



## **Fostering Agency Report**

### **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services require that the executive side of the local authority:
- a. Receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the fostering service every three months;
  - b. Monitor the management and outcomes of the service 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.

(Standard 25.7)

The Fostering Agency is required to produce a Statement of Purpose which is updated once a year.

- 1.2 The last report covered the period October to December 2012 and was provided in February 2013 along with an annual updated statement of purpose. This report covers the period January to March 2013.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To approve the Fostering Agency report.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 To comply with Guidance and regulations and National Minimum Standards for Foster Care.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 4.1 A full inspection of the Fostering Service took place in October and November 2011 and the grading was Good

- 4.2 The membership of the fostering panel complies with Guidance and Regulations and National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. It consists of an independent chair and vice-chair, an elected member, a qualified social worker, a health service representative, a foster carer and fostering social worker, a care-experienced young person and other independent members with relevant experience. The panel is supported by a professional advisor and also has access to medical and legal advice as required. The Agency Decision Maker is the Head of Service for CiC Regulated Services.
- 4.3 The number of people expressing an interest in fostering has remained consistent, with mainstream approvals more or less keeping pace with de-registrations and the number of approved carers in each category.
- 4.4 The fostering service works with a fostering marketing officer in the corporate marketing and communications team to deliver a programme of promotional activities. Increasing the number of carers is a priority action for the Service and a decision has been taken to secure a specialist fostering and adoption marketing consultant to undertake 'quick wins' of increased DCC website self-service and promotional material and to develop a marketing strategy .
- 4.5 Derby's high number of CiC has necessitated an increasing use of independent fostering agency placements (IFA) which creates a significant budget pressure and increase in number of children placed out of Derby. This highlights the urgent need to look to increase the number of foster carers.
- 4.6 Fostering duty continues to provide a 9.00 to 5.00 service every working day and an out of hour's telephone service. Two social worker posts are now dedicated to assessing, training and supporting friends and family carers and specific training and support packages are being developed.
- 4.7 One set of foster carers has been deregistered in this period due to concerns. There have been no further appeals to the Independent Reviewing Mechanism
- 4.8 The Derby Foster Carers' Charter which sets out agreed expectations and commitments of both foster carers and the fostering service is now in place.
- 4.9 With support from the Fostering Network the Foster Carer Association has been re launched and is now has membership of Corporate Parenting Commission.
- 4.10 157 of our mainstream carers have now completed the required Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Carers and Friends and Family carers are now being supported to achieve the same.

<b>OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED</b>
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5.1 Not applicable

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

<b>Legal officer</b> <b>Financial officer</b> <b>Human Resources officer</b> <b>Service Director(s)</b> <b>Other(s)</b>	Mark Barratt: Director of Specialist Services CYPD DMT
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<b>For more information contact:</b> <b>Background papers:</b> <b>List of appendices:</b>	Hazel Lymbery: Head of CiC Regulated Services 01332 642641 hazel.lymbery@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 Implications Appendix 2 Recruitment Activity Report Appendix 3 Duty Activity report
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## IMPLICATIONS

### Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The cost of providing the Fostering Service is contained within fixed cost-centre budgets. A budget increase in 2012-13 allowed fostering allowances to be up-rated to keep pace with the recommended national minimum rate.
- 1.2 Any increase in the shortfall of in-house placements has a direct financial effect due to the much higher placement costs in the independent sector. It is therefore essential increase the recruitment and retention of foster carers.
- 1.3 In the event of an appeal to the IRM the cost falls on the fostering service provider. The fee is around £2500 for each case.

### Legal

- 2.1 The fostering function of the Council is regulated by the 1989 Children Act and the Associated Fostering Regulations, guidance and the minimum standards published in 2011.

### Personnel

- 3.1 The service became managed by a Head of Service for CiC Regulated Services in February 2013 which brought the fostering, adoption and children homes services under the management of a single manager. There are 2.8 whole time equivalent team managers and 16.8 whole time equivalent social workers carry out the full range of fostering activities.

### Equalities Impact

- 4.1 The service continues to give due consideration to race, gender, culture, sexual orientation, religion, and disability in relation to children being placed and for adults who apply to become foster carers. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and further efforts will be made this year to recruit carers from BME communities and carers for disabled children.

### Health and Safety

- 5.1 This is considered at all stages of the recruitment, assessment, training and support of foster carers. All the managers in the service have completed mandatory Health and Safety training in the last three months.

## **Environmental Sustainability**

6.1 None arising from this report

## **Asset Management**

7.1 None arising from this report

## **Risk Management**

8.1 Risk is managed at all stages of the fostering process.

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

- 9.1 Corporate and departmental objectives are pursued through business plans and individual performance plans throughout the service. The report contributes to the following Council objectives:
- Good quality services that meet local needs

## Appendix 2

### Recruitment Activity report 2012 to 2013

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>Recruitment</b>												
Expressions of interest	42	43	24	31	21	26	20	22	17	34	32	35
Initial Visits	6	6	5	5	11	14	9	4	1	8	6	12
Mainstream applications received	1	3	1	1	2	1	3	1	2	2	2	3
Friends & family applications received	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Approvals	1	1	3	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	2
De-registration	1	5	0	4	5	4	2	2	5	2	1	1
<b>Carers</b>												
Mainstream	100	99	101	99	99	100	100	100	100	100	100	101
Friends & family	29	28	27	27	27	27	27	28	26	25	25	23
Respite only	13	13	14	13	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
Support Carers	27	26	26	25	21	18	18	17	14	4*	4	4
Link only	18	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	20	19
Total	187	185	187	183	180	178	178	178	173	162	163	161
<b>Placements</b>												
All children	212	204	205	205	196	197	190	189	187	193	182	186

**Please note that the reduction from 14 support carers in December 2012 to 4 support carers in January 2013 is due to a change in the approval status for this type of carer. To meet Ofsted regulations these carers now have to meet national minimum standards and only four of the 14 chose to complete this assessment.**

## Appendix 3

### Duty activity 2012 to 2013

	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Referrals</b>	26	37	25	35	25	31	39	56	17	28	22	40	381
<b>Placed with DCC carers</b>	5	14	5	7	5	4	8	8	4	7	3	13	83
<b>Referred for external placement</b>	5	3	6	2	2	0	6	7	2	4	4	8	49
<b>Placed for respite only</b>	12	9	5	12	8	18	20	21	5	7	8	17	142