATE:	12/09/2019
BACKGROUND PAPER:	Quarter 1 Fostering Service Report 1 st April – 30 th June 2019