



**Name of meeting:** Corporate Parenting Board  
**Date:** 10 February 2020  
**Title of report:** Children in Care Services Performance Highlights (Fostering and Children's Homes)

**Purpose of report**

This report outlines key performance for Fostering Service and Childrens Homes up to December 31st 2019, for the board to consider and comment upon.

<b>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?</b>	No
<b>Key Decision - Is it in the <a href="#">Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)</a></b>	No
<b>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</b>	Not applicable – for information
<b>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> &amp; name</b>	Tom Brailsford for Mel Meggs 28.1.20
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>	Not applicable
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</b>	Not applicable
<b>Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a></b>	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?

December 2019 saw two new carer approvals, one in-house and one connected carer. The rolling 12-month total of approved carers to December was 21 approvals. There were two in-house fostering de-registrations in Dec 19 (including connected carers). The number of children placed with Kirklees foster carers increased to 240 in December 2019, a slight increase from the level in November. This is above the 12-month average of 226. The number of connected person's placements decreased, from 95 in July 2019 to 89 in Dec 2019 (Note that this figure includes Regulation 24 placements). The September 2019 figure of 181 for agency fostering represented a 12-month high in the number of Independent Agency placements, although this has now reduced slightly to 175 December 2019. This compares to a 12-month low of 157 in January 2019. This increase reflects the use of independent agency foster care to place the increased number of children in our care, because we did not have internal carers available. Prospective carers in assessment Stage 1 fostering advisors nine Stage 2 nineteen this includes six supported lodgings, one of which is a Connected Persons. Exit interview feedback to service manager is in place for any carer who resigns.

#### What do we want to improve?

Recruitment and retention of foster carers is a priority as is reducing the use of 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 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.

We have recently signed an agreement with the National Fostering Network to work together this year to implement two Foster Carer Mockingbird hubs in Kirklees, this model facilitates additional support to specific carers. 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. The Challenges re carer recruitment are a both a local and 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. We continue to pursue a range of recruitment activity, to improve our internet search presence to prospective carers we have entered into an agreement with “Google Ads”. The Service Manager is working closely with the Kirklees Fostering Network to continue to develop our fostering service offer and ensure that carers are supported appropriately.

Foster carers now have membership of the Corporate Parenting Board. We have launched a new package of carer benefits including access to the employee health scheme, and access to the staff discounted shopping scheme. 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 Carer Training analysis and refresh is to take place

## **Childrens Homes**

Three of the Councils five Ofsted Registered Childrens Homes have been inspected individually unannounced over two days by Ofsted between October and December 2019. We are pleased to report that the homes have been graded as “Good” overall. Our two further homes will be inspected unannounced in this financial year.

### **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 Climate Change and Air Quality**

Not applicable

#### **3.5 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.

#### **3.6 Reducing demand of services**

Not applicable

#### **3.7 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 Fostering and Children's Homes be noted.
7. **Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations**  
Not applicable
8. **Contact officer**  
Steve Comb, 01484 221000  
[steve.comb@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto: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)