

Summary Sheet

Council Report

Directorate Leadership Team

Report: Rotherham Fostering Service Performance Report 2017/18

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan? No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Mel Meggs (Deputy Strategic Director, CYPS)

Report Author(s)

Anne-Marie Banks, Service Manager, Fostering and Adoption

Ward(s) Affected All

List of Appendices Included:

Rotherham Fostering Service Annual Report 17/18
Rotherham Fostering Service Statement of Purpose 2018/19

Background Papers: None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
Corporate Parenting Panel

Council Approval Required: No

Exempt from the Press and Public: No

Report: Rotherham Fostering Service Annual Report 2017/18

1. Recommendations

1.1 That the Corporate Parenting Panel receives this report and considers and comments on any issues arising in the report. The report provides performance and activity data on the service, reports on the activity and functioning of the Fostering Panel, and details service developments that have occurred in the year and those that are planned moving through 2018/19.

2. Background

2.1 This report is an annual report to brief on the business and activity within the Council's Fostering Service in 2017/18.

2.2 The report provides performance and activity data on the service, reports on the activity and functioning of the Fostering Panel, and details service developments that have occurred in the year and those that are planned moving through 2018/19.

3. Key Issues

3.1 Rotherham Fostering Service acknowledge that in order to reach the sufficiency plans, Rotherham Fostering need to recruit and retain more foster carers, enabling Rotherham Looked After Children to be placed within the community which they know and where they belong. The indicators that the service is well placed to achieve this include a successful recruitment of social workers who are skilled and motivated. Interest in fostering has increased, modern technology is used to communicate with foster carers in a more cost effective and timely way. Publicity and marketing materials have been refined and refreshed. The service has stream lined the enquiry process with a dedicated fostering advisor and a dedicated matching and placing duty worker. The call for action regarding the sufficiency agenda is well promoted in Rotherham evidenced in the increase in enquiries. Fostering

assessments are progressed in a timely way for families ready to foster, and for those still thinking about fostering and not ready “yet”, these are held by the service in the “keeping in touch” initiative, which sets Rotherham apart from other fostering agencies, and in a position to attract these potential fostering families in the future as they have already been engaged in the “fostering conversation”.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1 That the DLT accept and recommend this report.

5. Consultation

5.1 Not applicable

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 Not applicable

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 The Fostering Team, in conjunction with Service Manager and Head of Service continues to monitor the Fostering Team spend in line with RMBC finance team. A lack of sufficiency of provision has implication on the commissioning of placements which brings with it higher costs. The spend for 2017/18 is detailed in the table below.

| Description: | Total Spend: | Budget: | Under/Over |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Fostering Team | 1,449,781.18 | 1,411,057.00 | 38,7274.18 |
| Fostering Equipment and Mileage | 160,101.42 | 117,137.00 | 42,964.42 |
| Families Together. Short Break Care Packages | 49,874.71 | 73,070.00 | -23,195.29 |
| Home Adaptions | 86,614.00 | 77,733.00 | 8,881.00 |
| Wraparound Support | 89,920.08 | 149,897.00 | -59,976.92 |
| Totals | 1,836,291.39 | 1,828,894.00 | 7,397.39 |

7.2 There was an over spend in the Fostering Team as a result of workers leaving the agency and the necessity of recruiting agency staff. This overspend was absorbed through tighter constraints in other areas of the service. The Service has recruited to post, and the only agency worker at the current time is the Panel Advisor.

7.3 The Fostering Equipment Service has introduced an initiative to recycle within the service equipment rather than automatically buying new equipment when a child is placed. However this budget also relates to the mileage claims for foster carers transporting children to and from school and to contact with their family.

7.4 The cost of the wrap around in 17/18 was less as a result of delay in recruiting to posts and introducing the Mockingbird Model which led to an underspend. This saving was used to offset in other areas of spend.

8. Legal Implications

10.1 There are no direct legal implications to this report, save to say that the Fostering Team operate within the relevant statutory framework set out earlier in this report, together with Statutory Guidance and the Council's policy and procedures.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 There are no direct human resource implications to this report.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 The Fostering Performance Report 2017/18 relates to services for looked after children in care. The service is mindful of the sufficiency agenda and the requirement to provide family based care to children local to the communities which they know and call home. The service is also mindful that placing children at distant has implications on their identity and connectedness, and presents challenge in providing a responsive service when placements are in jeopardy of disruption. The service is aware of the dual roles of recruiting and retaining foster carers to reach sufficiency and have introduced strategies to improve in these areas in 2018/19. In addition the Service is also mindful of the wider implication on outcomes for children in care, including the impact of placement disruption and in the areas of health and educational attainment. In addressing this, the service attend fortnightly performance clinics where there is a focus on performance, and work closely with health and education in achieving better outcomes for children in care.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 There are no direct implications within this report, other than to say that the Fostering Team are compliant with the Human Rights Act and Equal Opportunities Policy.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 Not applicable.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Strong managerial oversight by Directorship Leadership Team along with fortnightly Performance Management Meetings mitigates risks by holding managers and workers to account for practice and enabling a climate for managers to check and challenge practice across services.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Mel Meggs, Deputy Strategic Director CYPS
Mel.Meggs@rotherham.gov.uk

Ian Walker Interim Head of Services, Children in Care
Ian.Walker@rotherham.gov.uk

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:-
Patricia Phillipson, Head of Finance, CYPS

Director of Legal Services:- Neil Concannon, CYPS

HR Business Consultant:- Amy Leech

Name and Job Title.

Anne-Marie Banks Service Manager, Adoption, Fostering and Therapeutic Team

Ian Walker Head of Services, Children in Care

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