
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

7 October 2021

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Councillor P Seaman

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Children's Services

Ward(s) affected:

none

Title:

Coventry City Council Annual Fostering Report

Is this a key decision?

No - although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet Member of the work undertaken by the Fostering Service between April 2020 and March 2021. The performance of Coventry Fostering Service is critical to the delivery of high-quality local placements that can meet the diverse needs of Coventry's looked after children. The report summarises the activity of the service over the past 12 months. It highlights the challenge of adequately recruiting and retaining the number and type of carers who can meet vulnerable children's needs. It also emphasises the challenge of developing, supervising and supporting approved foster carers to meet the often-complex range of needs that looked after children have.

This report identifies the growth in the number of children placed in the internal foster care estate resulting in a decrease in external placements. The report outlines an increase in connected persons fostering arrangements and details the ongoing work of the Fostering Transformation Project.

Recommendations:

Cabinet Member is requested to:

- 1) Analyse and endorse the work completed in this area of work.

List of Appendices included:

Fostering Annual Report 2020-21

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

Yes –Corporate Parenting Board at a date to be confirmed.

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Coventry City Council Annual Adoption Report

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Each local authority in England is obliged by National Minimum Standards to formally understand analyse and approve the performance of its fostering service in an annual basis. The attached report in the appendix is part of a range of opportunities to do this.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Cabinet Member is requested to:

Analyse and endorse the work completed in this area of work.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 Consultation occurs on several levels with children and foster carers. This work is documented within the body of the appendices where appropriate.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 This is an annual report and work will continue in this area over the next 12 months

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Director of Law and Governance

5.1 Financial implications

	2018/19 £000	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000
Budget	5,932	5,566	6,321
Expenditure	4,719	5,435	5,843

- 5.1.1 Internal fostering continues to be one of the most cost-effective placements for Looked After Children, as well as providing quality outcomes for Coventry children. Expenditure continues to increase as the service grows and the budget will increase in future years to reflect increased service targets. Resources will also be made available to expand the internal fostering team in line with the increasing number of foster carers.

- 5.1.2 Fostering fees for 2020/21 were increased by 1.5% from 2019/20 levels in order to recognise the impact of inflation and to ensure that our rates remain competitive with those of surrounding local authorities.

5.2 Legal implications

- 5.2.1 The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 state that the fostering service Provider must compile a written statement in relation to the fostering service ("the statement of purpose") which consists of —
- (a) a statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service, and
 - (b) a statement as to the services and facilities (including any parent and child arrangements) provided by the fostering service.

5.2.2 The fostering service provider must provide a copy of the statement of purpose to the Chief Inspector, place a copy on their website (if they have one), and make copies available, upon request, to —

- (a) any person working for the purposes of the fostering service,
- (b) any foster parent or prospective foster parent of the fostering service,
- (c) any child placed with a foster parent by the fostering service, and
- (d) the parent of any such child.

5.2.3 Under Statutory Guidance the fostering service must compile a Statement of Purpose, which sets out the aims and objectives of the service as a whole, and the services, and facilities which are provided (including the provision of any “parent and child arrangements”). The statement must be reviewed and updated as necessary, but at least annually and published on the provider’s website (if they have one), with a copy provided to Ofsted. The statement of purpose is placed on the Coventry City Council website and can be accessed through the link:

https://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/31786/fostering_service_statement_of_purpose

6. Other implications

None

6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

The fostering service contributes to the Council plan in the following ways:

- Locally connected: foster carers keep children safe and contribute to them getting the best start in life. In addition, by developing the skills of foster carers this will improve outcomes for children. By keeping children local, with local foster carers, this means that a multi-agency package of support to be developed for each child more easily
- Delivering our priorities with fewer resources: by developing a robust fostering service, this means less reliance on more expensive external placements.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

Any risk is being managed through robust leadership and management within the service and review by an internal Placements Board. This provides robust challenge to the delivery against the targets set for the service, in examining the increase in foster carer households and occupancy of approved beds. This in turn reports to the Children’s Services Leadership Team and Lead Member as appropriate.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

Increasing the numbers of internal foster carers and children placed internally will reduce the need for more costly external placements and enable looked after children to be placed closer to their home. This will mean better outcomes for looked after children in Coventry. This is crucial to the Council’s Corporate Parenting responsibilities. This report is also reviewed by the Corporate Parenting Board.

6.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Promoting equality of opportunity is a key part of the fostering service. This is considered in the report documented in the appendix.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

Report author(s):

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

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Director: John Gregg	Director of Children's services	Children's Services		6 September 2021
Members: Cllr P Seaman	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People			8 September 2021

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www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings

Appendices