

# Appendix 1

## Fostering Recruitment Strategy

### **1.0 Introduction**

**1.1** The Fostering Service is part of the Children, Young People and Families Service of Wolverhampton City Council. The Fostering service is committed to providing safe and professional foster care provision for Wolverhampton Looked After Children. To fulfil the complex tasks relating to the care of vulnerable children and young people, we will recruit foster carers who can meet the racial, cultural, linguistic and religious needs of Wolverhampton's Looked After Children.

### **2.0 Local Picture**

**2.1** With the current estimated national shortage of 10,000 foster carers (Fostering Network 2013), and the ever increasing number of children in care, Wolverhampton City Council, is not alone in facing a huge challenge in its recruitment and retention of foster carers. Since 2011, Wolverhampton has experienced a significant rise in the numbers of children and young people becoming looked after children and whilst most regional authorities have also experienced rising numbers, local factors have meant that our rise has been higher than most. The local picture for the council shows 783 children in care aged 0 to 18 years and 160 local authority fostering families. Like all other local authorities, this deficit has a direct impact upon the choice of placements Wolverhampton has for its looked after children, permanence planning, retention of foster carers and cost outcomes. Children who aren't placed with our in - house foster carers are placed with the various Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's). The costs of these placements are often three or four times higher than the cost of local authority placements and for this reason foster carers can receive higher payments.

**2.2** Currently, we have more children placed with carers through IFA's than in house foster carers because Wolverhampton City Council do not have the number of foster carers it needs to place all looked after children within its own foster placements. The split at this time shows around 45% of children with in house foster carers, and 64% with IFA's. With the current financial challenges the local authority is now experiencing, this way of working is simply not viable. Recruiting of in house foster carers is a corporate priority, and there are good reasons for this, not least to save money, but because we know that there are more benefits to children of being placed with local authority foster carers; such as more chance of keeping siblings together, keeping children within their community, the ability to control placement quality, and ability to support the status of foster carers who choose not to provide services for children that are resource rather than needs led. Other arrangements like the "Staying Put" arrangement, which allows young people who are 18 years old to remain with their current foster carers will also, have an impact on the availability of placements. Wolverhampton City Council currently supports 11 "Staying Put" arrangements. In addition there are another 12 Looked After Children placed in foster carers who will shortly turn 18 and are expected to remain in their placements. These placements will be with internal and external provision.

**2.3** This recruitment strategy links to the objectives of the sufficiency strategy which includes provision of high quality and stable placements for children throughout their time spent in the care of the local authority. Furthermore, Wolverhampton is in a good

position to support the development and review of its fostering recruitment strategy as the council's vision is to deliver services in such a way that they continually improve children's lives. This overarching intent includes improving placement choices and terms and conditions for foster carers.

**2.4** This strategy will play a key role in this and is instrumental in raising awareness of the council's need to recruit foster carer and our key messages behind this. This document focuses on the marketing and communications strategy for finding foster carers for children and young people, and explores using targeted and wider marketing activities to raise awareness with the aim of generating enquiries from the right people who are interested in becoming foster carers. It also identifies long term marketing and communications activities to maintain the momentum keeping our messages out in the public domain of local carers for local children.

### **3.0 Objectives of this Strategy are:**

- To increase the number of mainstream foster carers
- To reduce the reliance on independent fostering agency placements
- To recruit Specialist/Remand foster carers for those children who are unable to live in a mainstream foster placements or, who are remanded to the care of the Local Authority.

### **4.0 Principles of the Recruitment Strategy**

- Utilise previous recruitment experience as well as knowledge gained from research and from being part of a regional consortium to inform our recruitment campaigns.
- We recognise that our existing foster carers have a wealth of experience and skill to bring to the recruitment process and they will be involved in the recruitment, training and support of prospective carers.
- Prospective foster carers will receive a prompt response to their enquiries and be kept informed about the recruitment, training, assessment and approval processes.
- Early screening of prospective foster carers will seek to ensure that unsuitable applicants are excluded from full assessment and approval. The assessment of prospective foster carers will be prioritised according to their suitability to provide placements for the existing or forecast population of looked after children.
- The approval status of foster carers will be subject to regular review to ensure that a flexible resource is available to meet changing needs of looked after child in foster care. In particularly we require placements that can meet the needs of young people who may go missing from placements, who display challenging and often aggressive behaviour, who are non-school attenders and who may have difficulties with alcohol and substance-misuse.

