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**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

**16 October 2025**

**Subject: Children's Services Annual Fostering Report 2024/2025**

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## **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) of fostering activity and performance in 2024/2025. (Appendix 1)

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
  - 1) To note the outcome and progress in 2024/2025
  - 2) Identify any recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member.

## **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 Foster care is subject to legislative and regulatory guidance through The Children Act 1989, The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the Fostering Services: National minimum standards 2011. It is further regulated through the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations published in 2010 and the Assessment and Approval of Foster carers guidance 2013.
- 3.2 The regulatory framework for fostering sets out the minimum standards expected to ensure that the care provided by foster carers is adequate to ensure that those children placed within fostering homes are well cared for and achieve good outcomes.
- 3.3 The requirement for fostering agencies to produce an annual report is primarily set out by Ofsted and governed by the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, specifically Regulation 35, along with the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, particularly Standard 25.7. This can be found at Appendix 1.

## **4 Fostering Service activity and performance update**

- 4.1 The purpose of the annual report is to evaluate the effectiveness of the fostering service; to identify areas for improvement and development; to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements; to inform stakeholders, about the service outcomes and future plans. The review of the Fostering service activity and performance data is outlined in the Annual Fostering Service report attached. (Appendix 1).

## **5 Summary and priorities for the next 12 months**

- 5.1 The Fostering Service plan to improve and develop the following key areas in 2025/2026:

- Continue to drive the Fostering Excellence Project to enable increased capacity and resilience of internal mainstream fostering households
- Continue to develop recruitment of carers from a range of diverse backgrounds to more closely match the backgrounds of children in care
- Identify reasons for drop out between enquiry, expression of interest and approval, to improve conversion rate
- Finalising and launch Coventry's Kinship strategy and offer
- Continue to develop Kinship fostering in line with the Kinship strategy and our Kinship offer and aim to increase permanence through special guardianship arrangements
- Ongoing growth of the Next steps fostering scheme
- Relaunch parent and child and out of hours schemes
- Launch a short stay provision to support families in need to prevent children coming into care
- Continue to ensure foster carers are consulted about all changes that affect their role
- Widen mentoring offer for connected persons carers and offer to applicants during the assessment process
- Review support available to children of foster carers and newly approved foster carers during their induction period
- Embed DDP principles and continue to upskill all workforce caring for children

Appendix 1: Fostering Annual Report 2024-25

### **Authors:**

Sukriti Sen, Director for Children and Education Services  
Angela Whitrick, Strategic Lead, Corporate Parenting & Sufficiency  
Zelma Van Rhyn, Operational Lead, Fostering

**Contact details:** [Sukriti.sen@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:Sukriti.sen@coventry.gov.uk) Tel: 02476 978470  
[Angela.whitrick@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:Angela.whitrick@coventry.gov.uk) Tel: 07970465027  
[Zelma.vanrhyn@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:Zelma.vanrhyn@coventry.gov.uk) Tel: 02476975489