

EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



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

LEAD OFFICERS: Director of Children's Services & Education

DATE: 13th February 2020

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

WARD/S AFFECTED: (All Wards);

KEY DECISION: N

SUBJECT:

Quarter 2 Fostering Report from 1st July to 30th September 2019 with Appendix 1

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 2 provides analysis of the year and reflects upon data and any patterns within the Service to determine development and progress.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

Notes the Quarter 2 Fostering Service Report which is available on the Council's website along with Appendix 1.

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 second Quarter of 2019 covering the period from 1st July to 31st September 2019 and provides a comprehensive overview of the Service.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

1. Quarter 2 saw a slight decrease in the number of children in our care, but an increase in the number of children and young people in independent fostering agency placements. There has been a consistent increase in the number of children placed with family and friends carers.
2. Quarter 2 continued to reflect that the highest group of children and young people in foster care are in the 11-15 year age group, with males remaining the largest gender group of children in foster care. There are 53% of children in foster care who are male, with only 7 children with disabilities being placed in foster care. Children with disabilities continue to have more likelihood of permanence plans in long-term residential provision, as opposed to in-house or agency foster placements.
3. The 11-15 year age group continued in this Quarter to make up the highest percentage (33%) of young people placed in agency foster placements. The 0-2 year age group also remained high in this Quarter for children placed in foster placements; the majority of this age group were placed in-house.
4. An audit of placement stability showed that babies removed at birth or who were removed due to non-accidental injury, often have at least three placements until they secure their permanent placement. This is largely due to the emergency nature of the first placement, and recommendations from the Judiciary to request parent and child assessment placements in care proceedings prior to securing a permanent placement of adoption or Special Guardianship.
5. Teenagers are another high percentage group who have three or more placements, consistently due to behavioural needs and challenges for foster carers to manage in the longer term. Changes in educational placement also influence significantly upon placement stability. It can be challenging for the young person to emotionally invest in further foster placements when the first has disrupted.

This Quarter has seen a lower than average number of enquiries, however this period is typically a quieter time than other months due to the summer holiday period in July and August. Out of the five Local Authorities that are looked after by the 'front door' service, we are currently sitting in second when it comes to enquiries per 10,000 for Quarter 2.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

No policy implications identified

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The fostering budgets are closely monitored as part of the regular portfolio budget review.

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 have been identified.

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:	Amended 22/01/20
BACKGROUND PAPER:	Quarter 2 Fostering Service Report 1 st July to 30 th September 2019