### **5.0 Wolverhampton Demographics**

Wolverhampton has a population of 250,970 and is proud of the richness of diversity that this encompasses, with 35% of its residents from Black and Ethnic Minority population.

The population is predicted to grow by 4% by 2021, with the aged 19 or below cohort expected to increase by 3.4%. In 2011 the population density of Wolverhampton had increased to 36 people per hectare (PPH), compared to 34 PPH in 2001<sup>1</sup>

Life expectancy is lower than the England average and Wolverhampton ranks 20 out of 326 Local Authority areas in the Indices of Deprivation 2010.

The overall unemployment rate in Wolverhampton is 6.8%; the fourth highest; as compared to the national average of 3%. As at November 2013, Wolverhampton has the 5<sup>th</sup> highest youth unemployment rate out of the 326 Local Authority areas.

The median annual income of Wolverhampton residents is £23,908; and despite being the second highest in the Black Country; it is 12.6% less than the national average income (Ofsted Inspection 'Our Story' 2014).

## 6.0 Analysis of current looked after children population Children Looked After - At 31 March 2014:

- 783 children are being looked after by the Local Authority. This is an increase from 660 at 31 March 2013; equivalent to an 18.6% increase.
- 58 (8%) live in residential children's homes, of whom approximately 43% live out of the authority area.
- 3 live in residential special schools, all of whom live out of the authority area.
- 547 (79%) live with foster families, of whom 70.8% live out of the authority area.
- 55 children live with parents or persons with parental responsibility.
- 3 children are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- 54% of LAC are in placements that are outside of Wolverhampton
- 106 (13.5%) of looked after children have a decision that they should be adopted; with 32 (30%) of those children currently being placed with their adoptive parents

In the last 12 months

- 329 children became looked after; of whom 27 (8%) had been previously looked after
- 205 children have ceased to be looked after.
- 30 children and young people have moved on to independent living.
- In the period 2013-14 Wolverhampton made 24.7 care applications per 10,000 children; significantly higher than the national figure of 9.2 care applications per 10,000 children. Wolverhampton has the highest rate of care applications nationally. (Ofsted Inspection 'Our Story' 2014).

## 7.0 Types of foster care provided

The fostering service provides a range of foster care placements which includes:

- **Short term /Temporary/Mainstream carers** provide short term placements for children young people whose care plans are to return to their birth family or to move on to permanency either through adoption or long term fostering
- **Shared Care /Respite placements** for disabled children and young people, to enable families to have a series of continuous planned short breaks

- **Permanent carers**, can makes a commitment to care for a child or young person until they reach the age of maturity eventually preparing young people for independence and adulthood.
- **Family and Friends carers** (Connected Persons) look after specific relatives or friends child or sibling group of children
- **Sibling Group carers** are approved to look after related children of two or more siblings (either permanent or temporary).
- **Mother and Baby Placements** are approved to cater for young parent and baby during their pregnancy and following the birth of the baby.
- **Emergency placements** for those children whose family are in crisis and need a safe place for a short period. These carers take children at very short notice rarely with the opportunity for introductions to take place. The above types are now encapsulated in an overarching 0-18 approval category of approval for all new Wolverhampton foster carers.

## 8.0 Specialist, Remand foster care

8.1 We are seeking to expand our in house provision to include placements which will care for children young people who are remanded into the care of the local authority by the youth justice courts, or whose assessed needs/behaviour means that they require higher level intervention/support and may either have had several placement breakdowns or be placed in residential or external placement provision. Placements can last between 6 and 18 months. The programme will be supported by a multi-agency team which will include clinical and educational psychologists, teachers, social workers and support workers. The team, including the foster carers, will be trained in social learning theory and provide a multi-dimensional intervention designed to create change in any domain of the young person's life assessed to be a contributing factor to the risk of social exclusion.

