



Derby City Council

**Corporate Parenting Committee  
22 September 2015**

**ITEM 6**

Report of the Acting Strategic Director of  
Children and Young People

**Foster Carer Recruitment**

**SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the fostering recruitment activity from April 2015 to the present date and builds on the previous information shared with Corporate Parenting Committee.
- 1.2 As part of the corporate demand management initiative the fostering and adoption service embarked on a service wide project to further support our ability to recruit more foster carers and attract adopters. This was a partnership with iMPower using their Family Values programme. This work started in late August 2014 and continues to date. Section 4.2 gives further detail on this work and progress made.
- 1.3 The Family Values programme recognises the importance of involving foster carers at every stage of the recruitment process, including the design, delivery and evaluation of recruitment strategies.

National and local research indicates that this will lead to better recruitment outcomes and our foster carers have indicated that they are willing to contribute and work alongside staff from across the service in foster carer recruitment.

- 1.4 A solid evidence base is important so that the service can understand the impact of new recruitment approaches that then informs how the service should continue to target 'Pioneer' groups within the community of Derby and surrounding areas.

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 For Corporate Parenting Committee to note the report.
- 2.2 To continue with the current marketing plan with an emphasis on word of mouth campaigns supported by approved Derby City Council foster carers.

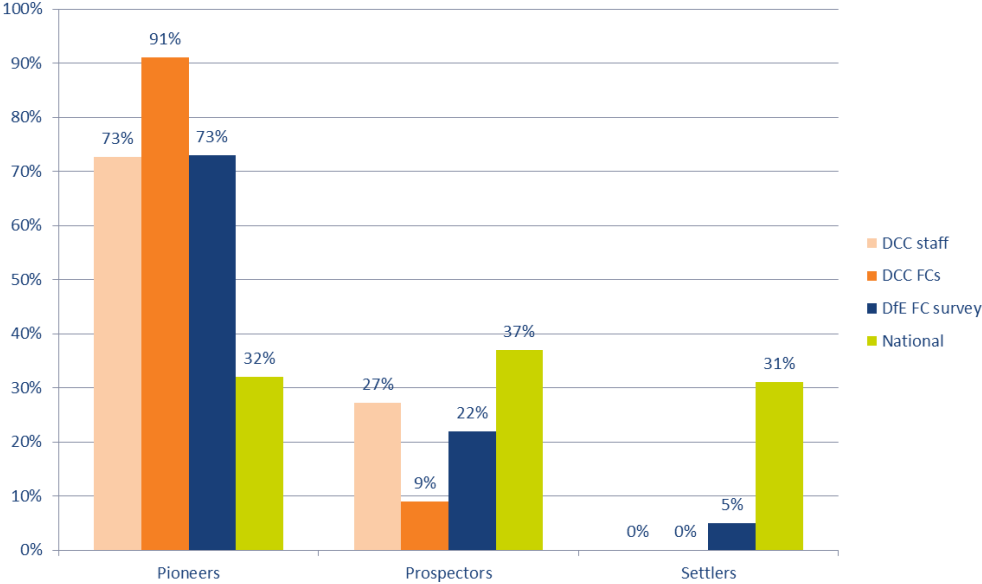
**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 Recruiting more foster carers for Derby City Council will have a positive impact on the Councils budget, specifically the spend for external independent sector fostering

placements and will also allow more children in care to be placed locally to Derby.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

4.1 Working with iMpower, research was carried out that used the Values Modes approach. This groups individuals based on their values. By understanding the dominant groups it allows the service to tailor recruitment to appeal to them. In the case of Derby foster carers the dominant group was the Pioneer group, who made up 91% of the cohort. This is in line with foster carer groups elsewhere, and is also in line with the proportion of staff that fit into this group. The full breakdown is shown in the graph below, with the orange columns showing the breakdown of the national general population (i.e. whole population, not just foster carers).



The characteristics of the three main groups and the implications for how the service can engage with them are shown below.

Maslow Groups	Characteristics:	This means messages should be:	This means the methods used should be:
Pioneers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Inner-directed</li> <li>➤ Guided by their sense of right and wrong, not 'the rules'</li> <li>➤ More concerned by fairness than incentives/reward</li> <li>➤ Idea not action focussed!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In the form of questions not statements</li> <li>➤ Bold, punchy and inspiring</li> <li>➤ Personalised (you, me)</li> <li>➤ Clear about why it's 'the right thing to do'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Bottom up and frequent</li> <li>➤ 2 way and co-productive – helping people feel part of the solution</li> <li>➤ Personalised, local and 'real'</li> <li>➤ Through peers</li> </ul>
Prospectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Outer-directed</li> <li>➤ Draw esteem from the affirmation of others</li> <li>➤ Guided by external influences (people, money, power)</li> <li>➤ Concerned about how to 'work the system'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Centred on the personal benefits (what's in it for them?)</li> <li>➤ Unambiguous about how success is defined</li> <li>➤ Clear about the evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Top down</li> <li>➤ Efficient and convenient</li> <li>➤ Systematic – allowing for accountability (the behaviours and benefits to be seen and traced)</li> </ul>
Settlers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Security driven</li> <li>➤ Wary of change / nostalgic</li> <li>➤ Risk averse</li> <li>➤ Traditional</li> <li>➤ Low sense of ability to effect change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Statements</li> <li>➤ Rules and compliance based</li> <li>➤ Anchored in majority behaviour (norms)</li> <li>➤ Reassuring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Instructive (top-down)</li> <li>➤ Impersonal</li> </ul>

The understanding developed through this work informs our marketing approach. Specifically it informs an approach that relies on word of mouth campaigns, is co-productive in helping people feel part of the solution, and is run on carers' terms.

