

**Report of Director of Children's Services**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 22nd June 2016**

**Subject: Annual Reports of the fostering and adoption service & annual updates of the respective Statements of Purpose.**



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards 2011 for fostering and adoption that the Executive Board of the council receives written reports on the management and outcomes of the fostering and adoption services. These reports provide an overview of fostering and adoption service activity from April 2015 to March 2016. The reports are attached at appendix A and appendix B respectively.

The report also seeks elected member approval of the revised Statements of Purpose for Leeds City Council's Fostering and Adoption Services. The Statement of Purpose for each service is attached at appendix C and appendix D. In each case the Statement of Purpose is required as part of the national minimum standards in order to be able to provide those services.

**Recommendations**

1. It is recommended that the Executive Board approve the Statements of Purpose for both the Fostering and Adoption Services for Leeds City Council. It is also recommended that the Executive Board reviews the annual fostering and adoption report and continues to support the work of the adoption and fostering service to ensure children receive the best possible support.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report asks the Executive Board to consider the annual reports of the fostering and adoption services, as detailed in Appendix A and B of this report, as required by the National Minimum Standards 2011.
- 1.2 This report seeks elected member approval of the revised statements of purpose for Leeds City Council's Fostering and Adoption Services. The Statement of Purpose for each service is attached at appendix C and appendix D respectively. In each case the Statement of Purpose is required as part of the national minimum standard in order to be able to provide those services.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption and Fostering Services, that each fostering and adoption service produces a statement of purpose, including its aims and objectives, a description of the service it provides and the facilities that are provided. This Statement of Purpose gives an outline of those requirements and also how the service is managed and its fitness to provide a comprehensive adoption service.
- 2.2 Children's services fostering and adoption services are inspected against these standards by Ofsted. The statements of purpose and any updates must be approved through the 'Executive side of the council' on an annual basis.
- 2.3 The Statement of Purposes attached give an outline of those requirements and also how the service is managed and its fitness to provide fostering and adoption services. It shows the policy and performance framework that underpins our work and shows how the welfare of children will be met. It also demonstrates the systems which we have set in place to recruit, train, supervise and support foster carers and adoptive parents.
- 2.4 The Council's Executive Board is the most appropriate body to provide formal approval for both of the statements of Purpose and to review the work of the fostering and adoption service. The background issues in relation to the fostering and adoption annual reports are addressed in detail in the reports themselves at Appendix A and B.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 The statements and annual reports were last submitted to Executive Board in June 2015. The changes in the statements this year are minimal and relate mainly to legal and organisational changes within the service.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 The fostering and adoption service have good mechanisms to consult with and engage foster carers and adoptive families in order to develop and deliver services.

## **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.2.1 The service completed a full Equality Impact Assessment in 2011. This was reviewed in 2015.

## **4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan**

4.3.1 These reports contribute to the delivery of the Best Council Plan outcome for everyone in Leeds to 'be safe and feel safe'. In addition, the Children and Young Peoples Plan identifies Looked After Children as one of the three priority 'Obsessions'. The fostering and adoption service is integral to these plans to provide stable and secure placements for looked after children and those placed for adoption.

## **4.4 Resources and value for money**

The fostering service has seen an increase in young people "Staying Put " with their with their foster carers post 18 years of age, following the introduction of the new duty placed upon local authorities in this regard. Whilst this is very positive for young people and improves their outcomes it has placed a considerable financial pressure upon the placement budget within children's services. This is due to the differential between the government grant and actual cost and the costs associated with this, in that this reduces the number of in house foster carers available for placements. This has therefore placed pressure on the budget regarding external fostering and residential budgets and is discussed in more detail on the fostering annual report at Appendix A.

## **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 This is addressed in 2.1- 2.4 above and is subject to call in.

## **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 Not applicable

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 This report seeks that Executive Board review the annual reports, as outlined in Appendix A and B, and continue to support the work of the fostering and adoption services to ensure our children receive the best possible support.

5.2 This report also seeks Elected Member approval of the revised statements of purpose for Leeds City Council's Fostering and Adoption Services. The Statement of Purpose for each service is attached at appendix C and appendix D respectively. In each case the Statement of Purpose is required as part of the national minimum standards in order to be able to provide those services.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 It is recommended that the Executive Board approve the Statements of Purpose for both the Fostering and Adoption Services for Leeds City Council. It is also recommended that the Executive Board reviews the annual fostering and adoption

report and continues to support the work of the adoption and fostering service to ensure children receive the best possible support.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.