## 9.0 Support Fostering or Day Fostering

9.1 Children using this scheme do not have to become 'Looked After' if the period of care is less than 24 hours. This is a facility for the placement of children where it is not necessary for them to be cared for overnight. Most of the carers who will provide this service will also be approved to provide other forms of foster care as well.

## 10.0 Demographics of Wolverhampton City Foster Carers

10.1 The Service has a well-established pool of experienced and committed foster carers. 56% of Wolverhampton carers have been fostering for Wolverhampton for 5 years or more.

30 years plus	2%	(4)
25 – 30 years	2%	(3)
20 – 25 years	8%	(5)
15 – 20 years	9%	(16)
10 – 15 years	20%	(35)
05 – 10 years	20%	(36)
0 – 5 years	44%	(80)

10.2 These figures are broadly in line with national foster carer's figures, However we do have a large number of foster carers who are over 55 years of age, 25%, compared to the national average of 18%.

**10.3** Currently Wolverhampton City Council has 169, (excluding family and friends foster carers), foster carers and approximately 200 places. There are 94 mainstream foster carers providing placements for 1 child, 38 carers approved for 2 children, 7 approved for 3 children. and 1 for 4 or more children. The remainder 48 provide placements for LAC who are relative or friend's family placements.

**10.4** The current attrition rate of 13% this year also indicates that the number of recruitment for foster carers needs to increase significantly. The service balance between placing 0-12 in house and 12-17 in external provision needs to also shift. Therefore the aim of this strategy is to increase in- house fostering resources.

## **11.0 Identification of Targets for future Recruitment**

**11.1** Research suggest that as well as all the other factors described above and due to the continued increase in looked after population for local authorities, an increase of an additional 15% of fostering placements, should be added on the agency's agreed yearly recruitment target.

Total Placements = 40 in each year

This is based on:-

- The number of children requiring foster placements, including both new admissions and current LAC, during the period 04/13 - 03/14.
- The number of foster carers lost during the period 04/13 - 03/14 and the number of foster placements lost as a result.
- The plan to recruit foster carers dedicated to providing support fostering or day placements
- The plan to recruit specialist foster carers to provide placements for children presenting difficult behaviour, with the aim of reducing the need to place such children with external foster carers.
- The need to be able to place sibling groups of three and four with in-house foster carers.

## **12.0 The Recruitment and marketing activity**

**12.1** The recruitment of foster carers is a whole process, the marketing activity, which raises the awareness of the need for foster carers, forms just one part of that process. The recruitment activities need to be consistent, thus providing the 'drip-drip' effect. (Fostering Network 2012). This ensures that when people are ready to foster, that Wolverhampton City Council is their first choice. Research shows that on average, it can take a person between 18 months and 2 years to come to the decision that they want to foster, therefore it is important that there is a constant presence of fostering materials in various forms to encourage people to choose Wolverhampton City Council as their agency of choice. There are many ways that the awareness of the need for good quality foster carers can be raised, and since we have been recruiting in house we have utilised a number of approaches.

**12.2** To raise the awareness:

- Meet and Greet for people to drop in to speak to the team and carers about fostering
- Publicity materials including pocket sized cards for wallets distributed during the events

- Radio advertising
- Advertising in the various venues around the city
- Advertising in Express and Star newspapers
- Advertising and leaflet stand in libraries across the city
- Advertising using the Council twitter account
- Uploaded Videos of 4 fostering families on the Council website and
- Facebook advertising
- Email Signature for council employees
- Targeted advertising in Midlands zone
- 'Tweetathon'

**12.3** To encourage people to care for our children, especially those in the older age range we need to develop a number of one off initiatives to include:

