

Report of Director of Children & Families

Report to Executive Board

Date: 27th June 2018

Subject: Annual Report of the fostering service & annual update of the Statement 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. Elected Members in Leeds value the role that foster carers play in supporting some of the most vulnerable young people in the city. This report informs members about the management and fostering service activity from April 2017 to March 2018. The report is attached at Appendix A.

The report also seeks elected member approval of the revised Statement of Purpose for Leeds City Council's Fostering Service. The Statement of Purpose for the service is attached at Appendix B. 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 Statement of Purpose for the Fostering Service for Leeds City Council. It is also recommended that the Executive Board reviews the annual fostering report and continues to support the work of the 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 report of the fostering service, as detailed in Appendix A.
- 1.2 This report seeks elected member approval of the revised statement of purpose for Leeds City Council's Fostering Service. The Statement of Purpose for the service is attached at appendix B. 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 Fostering Services, that each fostering 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 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 services. It shows the policy and performance framework that underpins the 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.
- 2.4 The Council's Executive Board is the most appropriate body to provide formal approval for the statement of Purpose and to review the work of the fostering service. The background issues in relation to the fostering annual report are addressed in detail in the report itself at Appendix A.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The statement and annual report was last submitted to Executive Board in July 2017. The main issues are contained within the report itself at Appendix A.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 The fostering service has good mechanisms to consult with and engage foster carers 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 service is integral to these plans to provide stable and secure placements for looked after children.

4.4 Resources and value for money

The fostering service has seen an increase in young people "Staying Put " 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 the actual cost associated with this, and that foster carers caring for some young people for longer reduces the number of in house foster carers available for new placements.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standard 2011 for fostering that the Executive Board of the Council receives a written report on the management and outcomes of fostering and adoption services.
- 4.5.2 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 report, as outlined in Appendix A, and continue to support the work of the fostering service to ensure our children and their foster carers receive the best possible support.
- 5.2 This report also seeks Elected Member approval of the revised statement of purpose for Leeds City Council's Fostering Services. The Statement of Purpose for the service is attached at appendix B. 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 Statement of Purpose for Fostering Services for Leeds City Council. It is also recommended that the Executive Board reviews the annual fostering report and continues to support the work of the adoption and fostering service to ensure children receive the best possible support.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ 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.