

Appendix 2: Fostering Communications Plan (Sept 14) DRAFT

Research	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There's a significant amount of national and regional research available to help shape our recruitment and retention communication approach. In particular, this plan relies on two recent national reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Childhood Wellbeing Centre's 2012 report 'Demographic characteristics of foster carers in the UK: motivations, barriers and messages for recruitment and retention • The Fostering Networks 2013 'Why foster carers care'. 2. Regional research has involved discussions with the fostering communications network and other local authorities 3. Local research includes quantitative information from the City Council's fostering service and a review of previous communication approaches 4. Key points to shape our approach are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 2011, Wolverhampton has seen a significant rise in looked after children (LAC) numbers. Currently (Sept 2014) there are 783 children in care aged 0 to 18 years and 160 local authority fostering families. • A significant amount of investment has been made in marketing over the last two years. This stimulated significant demand in terms of awareness and interest (call volumes) but didn't translate into leads and conversions. This suggests that marketing needs to be more targeted and importantly, that the service needs to be reviewed and process-mapped to ensure we are maximising opportunities • MOSAIC profiling of Wolverhampton foster carers identifies six key target profiles (see target audiences below). This broadly aligns to research undertaken by regional colleagues. • Key communication channels based on feedback from callers is word of mouth, digital • A notable proportion of foster carers have experience in the caring or childcare professions • The decision to foster is based on an individuals' core values • The main motivating factor cited by fosterers is their desire to make a difference and do the right thing. Financial gain is a secondary motivating factor • The Council is also introducing a new 'specialist foster carer' service which will require a specific, separate communications plan
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of the rewards and benefits of fostering amongst key target audiences • Generate 120 viable enquiries a month (by web, phone or direct engagement): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - between 1 October and 31 March 2015 (720 in total) to help recruit 30 new fosterers - between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016 (1440 in total) to help recruit X new fosterers

- Develop a customer-focused foster carer membership communications and engagement plan to support retention.

Strategy

- Under campaign brand name of 'You can make a difference' to personalise the appeal
- Continuous and sustained targeted communication activity for a three year period, augmented by campaign peaks in late Nov/early Dec (to tie in with the festive/family period) and May (to tie in with Fostering fortnight)
- Digital by design to ensure campaign is more targeted and easy for customers to use (need to make self-assessment form live)
- Value-based, demographic targeting
- Emotional appeal: creative design / marketing collateral to focus on the urgent welfare needs of the children and messages to stress the difference a positive family environment could make to them
- Involve foster carers throughout communication planning and delivery as key stakeholders and advocates
- Needs to focus on retention/membership communication / relationship marketing as well as recruitment. Focus on fosterers as 'customer' and move to a more 'customer orientated service
- Exploit use of better database management and the new CRM system that's being introduced in summer 2015
- Explore potential of regional collaboration to offer up new opportunities such as TV advertising
- NOTE: a specific communication plan will be developed for Special Foster Carers

Implementation

1. Target audiences:
 - a) Mosaic profiles:
 - Group M 'Family Basics': families with children who have limited budgets and can struggle to make ends meet (22%)
 - Group K 'Modest Traditions: Mature homeowners of value homes enjoying stable lifestyles (13.4%)
 - Group L 'Transient renters': Single people privately renting low cost homes for the short-term (11.34%)
 - Group H 'Aspiring homemakers': Younger households settling down in housing priced within their means (11.34%)
 - Group F 'Senior security': elderly people with assets who are enjoying a comfortable retirement (10.31%)
 - Group N 'Vintage value': Elderly people reliant on support to meet financial or practical ends (10.31%)
 - b) Activists / volunteers working for charities
 - c) Faith-based groups / volunteers
 - d) Retired / retiring police officers (NARPO)
 - e) Retired / retiring teachers

- f) Nurses
- g) GPs
- h) Fire officers
- i) Probation
- j) Council workers

2. *Key messages*

Need to resonate with the value-based motivation of the target audiences, perhaps a more emotive appeal focusing on how fosterers can help following the breakdown of family relationships and the destabilisation of children

- Could you care for a child in need?
- Want to give something back to your community and provide a caring, stable home for a local child in need?
- Do you have time, motivation and a spare bedroom to be able to care
- We are looking for people of all ages and backgrounds to be foster carers
- You'll receive professional support and training
- You could earn £20,000 a year