- New images introduced on our publicity material to aid recruiting carers for teenagers and sibling groups.
- To widen the carer workforce to target more people from professional backgrounds
- Develop/ Revise information pack to give applicants a better understanding of what being a foster carer for children aged over 10 actually is.
- Production of a DVD, using Wolverhampton's own foster carers to talk about their experiences, focussing on the need for carers for older children
- Explore the managing of all initial enquires to be solely dealt with by a defined number of customer service workers, who have been trained and supported by the fostering team ensuring a professional and streamlined approach.
- Keeping on-line form enquirers access to the website live and updated
- Devise information to make people think about the spare room in their home, by discreet targeting of higher council tax bands postcodes within the city with a direct mail letter and flyer.
- Explore with Health and Education partners their establishment carrying posters /distributing literature
- Have a takeover Roundabout day where signs are placed throughout the city
- Explore the use of Yellow Pages
- Billboards at major junctions entering the city
- Window Vinyl's in empty shops across the city to display fostering messages
- Permanent signs outside council buildings
- Work with local councillors –provide script sheets and campaign materials to encourage them to spread the word at local events

**12.4** Information giving:

- Continue to update the website regularly
- Review the information pack sent to all applicants
- Hold a series of information sessions throughout the year
- Ensure that the information pack is sent out within 24 hours of enquiry
- Provide a courtesy call after a week to follow up further with the applicant

**12.5** The assessment process:

- Map out the recruitment and assessment process to identify any gaps
- Provide pre-approval training x 7 each year
- Utilise Black country consortium partnership as necessary to prevent applicants waiting

- Improve the customer journey by devising a set of informative leaflets, about the assessment process to aide customer understanding and satisfaction of the process.
- Conduct exit interviews of all drop out at IA and assessment stages
- Recruit to the permanent Consultant Social Worker post by December 2014
- Continue to deal with all fostering enquiries in the recruitment and assessment team once they are received from City Direct on a daily basis

### 13. Management Information

13.1 In order to meet the aims and objectives, management information will need to be provided to monitor the recruitment and retention of foster carers to ensure that any gaps in provision are resolved and the strategy is working. The analysis of this information will inform the on-going strategy.

The information needed regularly is as follows:

- Number of enquiries and where they have come from
- Timeline from enquiry to initial visits
- Number of initial visits carried out
- Timeline from initial visit to Preparatory training
- Number of assessments allocated
- Number of carers approved
- Number of carers terminated
- Number of children needing placements in-house and their ages, gender and ethnicity

13.2 Management Information has indicated that there are quiet times in the year where there are very few appointments booked. These times tend to be during the summer (July and August) and over Christmas (November and December).

**Enquiries April 2013 the overall results to date in terms of overall enquiries and appointments booked are as follows:**

Month	Calls Received	Appointments booked	Initial Assessments
April	130	21	11
May	150	16	11
June	89	09	10
July	93	04	06
August	65	06	02
September	78	13	09
October	63	07	06
November	81	05	01
December	39	10	05
January	96	24	10
February	94	16	15
March	69	24	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.037</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>74</b>

13.3 April May and June generate the most enquiries, as this is when the National Campaign 'Foster Care Fortnight' is, and a lot of media is generated at this time. .The

marketing activity is currently not recorded at the time of the enquiry, neither are the reasons applicants give for what made them contact Wolverhampton over the past 12 months. This aspect of management information which is critical is currently being developed.

## **14.0 The Drop-out Rate**

This is an area that needs to be addressed going forward. Although the marketing campaigns generates huge amount of enquiries as can be shown from the above, there is a higher than expected drop out rate after the first enquiry to the Initial Assessment stage only 7.5% progressed on-wards. This can be for a variety of reasons, with people either ruling themselves out, or the fostering team ruling them out.

Tackling the drop-out rates:

- Refreshing scripts/key messages from the enquiry line
- Keeping people interested following the initial call- call them back /send out pack
- Review and refresh the information pack
- Interview those who did not go forward
- Call backs
- Review script used by City Direct/ have only 3 dedicated officers managing these calls
- Employ dedicated foster carers to take these calls

## **15.0 Retention of foster carers**

**15.1** There is evidence to show that foster carers rely upon the income they receive from fostering and over 61% of foster carers felt that money was an important factor of them becoming foster carers. Research also showed that there is widespread dissatisfaction amongst foster carers with the methods and details of their payments, for example, with the bureaucracy surrounding incidental expenditure, the lack of a retainer and loyalty rewards. It noted that foster carers working for independent fostering agencies receive better rates of pay and loyalty rewards, receive their payments on time and have access to accountants employed by the IFA's.

