

Update on the Fostering Service including Mockingbird

Executive Summary:

The Annual Report of the Fostering Service will be finalised in July 2019 following submission to central government of the Fostering Data set. This report sets out development with the Service that are underway, the objectives for the forthcoming year and updates the Board on the implementation of the Mockingbird model.

Reason for bringing to the Corporate Parenting Board:

Recent mock inspection of the Service noted a number of improvements that needs to be made to ensure the Service continues to operate within regulations and meets its objectives to provide high quality care close to home for Walsall's looked after children.

Recommendations:

That:

- 1. To note the outcome of the recent mock inspection of the Fostering Service and the subsequent action plan in place.*
- 2. To note the progress with the implementation of the Mockingbird*

Background papers:

List here any private background papers used in the preparation of this report. This does not include the listing of reports that have already been published.

NB: Any reports or publications listed here will need to be available to be provided to the public, should they be requested, for 4 years.

Corporate Parenting Pledges

Pledge 5 – A Good and Safe Place to Live

Resource and legal considerations:

There are no resource of considerations.

Council Corporate Plan Priorities:

Safeguarding of children .

Citizen impact:

Looked after children, care leavers and their families.

Environmental impact:

Nil

Performance management:

The Fostering Service will be part of forthcoming ofsted inspections.

Reducing inequalities:

How does this issue seek to reduce inequalities?

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out? Yes/No

If yes, summarise the key findings here.

Consultation:

Fostering service including approved foster carers

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Key Development

- 1.1 The Fostering Service has not been independently inspected since 2013 when OFSTED inspection arrangements for Local Authority fostering services were incorporated into the single inspection.
- 1.2 In light of the importance of the Service in the delivery of looked children outcomes and the role of that provider services will have in the new inspection framework it was agreed to commission a mock inspection of the service. This inspection was completed in March
- 1.3 The methodology of the inspection mirrored what would be undertaken in OFSTED inspection and was undertaken by a former inspector with considerable expertise in regulated services.
- 1.4 A number of short falls in practice were identified by the ex inspector.. An action plan was drafted and tabled at Directorate Management Team in April 2019. At this Meeting it was agreed the action plan will form part of the OFSTED Improvement plan and monitored by the Corporate Parenting Board.
- 1.5 Actions agreed at the meeting was Service redesign which will be implemented by the end of July and overhaul of the Fostering Panel.
- 1.6 Updated action plan is included in Appendix 1

2. Other Developments –

- 2.1 A independently chaired Recruitment and Retention Strategy Group has been established. This group has reviewed the current marketing strategy (2016/19) which will be available in July. The focus of the strategy is to position Walsall as leading in the region in the marketing of the Service and to ensure that we are embed the proven retention practices.
- 2.2 The Service is focussing with the Children's Champion on developing ways to ensue children shape how we recruit train and support our foster carers.
- 2.3 Work is underway to ensure the role and contribution of Foster Carers and their families is formally recognised by the Local Authority with an event. This will be held every two years. Details will be confirmed following the next planning meeting in July.
- 2.4 A third Mocking bird Hub has not been established in May, with fourth planned in the Autumn. Fidelity checks confirmed that Walsall implementation is fully compliant. Requests form Fostering Network for presentations on practice within Walsall both regional leaders event May and the national conference in July.
 - 2.4.1 Currently there are three hub carers involving 20 households and 36 children aged between 9 months to 17 years of age. There are waiting lists for carers to joint the fourth hub. A further Liaison officer / Supervising Social Worker role is currently being advertised.

MOCK INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

JUNE 2019

FINDINGS: Walsall fostering Service were found to:

1. Not consistently meeting key regulatory requirements
2. Be unable to adequately evidence their knowledge of carer's capacity or how support contribute to placement stability and improving outcomes for children.
3. Have an absence of management oversight and direction
4. Have an absence of auditing activity to monitor compliance and service priorities
5. Have no service development plan or link to LA priorities

OUTCOME: Urgent remedial action required, with progress to be monitored by Corporate Parenting Board.

DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTIONS REQUIRED	BY WHEN	LEAD	UPDATE	RAG RATING
1 Fostering service able to evidence compliance with ALL regulatory requirements and means to monitor adherence	a) Agree administrative processes to review regulatory checks: DBS – every 3 years Employment – every 2 years Medicals – every 3 years LSA checks – every 2 years DBS for all other household members – every 3 years	Sept 2019	Group Manager Provider Service		
	b) Revise, implement and review process of all approved foster carers that meets requirement set out in NMS 2016 and Regulation 28 Fostering Services 2011. This arrangement is to ensure Panel considers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ALL first reviews following approval,• After first review, every third review thereafter and	June 2019	Group Manager Provider Service Team Managers Fostering Service Foster Reviewing Officers		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews following an investigation into an allegation or serious complaint / concerns or where there is significant change within the family circumstances 				
	c) Establish performance reports to report on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Timeliness of foster carer / household reviews Supervision visits (including household inspections) Unannounced supervisory visits. DBS, Medicals updates Health Safety updates Safe care plan updates 	June 2019	QA Lead Performance Team Group Manager Provider Service		
	d) Establish report on frequency of management of allegations / standards of care / complaints / exemptions	June 2019	QA Lead Performance & Group Manager Provider		
	e) Establish clear standards on chairing, convening (quarterly) and recording of discussion and outcomes from Fostering & Permanency Panels	June 2019	Group Manager Provider		
	f) Establish additional Quality Assurance arrangement in respect of Panel Minutes and sign off	June 2019	Group Manager and Chair		
2 Fostering Service able to evidence learning from audits, complaints, foster	a) Establish a monthly case record audit programme as part of CSC audit programme	April 2019	PSW & Group Manager Provider Service.		

carer reviews and panel feedback.					
	b) Establish "learning from" culture within the teams and evidencing thereof	March 2019	Managers Fostering Service		
	c) Establish quarterly reports from Fostering and Permanency Panels	May 2019	Group Manager Provider Service		
3 Fostering service able to evidence it's marketing and recruitment processes are informed by sufficiency strategy	a) Establish Recruitment & Retention Strategy Group to review and agree recruitment / commission targets and types of fostering provision.	June 2019	Group Manager Provider Service QA Lead		
	b) Establish Fostering Score Card to capture enquiry, recruitment, retention figures and timeliness of assessments, reviews and placement stability.	July 2019	Group Manager Provider Service & QA Lead, Performance Team		
4 Fostering Service can evidence due consideration of 'matching' of carers to children and supervision of foster carers.	a) Establish case record requirement for placement officer which sets out matching rationale	April 2019	Group Manger & Team Manager of Support & Development and Placement officers		
	b) Ensure exemption criteria / process is adhered to and evidenced in records to	April 2019	Group Manger Provider Service & Manager Fostering Service		
	c) Establish standards in respect to record management, decision/oversight on carers records	April 2019	Group Manager Provider Service & Managers Fostering Service		

5	Fostering Service is able to evidence an organisational structure that is fit for purpose (number of reports), and within recommended case allocation whilst ensuring delivery of Mockingbird Model.	a) Confirm posts to deliver maximum case load of 18 households	July 2019	Group Manager Provider Service		
		b) Propose re-organisation to establish dedicated team responsible for assessment of and supervision/support of Kinship Carers	June 2019	Group Manager Provider Service		
		c) Implementation of new organisational structure	August 2019	Group Manager Provider Service		