

Corporate Parenting Board Report –
Assessing Permanent Carers – Foster Carer Enquiries and
Recruitment
March 2019

Context

At January's 2019 Corporate Parenting Board the Assessing Permanent Carers Team presented a report detailing the strategy for the past year and future recruitment ideas. It highlighted that whilst there had been an overall increase in the number of fostering households the majority of these were 'connected carers'. This reflects the national trend.

Corporate Parenting Board requested understanding of the recruitment figures which this report provides.

Recruitment Figures 2018

The below table highlights enquiries to assessment for 2018. Figures are not available for 2017 due to a challenge with the data captured. This is now resolved and in future all reports will be focused on year April to March.

Quarter	Number of Enquiries	Withdrawn by CYC	Withdrawn by applicants as not proceeding with fostering	No response	Live Applications
Jan to March	27	4	9	12	2
April to June	27	5	6	14	2

July to Sept	28	0	12	15	1
Oct to Dec	28	2	13	8	5

Key findings - Enquires

In broad terms the figures tell us that the department has taken 119 enquiries in 2018. We can see that the number of enquiries has remained steady throughout 2018.

Aside from in April to June, roughly half of all enquiries were withdrawn by the applicants themselves. The most popular reasons cited were that they had a change of circumstances (job change, bereavement / illness) and they were not in a position to continue, or that they had heard more about what fostering entails and decided that it wasn't for them.

Of note is the number of enquiries that are closed due to a lack of response from the applicants. Often applicants will provide the team with a mobile number and an E-mail. We will always make contact on the phone as the first choice and then send an E-mail if we have no reply. We have found that then texting from our work mobile is a good idea as many people don't answer to council / withheld numbers. Finally, if none of the above works we will send a letter asking the applicant to get back to us.

Key Findings- Ongoing Applications

Figures provided to the last Corporate Parenting Board informed us that 3 fostering households were approved at Fostering Panel in 2018. This is a conversion rate of around 2.5% which is below the national average according to figures obtained by the Fostering Network which puts the figure at around 10%.

However there remain 10 enquiries initiating in 2018 which are open. These 10 enquires are at different stages of the assessment process. Some have been to Skills to Foster – pre approval training- others are undergoing assessment.

Future Actions

We will be revising the **enquiry process** to remove some of the work steps as, at present, there are there are some delays in this process. This is to ensure that the Assessing Permanent Carers team offers a swift, effective and robust response to all initial enquiries reducing the likelihood of them being non responders and taking an offer from another LA or IFA.

We will target potential foster carers in digital and other campaigns which should reduce the number of non responders.

In a further development we have begun a '**Future Call-back**' spreadsheet as we want to ensure that anyone who feels that they wish to consider fostering in the future goes on our list and is contacted at a later date.

James Lee

Service Manager – Assessing Permanent Carers Team

01/03/2019

Appendix

Jan – March 2018

1. Total number of enquiries - 27
2. Closed down due to lack of response - 12
3. Withdrawn by the applicants themselves – 9
 - 3 went with an IFA.
 - 2 had a change in circumstances (work, illness etc)
 - 2 applicants decided to withdraw after they had spoken to us as they felt it wasn't what they thought it was.
 - 2 people rang purely to get information from us but didn't feel that this was the right time for them.
4. Withdrawn by the Fostering Team - 4
 - 2 were because they had no spare room to foster.
 - 1 was because they weren't able to change their work situation.
 - 1 was because they had very young children and hadn't considered the impact on them.
5. Enquiries that remain open - 2

April – June 2018

1. Total number of enquiries – 27
2. Closed down due to lack of response - 14
3. Withdrawn by the applicants themselves - 6
 - 3 of them withdrew as they didn't feel it was the right time and they had other commitments.
 - 1 applicant was just calling for information.
 - 1 had a personal situation that meant they couldn't continue.
 - 1 went to an IFA
4. Withdrawn by the Fostering Team – 5 were withdrawn by us (no room, concerns re lifestyle, other commitments)
 - 1 No spare room.
 - 2 had other caring commitments
 - 2 wished to continue working full time.
5. Enquiries that remain open - 2

July - September 2018

1. Number of enquiries – 28
2. Closed down due to lack of response - 15
3. Withdrawn by the applicants themselves - 12
 - 2 of them were because of bereavements / serious illness
 - 4 of them were because of a change of life circumstances (job etc)
 - 2 decided to apply with another local authority (Leeds, North Yorkshire)
 - 3 changed their mind following the initial enquiry and felt that fostering wasn't for them.
 - 1 was just calling for basic information.
4. Withdrawn by the Fostering Team - 0
5. Enquiries that remain open - 1

October - December 2018

1. Number of enquiries – 28
2. Closed down due to lack of response - 8
3. Withdrawn by the applicants themselves – 13
 - 1 decided to go with another local authority (Leeds)
 - 3 withdrew as they felt that it was not the right time.
 - 3 wanted information and said they'd consider fostering in the future.
 - 4 had a change of circumstances so withdrew (job, home renovations, family issues)
 - 1 hadn't checked that all family members were on board
 - 1 listened to information but then decided it wasn't for them.
4. Withdrawn by the Fostering team – 2
 - 1 previous concerning CYC involvement.
 - 1 had work commitments.
5. Enquiries that remain open - 5