

Report sponsor: Suanne Lim, Director Early Help & Children's Social Care
Report author: Judy Levitt, Deputy Head of Service Fostering & Permanence

Fostering Friendly in Derby City

Purpose

- 1.1 Fostering Friendly is nationally recognised programme coordinated by the Fostering Network. The programme encourages and supports any employer through small changes to their personnel policy to both recognise the roles foster carers play in the lives of children and in turn be a source of potential recruitment and retention of existing foster carers. The Fostering Network indicate that nearly 40 per cent of foster carers combine fostering with other work. Those with a supportive employer enables them to balance employment better with looking after children.
- 1.2 Derby successfully gained official Fostering Friendly status in March 2022 for any Council employee to have enhanced paid leave should they become a foster carer. The four local authorities within D2N2 have all achieved Fostering Friendly status. This report seeks support in developing take up of Fostering Friendly status by other services, companies and organisations within Derby City.

Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To request the Corporate Parenting Committee's "relevant partners" consider for their own organisation and where appropriate, encourage other services, companies and organisations in Derby City to be accredited as Foster Friendly.

Reason(s)

- 3.1 Becoming Fostering Friendly directly contributes to one of the seven statutory principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people: *"for those children and young people to be safe, **and for stability in their home lives**, relationships and education or work"*. Whilst the corporate parenting principles apply only to local authorities, the local authority should highlight where relevant partners can assist in applying the principles through the services those partners may provide. 'Relevant partners' include local policing bodies, probation services, Integrated Care Board, NHS England, schools and educational institutions.

Supporting information

- 4.1 The Fostering Friendly employers' scheme helps employers to support and recognise the roles of their employees who foster and involves no direct costs. Members of the scheme agree to implement a fostering friendly personnel policy for all foster carers in their employment (regardless of their fostering service). This includes offering foster carers flexible working and paid time off for training and settling a new child into their home. The Fostering Friendly team will provide employers all the advice and support they need to join the scheme. The Fostering Network is a Fostering Friendly employer and can share a template personnel policy. Local companies not wishing to become Foster Friendly can also support through advertising, promoting events and pledging support, for example by offering apprenticeships or sponsorship.
- 4.2 The Fostering Team have been working closely with the Fostering Network who are working independently with large national companies. They will forward links and connections to Derby City as they are accredited.
- 4.3 One of objectives within the Fostering Team's marketing strategy in 2022/23 was to increase awareness of Fostering Friendly status by encouraging 10 Derby City-based companies to achieve this status by April 2023. Considerable work has been undertaken to reach out to Rolls Royce, Derby County Football Club, Derby University, the NHS, Integrated Care Board, Derby Fire service, Derbyshire police, and NatWest bank. Interest has been good but the team are yet to secure any formal sign up.
- 4.3 The Fostering Team have held two recruitment events for Council employees resulting in one approval to date.



Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 Internal marketing has occurred across the Council and significant external promotion of the scheme has been undertaken to date with Rolls Royce, Derby County Football Club, Derby University, the NHS, Integrated Care Board, Derby Fire service, Derbyshire police, and NatWest bank.

Other options

- 6.1 None considered

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 There will be home and family created for a looked after child with every new foster carer approved under this scheme. This will reduce the reliance on independent foster agency placements and will improve overall placement sufficiency for Derby.

Legal implications

- 8.1 None identified

Climate implications

- 9.1 None identified

Socio-Economic implications



- 10.1 None identified

Other significant implications

Appendix 1:

This report has been approved by the following people:

| Role | Name | Date of sign-off |
|---------------------|---|------------------|
| Legal | | |
| Finance | | |
| Service Director(s) | Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care | 12 February 2023 |
| Report sponsor | Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care | 12 February 2023 |
| Other(s) | | |

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|----------------------------|---|--|
| Background papers: | Foster carer leave policy, Foster carer leave policy (derby.gov.uk) | |
| | Combining Fostering and Other Work Report |  |
| | Fostering Network Link Fostering Friendly The Fostering Network | Foster friendly status (002).pdf |
| List of appendices: | Fostering Friendly presentation |  FOSTERING FRIENDLY POWERPO |