This is reflected in data collated since April which shows that in 40% of cases where a reason was given the role of foster carers, friends and families was given as being important.

4.2 The Family Values Programme

**What we did:**

- Surveyed 22 staff and ran 5 staff workshops
- Surveyed 104 foster carers and ran three focus groups
- Undertook a 'Values Modes' survey of staff and carers
- Undertook a detailed business analysis
- Worked with the team to develop a set of initiatives

**What we found:**

- Recruitment is poor – too few enquiries and too few conversions
- First contact with the Council is poor
- A high proportion of children are in IFA placements, which are at least £15k per annum more expensive than in-house
- Utilisation of foster carers is in line with national averages
- Staff and carers shared a very similar set of values. These similarities will help us target new carers
- There are opportunities to improve the speed of assessment and peer networks

**What next:**

Developed 3 workstreams

- Recruitment, Assessment and Support
- Use our Values Modes insight to target specific groups with messages that will appeal to them.
- Foster carers a key part of the workstreams and marketing using a word of

mouth focus

- 4.3 Some of the main activities that have contributed to our recruitment approach are detailed below:
- The fostering recruitment work stream has developed the ‘word of mouth’ campaign by developing this approach with existing foster carers and creating links with faith groups and community groups across the city. Drop-in sessions continue to be held weekly at the Council House, giving potential foster carers an opportunity to meet social workers and ask questions about fostering in a private and confidential setting. Fostering and adoption information sessions are held at the Quad on weekends throughout the year to attract foster carers within a 20 mile radius of Derby. These sessions are supported by newspaper advertisements placed in Derby Telegraph, Derbyshire Times, Ashbourne News Telegraph, Burton Mail and Uttoxeter Advertiser/Uttoxeter Post and Times – and a press and social media campaign:
  - Gem 103FM interview Derby Foster Care Agency to talk about our foster carer’s experiences and how their lives and their foster children’s lives are changed through fostering.
  - Derby Telegraph runs a feature on fostering with special focus on Derby City Council and content that is based on the information that Derby City Council provided.
  - Fostering Newsletter features special focus on Foster Care Fortnight and case studies of foster carers.

4.4 **Plans for September 2015 onwards:**

Following Fostering Fortnight we have seen a growth in the number of enquiries received by the service, and we have a number of people in our recruitment pipeline. Our analysis indicates that many of those who are enquiring have been influenced by friends, family and existing foster carers.

We plan to build on this success by focusing our project into two work streams. The first will cover recruitment and assessment, with a particular focus on identifying opportunities to speak directly to potential carers. The second will focus on supporting existing carers, with the short term aim of improving their experience of being a carer and a medium-term aim of creating more advocates for the service.

4.5 **Impact of the Family Values project**

The Family Values project is now showing an impact on the level of enquiries. The table below shows the level of enquiries for June and July 2015 in comparison to the same months for 2011-14.

	<b>2015</b>	<b>Average 2011-14</b>
June	33	26.75
July	28	24.25

This figure is against a picture, reflected nationally, of falling enquiries over the same period. To provide further context, the average level of enquiries in Derby for January 2015 to May 2015 was 13.4. The challenge now facing the service is to build on this growth and convert these enquiries to approved foster carers.

**OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 The Service is continuing to build on the ‘word of mouth’ approach but will also, working with marketing colleagues continue deliver a broader marketing campaign.

**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

<b>Legal officer</b> <b>Financial officer</b> <b>Human Resources officer</b> <b>Estates/Property officer</b> <b>Service Director(s)</b>  <b>Other(s)</b>	Hazel Lymbery, Director of Specialist Services, Tel:01332 642669, hazel.lymbery@derby.gov.uk
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<b>For more information contact:</b> <b>Background papers:</b> <b>List of appendices:</b>	Sally Penrose HOS Fostering and Adoption 01332 643817 sally.penrose@derby.gov.uk Appendix 1 – Implications
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<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial and Value for Money**

- 1.1 An increase in Derby City foster carers will have a direct and positive impact on the current spend on independent fostering agency placements for children in care

**Legal**

- 2.1 None arising from this report

**Personnel**

- 3.1 None arising from this report

**IT**

- 4.1 None arising from this report

**Equalities Impact**

- 5.1 The service continues to give due consideration to race, gender, culture, sexual orientation, religion, and disability in relation to children being placed and the recruitment of potential carers.

**Health and Safety**

- 6.1 This is considered at all stages of the recruitment, assessment, training, and post approval supervision of foster carers.

**Environmental Sustainability**

- 7.1 None arising from this report

**Property and Asset Management**

- 8.1 None arising from this report

**Risk Management**

- 9.1 Risk is managed at all stages of the fostering recruitment process and continues post approval via the supervision of approved foster carers.

## **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

10.1 The fostering service supports the Councils priorities of

- An inspiring start in life by improving educational outcomes
- An inspiring working life by improving skills and creating jobs by supporting young people to be ready for work
- Improving the health and well-being of vulnerable children and young people.