3. *Key Communication Channels:*

- Mosaic group M: Facebook, SMS/mobile, Twitter, email, post, landline
- Mosaic group L,H: Facebook, Twitter, Email, SMS
- Mosaic group N,K, F: post and landline
- Direct mail / print distribution
- Outdoor/indoor events programme led by the service and targeting key profiles, city events, supermarkets and including a monthly Fostering Friday event at the same place and same time to be able to connect the wider communication approach
- Telesales (check?)
- Digital: social media (Facebook - Wolverhampton Today, Twitter - @Wolvescouncil)
- Website - www.wolverhampton.gov.uk
- Radio awareness to create awareness during peak campaign bursts
- Publicity (local, regional press/broadcast media)
- Internal: City People / email

4. Who does what?:

- Lead spokesperson: Cllr Val Gibson, Cabinet Member for Children and Families
- Supporting spokespeople: Foster carers (to be identified)
- SEB lead: Sarah Norman
- Service lead: Alison Hinds
- Comms lead: Shelley Jones
- Celebrity video endorsement support: (to be identified): [Narinder Dhami](#), [Beverley Knight](#), [Denise Lewis](#), [Wolves connection Goldie?](#)

4. Budget / expenditure

- 14/15 - £20K total (£8K from service and £12K from corporate communication)
- 15/16 - £30K total (funding source to tbc)
- 16/17 - (funding source to tbc)

14/15 – split of core expenditure

- Oct/Nov - £2,000 (£1,000 x 2) on digital
- Dec – campaign burst - £10,000 (see appendix two for more detail)
- Jan/Feb/March - £3,000 (£1,000 x 3) on digital

15/16 – split of core expenditure

- April - £1,000 on digital
- May – campaign burst - £10,000 (see appendix two for more detail)
- Jun-Dec - £7,000 (£1,000 x 7) on digital
- Jan/Feb/March - £3,000 (£1,000 x 3) on digital

16/17 – split of expenditure

- As 15/16

5. Action Plan: see detailed campaign planner and action planning grid below at Appendix 1.

Evaluation**1. Recruitment**

- number of fostering enquiries generated by web or phone per month against target set
- social media return on engagement: measured by reach, likes and comments generated through our social media activity
- proportion of unique website visits translated into enquiries
- return on investment for social media advertising equivalent to £X for every enquiry generated
- return on investment for direct mail equivalent to £X for every enquiry generated
- coverage in local and regional media (tone of coverage, positive messages used and reach)

2. Retention

- Fosterers survey and specifically change in perceptions of support, pride, level of communication and engagement over time
- Attrition rate reduced

Appendix one: Campaign plan and detailed action plan

Campaign activity	Month											
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	
Facebook advertising												
Twitter (series of pre-programmed and spontaneous tweets)												
Direct mail to mosaic profiles												
Direct mail / digital communications to key carer groups												
Events programme (one event a week)												
Web homepage link to key content												

Detailed action plan	Owner	When	Done
Develop draft communication plan for review and feedback	IF	26/9/14	
Develop and sign off survey for Wolverhampton fosterers	IF/SJ		
Distribute fosterers survey with two week feedback window			
Agree budget for Facebook advertising with service			
Focus group with fosterers to discuss survey and comms plan approach			
Put together a database of key contacts, names, addresses, email and social media of all key target audiences			
Agree temporary design for Facebook advert promoting programme of events			
Liaise with service and customer services to define requirements for monthly reporting			
Agree plan of service outside events in key areas, to deliver at least one per week			
Begin Facebook advertising and monitor			
Present new creative concepts for the campaign			
Identify list of key carer group contacts and engage with them to access membership			
Revise the format of the how did you hear about us question asked by City Direct to get more detailed info on which channels used			
STRATEGY NEEDS TO BE OPERATIONALISED HERE			

Appendix two: Burst campaign activity plan

- Twitter – tweet everyday linking to unique content (tbc)
- Web carousel for entire campaign with three changeovers
- Post card distribution to MOSAIC profile areas (one each week of activity)
- Pre-planned events integrated into the overall offer but high penetration during the two weeks of burst
- City poster display sites for the two weeks
- Radio advertising for the two weeks
- Weekly media releases / publicity

