



Corporate Parenting Board 5 February 2019

Placement Finding Commissioning and Support Team

Background

The Placement Finding Commissioning and Support Team has responsibility for supporting and training approved foster carers, matching placements and for commissioning placements.

Placement Officer

Following evaluation of the needs of the service, the position of Placement Officer was created. This post was filled in October 2018 and has provided consistency and development of the duty role, enabling an increased reliability of service in the support of foster carers. A key focus of the role is processing placement requests for children and providing a key contact and front door to the service.

In addition the dedicated role has allowed the release of social worker and support workers within the team from duty providing them with valuable additional time with their direct case management.

Foster Carer Support and Training

The service has continued to run quarterly 'Fostering Gateway Events' where the whole fostering community is invited to discuss a specific topic and share information along with wider networks of professionals. These events offer valuable opportunities for foster carers and colleagues to come together and reflect on practice and development. They continue to receive positive feedback and are valued by the fostering community.

This year we have introduced 6 weekly Foster Carer Surgeries where carers are invited to meet members of the fostering team and have an informal discussion about topics of interest. The meetings provide an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas related to the care of children and young people in

care and have been highly successful.

The team have revised and launched the Core Training for carers, this is run twice a year focusing on key topics associated to roles and responsibilities of carers, its focus is to support carers to provide achievable welfare outcomes for children in their care, within York City Council's guidelines and the Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards.

New Training Offer

In order to support placement stability and to achieve permanence for our children and young people in care specific and specialist training has been commissioned. This training will provide more in-depth development of foster carers knowledge and skills.

- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Foster Carers
- NSPCC Reflective Fostering training
- Mental Health and E Safety training

We are also working towards more training being inclusive of Foster Carers and Social Care colleagues, this will enable a shared learning environment, and moreover the adoption and understanding of a shared and consistent working model which will promote placement stability.

Children in care / Fostering Households

At the end of Quarter 3 (1st October 2018- 31st December 2018) there were 209 children and young people in care

Of the 209 children in care:

- 160 children were placed in foster care.
- 91 children and young people were placed with mainstream City of York foster carers
- 41 children and young people were placed with someone with connected carers.
- 28 children and young people placed with Independent Fostering Agency carers
- 16 children are placed in specialist residential children's homes.

The remaining 33 children and young people in care are split between children at home with parents (placed under Placements with Parents

Regulations) and children placed for adoption.

York fostering households

There were 102 approved fostering households on 31 December 2018.

- 62 were mainstream foster carer households
- 26 were Connected foster carer households
- 14 were short breaks carers

We have seen an increase in our connected carer households alongside an increase in resignations of mainstream foster carers. It is anticipated that in Q4 there are likely to be a number of other resignations as we work with carers who have been 'on hold' or who have expressed a desire to resign.

Over the last year there has continued to be a shortfall of mainstream foster carers in York to meet the sufficiency needs of the service. The trend has continued that more foster carers are being deregistered than recruited. As such the service is experiencing a decline in available internal placement options. This situation has seen an increase in the use of Independent Fostering Placements and residential provision while searching for an appropriate placement match. Many of these placements are out of the York area.

The Placement Review and the work of the Assessing Permanent Carers team, provided in a separate report to Corporate Parenting Board, outline the Local Authority's response to resolving its placement sufficiency challenges.

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