

Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board
Date: 24th October 2019
Title of report: Annual Review of Foster Carer's Handbook

Purpose of report

To update the Board of the annual review of the Foster Carer's Handbook.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	NA
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	NA
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	NA
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Elaine McShane
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	NA
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	NA
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr V Kendrick Childrens Portfolio

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: No

Public or private: Public

(Have you considered GDPR?)

Yes GDPR has been considered. The information in this report does not identify any individuals.

1. **Summary**

The Fostering Team supplies a handbook as a useful resource, providing advice and support for both new and established foster carers. The latest version of the Foster Carer's Handbook is attached.

The aim is for it to cover the day-to-day issues carers may face in their role, as well as containing helpful guidelines and information on procedures and good practice and to be a useful reference manual.

Carers and Supervising Social workers were asked in September 2019 as to whether they had any areas they wished to be included or updated.

Our updates for this year included:

- Child Sexual exploitation section
- Risk and Vulnerabilities Team section
- Equipment updates with revised costings
- Update on emergency placements and purchase of clothing and essential items.
- Changes to the Placement Support Team
- Foster carers health and wellbeing and self-referral to employee health

Foster carers play an important role in the lives of Children Looked After and their families so it is important that they have the necessary tools to support them with this task. The handbook is one such tool, alongside support from their Supervising Social Worker, other professionals and other foster carers/Kirklees Fostering Network.

We have consulted with foster carers, Supervising Social Workers, Virtual School and the risks and vulnerabilities' team in updating this handbook.

Last year we emailed the handbook as well as supplied hard copies. Moving forward we initially considered the use of a portal to allow carers to access the handbook. However having looked at the approach taken by our neighbouring authorities, we were impressed by the electronic versions that were available on the internet and thus freely available to read. We are in negotiations with the Web Team to move this forward.

2. **Information required to take a decision**

No decision is required, this report is submitted as an update at the request of the Board.

3. **Implications for the Council**

3.1 **Working with People** Not applicable

3.2 **Working with Partners** Not applicable

3.3 **Place Based Working** Not applicable

3.4 **Improving Outcomes for Children**

This information is provided at the request of Corporate Parenting Board to outline the updated handbook. As above, this is one of our tools to support our carers in the care of our children.

3.5 Reducing demand of services

Not applicable

3.6 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Not applicable

4. Consultees and their opinions

Included as stated above.

5. Next steps

The report to have a corporate makeover before issuing to carers. There will be further work on producing an internet version.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the review of the Foster Carer's Handbook be noted.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

Not applicable

8. Contact officer

Andy Quinlan, Service Manager

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

N/A.

10. Service Director responsible

Elaine McShane, Service Director (Child Protection and Family Support)