**15.2** Furthermore it noted that IFA foster carers receive higher level of support through their supervising social workers contact and supervision than local authority foster carers, this is due to caseload of supervising social that are 4-11 compared to between 7 and 28 respectively. It is however noted that foster carers are more satisfied where they have regular visits and telephone contact from supervising social workers, where their children have an allocated social worker, where they receive full information regarding the child and where the child reviews were arranged on time. It noted that satisfied carers were also much more likely to take part in training.

Significantly, whilst the research illustrates the importance of financial payments and the way it was administered, it also showed that when given a choice only one in five carers (20%) chose higher payments, if that meant supervising social workers visits and other support from the organisation would be reduced.

*Cost and Outcomes in Children Social Care. Messages from Research Beecham and Sinclair, Dfes (2007).*



**15.3** Currently, foster carers are not employed by Wolverhampton City Council and therefore do not have the same conditions of employment as employees of the city council. Therefore they do not receive regular salaries or sickness benefits, however Wolverhampton carers are allowed one week's paid respite holiday a year. They are nevertheless expected to maintain their households and family life at a standard that promotes the well-being of looked after children and to provide high quality child care. This includes actively supporting the child's education and leisure pursuits.

The way forward is to:

- Widen the foster carers' workforce beyond the traditional demographic, and include more people of professional backgrounds.
- Recruit and retain people with the motivation and potential to care for children with challenging needs and siblings groups.
- Encourage foster family friendly policies.
- Although not stated it is implied that foster carers who are paid a professional fee are considered to be full partners in the foster care endeavour. As such they are entitled to the same respect, access to information and expectations of confidentiality afforded between social work colleagues, and can be expected to conduct themselves in this manner.

*(Recruiting and Retaining Foster Carers, the Government Perspectives. Department for Education and Skills (2014).*

## **16.0 Implementation, Review and Evaluation**

The strategy will be implemented by the Recruitment Team, which consists of a Consultant Social Worker and three recruitment social workers, and a marketing officer. This group will meet every other month and will be monitoring the action plan to ensure Wolverhampton continue to recruit good quality foster carers, and that the assessment process provides all applicants with all the information needed to ensure they are able and capable of carrying out the role of carer.

To ensure these stages remain relevant there is already in place:

- Evaluation following pre-approval training.
- We intend to build into the process evaluation following induction period.
- Face to Face interviews with the CSW following the assessment process. These evaluation stages will enable the Recruitment and Assessment Team to constantly monitor the quality and content of the recruitment assessment process and make changes (if necessary) at any point.
- Also to monitor the drop-out rate and obtain feedback from applications who do not proceed forward

## **17.0 Breakdown of Budgets allocation to specific activities (Marketing team to do)**

The recruitment budget is set at around £26,000, and the identified recruitment activity for this year is expected to come from this budget.

Daphne Atkinson

September 2014

## Fostering Recruitment Strategy – September 2014

Priority	Actions	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
<p>30 Form F assessments by 31st March 2015            40 Form F assessments by 31st March 2016            40 Form F assessments by 31st March 2017</p>	<p>Employ effective marketing and communication methods to raise the profile of the Fostering Service, building on the Wolverhampton brand. By creating and maintaining strong links with the media, Elected Members and communities, the fostering team will deliver recruitment campaigns that promote the many rewards to be gained from fostering.</p> <p>Consider Re-Branding of Fostering Recruitment – to include:            Research into success of re-branding            Meeting with communications team            Sourcing images, straplines etc.            Consultation            Updating fostering information pack            Re-printing of all publicity material</p>		<p>On-going</p> <p>September 2014</p>	<p>We have employed a number of methods throughout the year to raise the profile of Fostering for Wolverhampton children. Most recently during the Fostering fortnight 8<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> May2014            New messages to run from June 2014 “<i>Why choose Fostering for Wolverhampton?</i>”</p> <p>Working with Fostering network on recruitment. We are awaiting the outcome response from the Data Set exercise which is due at the end of September. 2014</p> <p>Meeting with Marketing took place            Another one is scheduled for 16/9/14</p> <p>Training booked for September</p>

