

Summary Sheet

Title of Report: Muslim Foster Carers Project (Update 10 January 2018)

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

This is not a key decision

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director, Children and Young People's Services

Report Author(s) Cheryl Long, Manager - Fostering

Ward(s) Affected All

Recommendations: To review the update and make any necessary recommendations

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required: Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public: No

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To review the update and make any necessary recommendations

2. Background and update

2.1 Following approval for Rotherham Fostering Service to be part of the Muslim Fostering Research Project a meeting was held on 29th November 2017 with Fostering Network project lead, Andrew Limbert. Joanne Nutton, Kathryn Maguire and Cheryl Long from Rotherham Fostering Service attended this to share more detail on the research project.

The project aims to gather and analyse data to identify good practice and evaluate how identity is taken into consideration within fostering. The project also aims to explore barriers associated with the recruitment of Muslim families to develop a targeted recruitment campaign focused on the Muslim community to meet the needs of looked after children locally.

In addition to Rotherham's participation, Bristol, Bedfordshire and Surrey Local Authorities are also participating, with one Independent Fostering Agency; Olive Branch Fostering which is based in Lancashire.

RMBC have been tasked to provide the following information for the next meeting on 2nd February 2018.

- Data around the last 3 placements made for Muslim children including the matching and placing of these children
- Identify 5 Rotherham foster carers that can be interviewed as part of the research project. The aim of this is to gather information on their experiences of the recruitment process, support, supervision and how they manage the cultural needs of the children in placement. Interviews will take place on 2nd February 2018.
- Recruitment and retention data of all Rotherham in-house foster carers in order that we can participate in a short survey to ascertain the views of the wider service.
- Information to be provided on what our current offer is for Diversity training.
- The previous initiatives adopted by Rotherham Fostering regarding the recruitment of foster carers from the Muslim community have been shared as part of this process.

Local information will be gathered as detailed above and will be analysed and measured alongside partner participants to explore themes and issues. This will be utilised to develop a more sophisticated approach to the recruitment process with an overall aim to increase the number of Muslim foster carers and therefore more cultural sensitive matches of Muslim children with Muslim families.

Following the research project completion in March 2018, there will be a launch event of research findings and good practice identified which each involved service will be invited to attend. Involved fostering services will also be given a bespoke training package developed from the practice learning that can be delivered to

prospective foster carers, approved foster carers and staff. Their intention is for the research findings to be published so that the findings can be shared publicly.

Fostering Network will remain involved with Rotherham Fostering Service until July 2018 to assist in embedding the good practice recommendations into the service.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 "As is" take no action. The outcome of this would be that there would be no development or change within the service regarding this specific recruitment of Muslim carers for Muslim children.
- 4.2 Involvement in this project (preferred option)This would enable a joint venture with fostering network to develop more sophisticated recruitment initiative for recruiting and retaining Muslim foster carers. An added value of this would be learning could be incorporated within the wider fostering recruitment drive.

5. Consultation

5.1 Initial discussion took place between Fostering Network, Head of Service, Ian Walker, Fostering Team Service Manager Anne-Marie Banks, Fostering Recruitment Team Manager, Cheryl Long and Fostering Recruitment Social Worker, Joanne Nutton. As a result of which an initial meeting was set up on 29/11/17. A further meeting has been arranged for 2nd February 2018 where Muslim foster carers will be interviewed to ascertain their views about the service and what we could do better.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 Initial meeting took place with Fostering Network on 29/11/2018 with a follow up meeting arranged for February. The programme will have concluded by March 2018.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 There is no cost associated with this project for RMBC other than Rotherham Fostering Service time and commitment

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 No legal implications identified

9. Human Resources Implications

- 9.1 None

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 The project will promote placement stability for children in care, and therefore improve outcomes and life chances for children moving into adult life. The project will also promote better foster carer experience and therefore support the retention of foster carers, and is likely to attract new foster carers into the Borough, and therefore build on the recruitment campaign.

11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 If successful the service will be able to operate a more culturally sensitive for children and foster carers.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 Not applicable

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Not applicable

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Approvals Obtained from:-

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	Colin Allen- No financial implications raised	12/02/2018
Assistant Director of Legal Services	Neil Concannon- No legal implications raised as long as no personal data of Foster Carers is shared with fostering network other than statistical information	12/02/2018
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	Theresa Caswell- No HR implications raised.	12/02/2018

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