

<b>CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE</b>	AGENDA ITEM No. 9
<b>9 NOVEMBER 2016</b>	PUBLIC REPORT

## **Report of the Corporate Director People and Communities**

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### **PERMANENCE SERVICE**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 An update has been requested by Corporate Parenting Committee in respect of the new Permanence Service. This will be presented by TACT (The Adolescence and Children’s Trust)
- 1.2 This report is presented under the Corporate Parenting Committee’s Terms of Reference,
  - 2.4.3.2 To receive statutory reports in relation to the adoption, fostering, commissioning, looked after children services and children’s homes with a view to recommending any changes.
  - 2.4.3.3 Ensure that the needs of looked after children and care leavers are addressed through key plans, policies and strategies throughout the Council overseeing interagency working arrangements.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 For information.

#### **3. LINK TO THE CHILDREN IN CARE PLEDGE**

- 3.1 This falls under Priority 4. Placement stability and range of high quality placement provision

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Peterborough has developed a unique and innovative approach to securing improved outcomes for children and young people in care through our new Permanency Service, which will be delivered by the very respected children’s charity, TACT [The Adolescent and Children’s Trust].
- 4.2 This new approach will also deliver savings to the Council and enable investment in edge of care, prevention and early help services.

#### **5. KEY ISSUES**

- 5.1 Peterborough, like most Councils, does not have enough foster carers to look after children and young people in our care. This means that we have to place about 33% of our children looked after with foster carers provided by Independent Fostering Agencies [IFAs]. This costs the Council about £2.5M per annum more than it would if we could place all our children with our own carers.
- 5.2 Money aside, there are other reasons why it is good for children to be placed with our own carers, including:

- We know our carers well, so we can make better matches between children and carers;
- Our carers are all located in or close to Peterborough, whereas IFA carers are often much further away.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Our fostering, adoption, family group conferencing and support staff will transfer to TACT under TUPE. The total budget for children's care placements will transfer to TACT which will be responsible for providing or sourcing from others all the placements that children in Peterborough need. Our foster and adoptive carers will be supported and trained by TACT and TACT will recruit, train and assess new carers.
- 6.2 Foster carers will benefit from a unique service. They will get the benefits of being supported by a specialist agency with many years' experience of supporting carers to care for more challenging children and young people. Importantly, they will also only look after children and young people from Peterborough, meaning that they will also benefit from a consistent relationship with one Council – unlike Independent Fostering Agency carers, who take children from all over the country. We think this combination makes our new service uniquely attractive to carers in the highly competitive world of fostering.
- 6.3 Staff, foster carers and young people all contributed to the development of the service specification and to the process by which TACT was identified as the winning bidder. We are all very proud of our achievement in setting up this unique and highly innovative new service.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 From these beginnings, we worked with our staff, foster carers and young people to develop a full specification for what has become the highly innovative Permanency Service. This new service will:
- Provide the support that foster carers want;
  - Reduce the overall cost of placements by increasing use of our in-house carers;
  - Enable investment in 'edge of care' and prevention and early help services in Peterborough, and;
  - Through these actions, deliver improved outcomes for children and young people.
  - An open tender process followed, which has resulted in the contract being awarded to the children's charity, TACT.

## **8. NEXT STEPS**

- 8.1 Information only.

## **9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 9.1 None.

## **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1 None.