Priority	Actions	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
	<p>Provide STF training to City Direct staff to increase knowledge of Fostering by</p> <p>Advertising in the Express and Star and local Radio Website updates Social media marketing Monitor Marketing Advertisement against outcome for enquiries e.g. number, post codes and months of the year</p> <p>Accessing and using the MOSAIC system for target marketing</p> <p>Review and update all Information packs</p> <p>Create Business cards with fostering recruitment for employees to hand out.</p> <p>Revise the schedule of Preparatory Training course (STF) throughout year 2014/16 to ensure no applicant is waiting more than 2 months from enquiry for predatory training</p>		<p>September 2014</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>	<p>We have received statistics from City Direct which show that since March 2014 and during the foster care fortnight, more calls have been received, than in the previous year.</p> <p>The most used channels were word of mouth, the council's website, the council tax flyer in March and the advertising campaign during April and May 2014.</p> <p>Appointments booked increased from 11 in March 2013 to 31 bookings in March 2014.</p> <p>To be discussed with marketing colleagues on the 16/9/14</p> <p>To be discussed with marketing colleagues on the 16/9/14</p> <p>We host 7 Skills to Foster training sessions throughout the year and there are additional days available</p>

Priority	Actions	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
	<p>Utilise other BCC consortium training resource</p> <p>Target Ethnic minority groups more proactively by hosting information days at mosque, churches and temples</p> <p>Involve the Children council in recruitment of foster carers</p> <p>Arranging the distribution of posters and flyers around the City</p> <p>Billboard Advertising</p>		September/on-going	<p>throughout the Black Country Consortium if required</p> <p>We have a commissioning arrangement with 3 external providers. Our preferred provider, Core Asset, undertook 25 Form F assessments 2013/14. The contract is monitored by a Senior Management group on a quarterly basis and this is due to be reviewed in September 2014. The quality of the assessments are very robust and of good quality. The feedback from fostering panel also supports this view.</p> <p>There were 23 Foster carers approvals between April 2013 &amp; March 2014 there are further 11 currently undertaking form F assessments</p> <p>Free radio advert – out on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September 14  Re: Circulation for all learning and educational establishments in, Wolverhampton.  To discuss CIC involvement with line manager  Recruitment consultant social worker working on stats for this area of work</p>

Priority	Actions	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
<p>Medical capacity to complete Statutory requirements</p>	<p>Liaison with Health Steering to increase capacity of medical personnel</p> <p>1 x Consultant Social Worker 2 x Social Workers 2 x Family Support workers</p> <p>1 x Therapeutic Care Expert 1 x Teacher 1 x Unit Co-ordinator</p> <p>Implement a strategy to ensure sufficient numbers of specialist foster carer to be responsive to children with complex needs</p> <p>Explore the feasibility of the specialist foster carers directly being employed by Wolverhampton City Council.</p>		<p>On-going</p>	<p>Marketing to be discussed and arranged</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory checks and medicals do cause some delays in this process, which is outside of our control</li> </ul> <p>Awaiting confirmation from senior managers</p>

Priority	Actions	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
<p>A total of 15 Specialist Foster Carers by 31/03/17</p> <p>05 new Specialist foster carers between 1<sup>st</sup> November 2014-May 2015</p> <p>05 new Specialist foster carers between 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015-November 2015</p> <p>Establish a Social Work Unit comprising of</p> <p>1x Consultant Social Worker</p> <p>2 x Qualified Social Workers</p> <p>2 x Family Support Workers</p> <p>1 x Therapeutic Care Expert;</p> <p>1 x Teacher</p> <p>1 x Unit Coordinator</p>	<p>Recruitment of the Specialist Foster Care Support team to commence in October 2014 and that the support team comprises of:</p> <p>Establish Posts via Business Case and seek permission to advertise for post</p> <p>Recruit Agency Consultant social worker to post and team of social workers to post</p> <p>Recruit support staff</p> <p>Develop branding and marketing for this area of work</p> <p>Write job description and Personal Specification for the specialist foster carers roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Recruit first five foster carers</p> <p>Recruit second five foster carers</p>		<p>October 2014</p>	

