

Corporate Parenting Panel

20 July 2018

Fostering Annual Report



Report of Karen Robb, Strategic Manager Looked After Children and Permanence, Durham County Council

Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide the Corporate Parenting Panel with a summary of activity within Durham County Council's Fostering Service.
- 2 The report identifies and analyses the performance of the Fostering Service, including the Fostering Panels, and reflects upon the development of the service over the past 12 months. The report also sets out the strategic priorities for the service in the coming year and beyond.

Background

- 3 The information presented in the report relates to the activity within Durham County Council Fostering Service and the activity of the Fostering Panels.
- 4 The report covers the reporting period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.
- 5 The report complies with the statutory requirements as set out under Regulation 35 (review of quality of care) of the Fostering Regulations 2011. These require the responsible individual should monitor all matters set out in Schedule 7, which relate to standards of care and the overall management of the service and to improve the quality of the foster care provided by the Fostering Service.

Recommendations

- 6 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are recommended to receive the Annual Report at the meeting on 20 July 2018, and discuss, to ensure there is ongoing improvement of the service to meet the needs of children looked after within foster care.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – The increased numbers of looked after children is an area of budget pressure. Work is taking place on the recruitment of foster carers, to meet the needs of looked after children and care leavers.

Staffing – The increased numbers of looked after children has an impact on the caseloads of social workers across the service.

Risk – The Local Authority must ensure it adequately safeguards children who are deemed at risk of significant harm and provide suitable care where children cannot live within their families. Not to do so, places the Council at risk if children are harmed and risks a poor Ofsted outcome.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – The service must ensure it has sufficient foster carers who can meet the diverse needs of looked after children who may have special needs arising from disability or their cultural or heritage backgrounds.

Accommodation– None

Crime and Disorder– None

Human Rights– Children and young people have the right to a family life where they can flourish and achieve the best outcomes that they can. Where children cannot live safely within their birth families, the Local Authority must ensure it makes satisfactory and suitable arrangements for their care as children and into adulthood.

Consultation– None

Procurement– None

Disability Issues– Children and young people with disabilities or complex needs will require foster carers with special skills to meet their needs. This is part of the Recruitment Strategy for the Fostering Service.

Legal Implications– Children's Services works within a clear statutory framework under the Children Act 1989 and associated legislation to ensure children and young people are safeguarded from significant harm.

Appendix 2: Fostering Annual Report

Attached as a separate document

Appendix 3: Foster carer training programme

Attached as a separate document