Appendix three: Best practice creative concepts suggested by fostering network

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Warrington Fostering website. The header features the text "Warrington Fostering - Change a life! - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by Wolverhampton City council" and the URL "http://warringtonfostering.co.uk/". The main navigation menu includes "Types Of Fostering", "Who can apply?", "Why Warrington?", "Our Children", "I'm interested", "News & Events", and "FAQS". The central banner has a blue background with the text "Changing lives in Warrington through Fostering". Below this, a purple box contains a testimonial from a 16-year-old named Terri, who wants to train to be a designer. The testimonial includes a photo of Terri and a call to action: "Call or fill in our enquiry form to see how you could change a life..." with the phone number "01925 444 100" and an "Enquire Online" button. Below the testimonial, it states: "To foster for Warrington, you can be single, married, living together, working, unemployed or retired. Our weekly allowances range from £295 - £495 per week". The footer includes a "Recent News & Events" section.

Imagine the
difference you
could make

Foster
a smile



Appendix four: Foster carers engagement survey

Foster Carer Survey

1. What motivated you to become a foster carer? (please rank your top three reasons in order of importance on a scale of 1-3 where 1 is most important)

<i>The opportunity to earn extra income</i>	
<i>The opportunity to have a job which means I can work from home</i>	
<i>The opportunity to make a difference to a local child in need</i>	
<i>The opportunity to get experience for my preferred career</i>	
<i>Our children have grown up and we wanted to have children in the house again</i>	
<i>We're not able to have children of our own</i>	
<i>Fostering was recommended to me by another foster carer</i>	
<i>Other (please state)</i>	

2. How easy did you find the process of becoming a foster carer?
Very easy Easy Difficult Very difficult Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer:

3. Do you feel you are treated as a valued member of the Fostering for Wolverhampton team?
Always *Mostly* *Sometimes* *Never* *Don't know*

4. Are you given all the information you need when a child is placed with you?
Always *Mostly* *Sometimes* *Never* *Don't know*

5. If you answered sometimes or never, what additional information did you need about a child being placed with you?

6. Do you feel able to make decisions on behalf of the child in your care?
Always *Mostly* *Sometimes* *Never* *Don't know*

7. Is the training that we provide helpful?
Always *Mostly* *Sometimes* *Never* *Don't know*

8. Is there anything not covered in your training that you would like to see included?

9. How do you rate the support received from your social worker?
Excellent *Good* *Average* *Poor* *Don't know*

Is there any additional support you would like? Please specify below:

10. How has the support you receive changed since you started fostering?

Better *Same* *Worse* *Don't know*

11. Which best describes the allowance you receive?

Covers all costs *Covers some costs* *Doesn't cover costs* *Don't know*

12. Is your total income from fostering fair?

Yes *No* *Don't know*

13. How well do you think children in your care are achieving academically?

Excellent *Good* *Average* *Poor* *Don't know*

14. Do you feel able to support children in your care with their education?

Yes *No* *Sometimes* *Don't know*

15. If you could change one thing about your fostering experience what would it be?

16. How do you think the public view the work of foster carers?

Excellent *Good* *Average* *Poor* *Don't know*

17. What is the best thing about fostering?

18. What is the worst thing about fostering?

19. Are you proud of being a foster carer?

Yes *No* *Don't know*

20. How has your experience of fostering compared with your expectations?

Easier *The same as expected* *More difficult* *Don't know*

21. Have you found being a foster carer a rewarding experience?

Yes *No* *Don't know*

22. Would you recommend fostering to others?

Yes I have *Yes* *No* *Don't know*

Please give reasons for your answer:

23. Would you be prepared to help us to recruit more foster carers through events, information sessions, case studies etc?

Yes No Maybe Don't know

24. If we gave foster carers a financial incentive, would you be prepared to actively help us to recruit more foster carers?

Yes No Maybe Don't know

25. Do you have any ideas on how we can increase the number of foster families in Wolverhampton? Please outline below:

About you

How long have you been a foster carer? _____

How many children have you fostered? _____

(use template from policy team for questions below)

Age

Gender

Postcode

Disability

Ethnicity

Sexuality

Religion

Profession

Appendix three: how people find out about fostering

How did you hear about us?

