

# Corporate Parenting Board

## 22 September 2016

<b>Report title</b>	Wolverhampton Fostering Annual Report April 2015 to March 2016	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Families	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Emma Bennett, Children and Young People	
<b>Originating service</b>	Looked After Children	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Shirley Gounder	Senior Social Work Manager
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<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>		

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### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. receive, observe, and provide feedback on the Fostering Annual Report for 2015/2016.

## **1.0 Purpose**

To enable the Corporate Parenting Board to have a clear understanding of the work undertaken by the Fostering Service between April 2015 and March 2016.

## **2.0 Background**

2.1 The Fostering Service Annual Report, which is attached, highlights the work of the Fostering Service for the period April 2015 to March 2016. Under the Fostering Service Regulations 2011, the Fostering Service must provide the executive side of the Council with written activities of the Fostering Service.

## **3.0 Progress**

3.1 The report continues to show improvements in the recruitment process of foster carers through targeted marketing activity. The service is striving to meet targets to increase the number of local foster placements for Wolverhampton children, which will help to reduce the reliance on expensive Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements. Placements have on the whole remain stable, with consistent supportive training such as the Keep Foster Carers Trained and Supported (KEEP) programme.

3.2 The Fostering Service is helped in supporting carers and children through partnerships with schools and health services. Within Children's Services, there continue to be effective working relationships between the Looked After Children's Teams and Locality teams.

3.4 The intention is to continue to expand the foster carer community and develop specialist fostering provision within the service.

## **4.0 Financial implications**

4.1 The approved budget for 2015/16 for the Fostering Service is £5.6 million.

4.2 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.  
NN/12092016/0

## **5.0 Legal implications**

5.1 Under the Fostering Service Regulations 2011, which came into effect on 1 April 2011, the Fostering Service must provide Council with written reports on the activities of the Fostering Service.

RB/14092016/Y

## **6.0 Equalities implications**

6.1 We want to have continuous improvements in securing local foster placements, for children from all backgrounds including those of ethnic minority communities, and disabled children and their families, to ensure equality of access to services for all Wolverhampton children who are Looked After by the local authority.

## **7.0 Environmental implications**

7.1 There are no identified environmental implications.

## **8.0 Human resources implications**

8.1 There are no known Human resources implications.

## **9.0 Corporate landlord implications**

9.1 There are no known Corporate landlord implications.

## **10.0 Schedule of background papers**

10.1 The full Annual Fostering Report April 2015- March 2016 is attached.

## **11.1 Appendix 1- Comments from the Children in Care Council**

## 11.1 Appendix 1 - Comments from the Children in Care Council

The report was accepted by the CICC on 07/09/16 and they asked the following questions:

1. Can you use the young people as advertisement for recruitment as we are aware that there is a stigma attached to young people and how people are less likely to foster us as they think we are not good at anything and will never amount to anything? – Reassurance given that this message is driven through training and recruitment and we would welcome young people involved in Skills to Foster training in the future.

2. Why is there a difference in pocket money and savings for external carers? Advised young people that this is an on-going issue and should be challenged via the LAC Reviews with their IRO and social worker if young people do not feel they are getting sufficient allowances. IROs are independent and therefore would be most appropriate to address.

3. Is online training effective? How can you be sure foster carers aren't just clicking through the screens as have overheard carers saying this and about how boring training can be? Reassured that online training is monitored by Esther who can see how long the training has been accessed for and carers then complete a learning log which reflects on what carers have learned to ensure this is not the case. Training is now more varied to avoid carers finding this mundane and repetitive.

4. When you talk about Men Supporting Men training groups, does this mean you are recruiting single and same sex males for fostering? Explained the training was to look at the male role in caring but that we certainly have recruited same sex males and single men as we assess the ability to meet the needs of the child, regardless of gender and sexuality. Another young person stated that she has seen fostering recruitment stands at Gay PRIDE and we confirmed that this year, we were also present promoting fostering for Wolverhampton.

5. Can external IFAs be questioned about the training they attend? Reassured that again, carers should be completing necessary training to meet their fostering standards and that we have an intention to sell places to IFA carers to attend our KEEP training.