Priority	Actions	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
	<p>Recruit final five foster carers</p> <p>Enhance Data base to capture the business needs of fostering recruitment strategy and annual marketing plan e.g. numbers of referrals, enquiries, number of assessments, and approved foster carers</p> <p>Introduce a friend financial incentive</p> <p>Review current carer's approval status with the view of them changing. To specialist foster carers</p> <p>Sufficient Medical Advisor to ensure timeliness of Health Reports</p> <p>Monitor Form F outcome at Fostering Panel.</p> <p>Improve the timeliness of Form F Assessments to Panel</p> <p>Improve the timeliness of</p>		<p>October/November 2014</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> November – May 2015</p> <p>May 2015 – November 2015</p> <p>December 2015 – May 2016</p>	<p>Initial exploratory meeting with marketing in June 2014</p> <p>To work with marketing and recruitment team to formulate a marketing action plan for this area of work</p> <p>Once the Consultant Social Worker is in place this area of work will be developed</p>

Priority	Actions	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
	<p>initial assessment process and reporting mechanism</p> <p>Ensure sufficient Skills to Foster Training throughout the year</p> <p>Obtaining a list of all carers approved for older age range. Discussing possibility of specialist with their supervising social worker Contacting carers to find out if they are interested</p> <p>Drafting foster carers agreement</p> <p>Seek expressions of interest from existing Wolverhampton City Council residential care staff</p> <p>Seek to target people who are looking for a career change – e.g. public sector (job losses)</p> <p>Spread the message about fostering in Wolverhampton by employing adverts on buses</p> <p>Develop a Retention Strategy which will focus on the benefits to carers of fostering</p>		<p>November 2014 – May 2015</p> <p>May 2015-November 2015</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>October 2014 – January 2015</p> <p>October 2014 – January 2015</p>	



Priority	Actions	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
	<p>for Wolverhampton Council.</p> <p>Utilise different approaches to increase the likelihood of coverage with a wider range of Wolverhampton, helping to ensure the wider public understand the basic issues about fostering, as well as specific target audiences being addressed, offering potential carers the information they require.</p> <p>To generate at least 100 new enquiries by 2015 to achieve our target for Specialist recruitment</p> <p>To reduce the number of people who drop out after initial enquiry</p> <p>Invest to save marketing budget for marketing and recruitment</p> <p>Provision of additional social work posts to address the imbalance between ratio and workload</p>		<p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>November 2014</p> <p>November 2014</p> <p>November 2014</p> <p>November 2014 – January 2015</p>	

Priority	Actions	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
<p>Enhance mainstream foster support care service to attract and retain high quality foster carers. The professional support for foster carers will need to be increased in order to provide an appropriate level of social work support</p> <p>Work to be undertaken to develop a financial reward scheme for foster carers as a strategy for recruiting and maintaining foster carers.</p> <p>Within the context of permanency planning</p>	<p>Complete the review of Fees and Allowances for carers</p> <p>Work with Elaine Callaghan/ CSW to translate Care Orders into SGO for those children placed in a permanent situation with LA foster carers</p> <p>Explore with local authority housing departments or housing associations the provision of larger properties with more than 3 bedrooms for foster carers who are approved for two or more children</p>		<p>July 2014</p> <p>November 2014 -On-going</p> <p>November 2014 - On-going</p> <p>November 2014 - On-going</p> <p>December 2014 – January 2015</p> <p>December 2014 – January 2015</p> <p>December 2014 – January 2015</p>	

Priority	Actions	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
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<p>develop/adopt a position statement .on Special Guardianships Orders in relation to foster carers status as permanent carers and their on-going financial support</p> <p>Provision of accommodation to enable foster carers to have larger groups of children</p>			<p>December 2014 on-going</p> <p>On-going</p>	
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<b>Priority</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Progress</b>
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