



Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board
Date: 18 December 2019
Title of report: Children in Care Services Performance Highlights (Fostering and Children’s Homes)

Purpose of report

This report outlines key performance highlights for children in care and care leavers up to October 31st 2019, for the board to consider and comment upon.

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?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the Council’s Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not applicable – for information
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Tom Brailsford for Mel Meggs (6.12.19)
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	Not applicable
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	Not applicable
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr V Kendrick (Children)

Electoral wards affected: None

Ward councillors consulted: None

Public or private: Public

Have you considered GDPR? Yes GDPR considered no service users identified

1. Summary

Fostering Service

What difference did we make?

A review of the Fostering Service operating model has begun to ensure we are focussing our resources in the correct way, and that our existing carers are receiving good support. It was also highlighted more positively that at the time of the 2016 inspection 66% of children were cared for in family settings at this inspection this had risen to 75%, due to increases in connected persons and other fostering, and a reduction in residential use.

Recruitment and retention of foster carers is a priority as is reducing use fostering agency care. The Service Manager is focussing on these challenges as two separate matters, improving our offer for existing carers and a focus on recruitment, we currently have eighteen prospective households at stage 1 and 2 of the recruitment pathway. We continue to develop the Recruitment Team to increase numbers of Kirklees carers and will have focussed campaigns for respite care that can be a softer introduction to fostering, and teenagers exhibiting troubled and troublesome behaviours. A recruitment and retention focus for our foster carers is a key strand of our improvement work and the Service Manager is working closely with the Recruitment Team to ensure that the numbers of assessments increase and that they are completed in a timely fashion. Capacity has been realigned to improve timelines for applications to foster Form F assessments. All foster carer resignations are scrutinised by the service manager and panel, and expression of interest in fostering that does not progress is peer challenged within the fostering team

What do we want to improve?

The Challenges re carer recruitment are a national issue. Latest figures from the National Fostering Network show that 8,500 more fostering households are needed across the UK. The carer supply and demand activity has led to supply constraints, with less choice of carer availability across the UK, we experience this at a local level.

Fostering Placements Profile October 2019

Internal Fostering 225

Connected Person Fostering 95

Independent Agency Fostering 173

Funded Staying Put 19

There is a specific piece of work taking place with the Fostering Team and Children in Care Social Work Team, tracking long term family finding challenges and focussing on long term family finding for a number of children in short term fostering placements.

The Service Manager is working closely with the Kirklees Fostering Network to continue to develop our fostering service and ensure that carers are supported appropriately. A foster carer is now attending the Corporate Parenting Board.

A regular meeting is now in place to review calls to the foster carer helpline and we meet with the foster carers who operate the helpline. We have launched a new package of carer benefits including access to the employee health scheme, and access to the staff discounted shopping scheme.

Our bid to the Department for Education to fund the “Mockingbird” model of fostering, was not successful however we now have some internal funding available. We will be consulting with Kirklees Fostering Network, and other stakeholders to discuss how we can develop our Kirklees model, and work with the National Fostering Implementation team, who hold responsibility for monitoring the application and “fidelity” of the licensed model. A Service Manager with commissioning background is now line managing the Placement Finding Team, the Placement Support Team is now line managed within Children in Care social work. A new Reviewing Officer post is in place for foster carers, ensuring challenge and scrutiny is appropriate and carers feel supported by the service, this is the first time our carers have had the benefit of independent review rather than fostering manager peer reviews.

A Carer Training analysis and refresh is to take place. All Private Fostering assessments now take place within the fostering service. It was highlighted during the Ofsted inspection that recording latency was causing an issue in the Fostering Service, and that the service needs to make better use of data.

Childrens Homes

The Councils five Ofsted Registered Childrens Homes have all been inspected unannounced by Ofsted in the 18/19 financial year, for their main annual inspection four are graded as Good and one Outstanding. The homes will all be re inspected unannounced in this financial year, and reports will be published in due course this information will then be put on the agenda for a future Corporate Parenting Board.

2. **Information required to take a decision**
Not applicable
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**

Oversight and monitoring of children in care performance to continue at future Corporate Parenting Board to monitor progress, as requested by the Chair.
 - 3.5 **Reducing demand of services**
Not applicable
 - 3.6 **Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)**
Not applicable
4. **Consultees and their opinions**
Not applicable
5. **Next steps**
Managers to lead the focus on areas of performance with staff, in areas where outcome data is not what we expect it to be.
6. **Officer recommendations and reasons**
That the report and key highlights on performance within Children in Care Services be noted.
7. **Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations**
Not applicable
8. **Contact officer**
Steve Comb, 01484 221000
steve.comb@kirklees.gov.uk
9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**
Monthly performance information is used to inform the narrative for this report
10. **Service Director responsible**

Tom Brailsford, Service Director (Resources Improvement Partnerships)