

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 5
21 NOVEMBER 2018	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Executive Director People and Communities Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Councils	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Sam Smith, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services.	
Contact Officer(s):	Myra O’Farrell Head of Service Corporate Parenting	Tel. 864391

FOSTER CARER FORUM REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Foster Carer Forum	Deadline date: N/A
<p>It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Committee</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes the content of the report; and 2. Raise any queries they have with the lead officers. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to each formal Corporate Parenting Committee.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 Corporate Parenting Committee wish to receive an update at formal committee meetings of discussions and actions from the Foster Carers forum.

2.2 This report is being presented under the Corporate Parenting Committee Terms of Reference: 2.4.4.2 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.

2.3 This links into all areas of the children in care pledge.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 The Foster Carers Committee continues to meet on a regular basis. The agenda consists of standing items and other issues, topics of conversation that occur from time to time. Meetings are attended by 10-15 representatives and the chair, deputy chair, secretary and treasurer posts are subject to annual elections. Managers from the Permanency service are also present at these meetings.

4.2 A summary of the discussions/actions at the committee is shared with all foster carers through

the bi monthly carers newsletter.

- 4.3 The group have been involved in working with TACT and PCC in developing the Staying Put offer to young people and carers. Work is still being finalised on this but work so far has contributed to an increasing number of young people remaining with their previous foster carers for a period before living more independently.
- 4.4 The committee and staff from the Permanency service have been involved in discussions with a local bank around their offer to young people/carers who open savings accounts with them.
- 4.5 The transport service is regularly reviewed, and Sara Thompson the PCC Transport manager attended the last meeting. The general satisfaction rates are improving and if there are issues they are being dealt with
- 4.6 There is an ongoing discussion around respite and opportunities for children with disabilities and policy is being clarified in that area.
- 4.7 The birth children's group is being reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose
- 4.8 The Committee actively organises events for children and carers during school holiday periods. Events at Bounce in October and Wicksteed Park events over the summer holidays were very well attended and enjoyed by all. 141 tickets have been sold for the Christmas Pantomime and the Annual Children and Carers Christmas Party is being held on 2nd December at the Fleet.
- 4.9 An important development has been extending a welcome to special guardians to these social events. These families really appreciate this, and it is helping them get to know other carers.
- 4.10 Foster carers have been actively involved in developing the service acting as buddies and acting as support for other carers subject to allegations. Carers are involved in delivering skills to foster sessions also and have been actively promoting the service and inviting friends and people they think may be suitable to apply to be foster carers.
- 4.11 The first annual TACT Peterborough foster carer survey took place in the summer. There was a 47% response rate which was seen as positive as the average response rate for online surveys is 33%.
- 4.12 Motivations to be foster carers – As in most other surveys carers wanted to: make a difference to the lives of children in care, offer children a positive experience of family life and the fact they enjoyed working with children. A strong factor was also wanting to give something back to the community which fits with TACT's charitable ethos and that of a public service/local authority.
- 4.13 Satisfaction levels - 92% of respondents described TACT Peterborough Permanency Service staff as treating them and their families positively and 90% felt the service had a priority and focus on the children and young people they fostered and importantly 96% of carers with birth children were pleased with the care the service had shown towards their birth children. Carers gave positive reviews to the TACT Peterborough Foster Carer Newsletter, updated Foster Carer Handbook and Foster Carer Support Groups.
Satisfaction rates of 100% were recorded in replying to phone calls, 97% in replying to letters, 96% in replying to emails, 95% seeing carers face to face and 96% regarding quality of supervision.
- 4.14 Delegated responsibility – This area appears to be working well; It was positive to see 73% said they were able to allow children to go to friend's houses for sleepovers, 83% said they could sign consent forms for school trips and 92% said they could arrange haircuts.
- 4.15 Terms of Approval - Growing and maximising the use of in house capacity rather than using more expensive Independent Fostering Agencies is a major objective of the service and the Council so it's important how the service manages this in the way it interacts with carers. Whilst 7 carer households (15% of those answering question) had been asked to take children,

outside of their terms of approval and most felt this was ok and they were supported, but two didn't. The TACT Peterborough figures suggest we are managing this better than most but must not be complacent as the financial challenges will not lessen.

- 4.16 The Out of Hours service has been a success with those carers needing to use it giving a 90% satisfaction response to the service received. The FN survey described out of hours support as could be better or poor, very different to the local picture in Peterborough. There were teething problems initially as staff got used the system and rotas, but we will continue to monitor the service closely.
- 4.17 Training - 98% scored the quality of training at 7/10 and over and 98% described the current training programme as meeting their needs, whereas 50% of those in the FN Survey didn't have training plans, so it would appear our service is doing very well. Whilst face to face training was preferred by 84% of carers, they embrace different modes of training despite the strong preference.
- 4.18 Service Developments - Foster carers were keen to provide more Child and Parent placements and Parallel Parenting (helping return children home to parents when appropriate).
- 4.19 Health - There were positive results in terms of carers interactions with health services and 100% said they felt confident about talking to the children and young people in your care about sexual health and relationships?
- 4.20 Education - Whilst a large majority of foster carers (69%) thought children were achieving at levels about right for them, a number thought children were under achieving. TACT will be working on this with Children's Services and the Virtual Head.
- 4.21 Quality- TACT Peterborough customer service was rated by 95% or more positively in the following areas: replying to your phone calls. letters, emails, seeing carers face to face and in the quality of supervision received.
- 4.22 It is pleasing for both PCC & TACT going forward that 91% of carers said they would recommend the TACT Peterborough Permanency Service to others interested in fostering, whereas only 55% of foster carers in the FN survey would recommend fostering to others.
- 4.23 Work plan - Respite and the management of allegations were key areas carers spoke to us about and these will be on the work plan going forward. The changes asked for were across the spectrum, but common features were the services relationship with PCC children's services, being treated as a professional and further developing the support given to carers.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 None

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 None

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 Corporate Parenting Committee to be aware of the role of the Foster Carer Forum.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 N/A

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

9.1 None

Legal Implications

9.2 No

Equalities Implications

9.3 No

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None