

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE (FORMAL)	AGENDA ITEM No. 4
20 JULY 2022	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Nicola Curley Director for Children’s Services	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Lynne Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills and the University	
Contact Officer(s):	Ricky Cooper, Assistant Director, Fostering, Regional Adoption and Specialist Young People’s Services	Tel.01223 699609

Report from the Foster Carer Committee

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Despina Kaoura, Service Manager Supervision and Support	Deadline date: N/A
<p>It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes the content of this report • Raise any queries they have with the lead officers 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to the Corporate Parenting Committee

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to inform committee of activity undertaken by the Foster Carer Committee and to update on fostering service developments and in response to items raised by the Foster Carer Committee.

2.2 This report is for the Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.4.4.6 To monitor the quality of care delivered by the City Council and review the performance of outcomes for children and young people in care, (d) Hold meetings with children and young people in care, frontline staff and foster carers to inform the committee of the standards of care and improvement outcomes for looked after children.

2.3 This reports to the Children in Care Pledge by focussing on respect for Children in Care and Care Leavers

3. TIMESCALES

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

4.1 Overview of activity

- 4.1.1 This report has been prepared to update the Corporate Parenting Committee on participation activity with Peterborough Foster Carers, and to provide an overview of development activity within the service.
- 4.1.2 The Peterborough Foster Carer Community (PFCC) continue to meet bi-monthly, and the Annual General Meeting will take place in December 2022.
- 4.1.3 Foster Carers representatives on the PFCC are:
- Mandy Nicholson, Chair of the Peterborough Foster Carer Community, Glen Crossland, Vice Chair, Andrea Hughes, Secretary & Events Coordinator, Lynne Bailey, Treasurer.
- 4.1.4 The PFCC have a wealth of fostering experience along with individual inter-personal skills which they bring with them to support the Foster Carer Community. The service works closely with the members of the PFCC throughout the year to ensure the voice and views of Peterborough Foster Carers is heard and central to plans for service development.
- 4.1.5 The Fostering Service has attended meetings with the PFCC to hear feedback from Foster Carers on what is working well and what Foster Carers feel needs to be considered or addressed by the Fostering Service and colleagues within the wider Children's Services. The Head of Service for Fostering, the Head of Service for Corporate Parenting and the Support and Supervision Service Manager for Fostering are also invited to attend the PFCC meetings.
- 4.1.6 The Head of Service for Fostering also meets monthly with the Chair and Vice Chair of both the PFCC and the Cambridgeshire Foster Carer Association (CFCA) which is a good opportunity to discuss service developments and plans in more detail and review feedback from Foster Carers received at formal meetings.
- 4.1.7 The PFCC are invited to be involved in the work being initiated within the service and are very proactive in providing their experience, knowledge, and skills to support service development. The Fostering Service has launched its new branding and logo in consultation with Foster Carers and the Children in Care Council. The branding is more dynamic and reflective of the new shared Fostering Service.



- 4.1.8 In April, there was a new initiative focused on carer retention. The working group meets once a month and Foster Carers from both Local Authorities are also part of this group. Focus so far has been on financial arrangements, feelings of isolation, managing complex behaviours and allegations and complaints. There has been good progress made in this quarter, demonstrated by improved carer retention.
- 4.1.9 The Fostering Recruitment Ambassadors from within the Fostering Community continue to work alongside the service supporting recruitment activity and raising the awareness of Private Fostering in their communities using their wealth of knowledge and experience of the fostering task.
- 4.1.10 Our Mentoring Scheme continues to be developed and one Mentor is currently being trained and supported by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to offer support to carers who are subject to an allegation or Standards of Care investigation. This is a voluntary arrangement for carers which we hope they will find beneficial. The role of a Mentor is to support carers when they are finding children's behaviours difficult to manage and to provide peer support particularly in the first year of carers approval.

4.1.11 The service involved some of our Foster Carers in reviewing the training course provided to applicant carers following feedback received in the Foster Carer Survey conducted in 2021. The service has now adopted the Journey2Foster course which has replaced the Skills to Foster course which has received positive feedback from applicant carers. The Young Trainers and our experienced Foster Carers provide an invaluable contribution to this training.

4.1.12 In person Support Groups for Carers have resumed. There are two Support Groups for Peterborough Carers including the Support Group focussed on child development for 0-5 year olds. A new monthly virtual Support Group has been introduced for carers of teenagers to support them to care for children in the older age range. The first group was held June, was well attended and received positive feedback. The CFCA and PFCC chair and other members of the Foster Carer forums are very proactive in attending and supporting these groups.

4.2 Update on changes from the Peterborough Foster Carer Community

- The PFCC agreed by consensus to change their name from Peterborough Foster Carer Committee to Peterborough Foster Carer Community – generally known as the PFCC.
- The details of the newly named Peterborough Foster Carer Community have been shared to the Fostering Community via the bi-monthly newsletter produced by the service which also provided a link for carers to access the new (private) Facebook page where useful information and updates are posted to keep carers informed.
- The service has supported the PFCC in creating a new logo for the PFCC.
- The PFCC have created a document introducing the PFCC to carers who may be interested in joining.
- The PFCC have reviewed and updated their 'Terms of Reference'.

4.3 Meetings held and identified actions

4.3.1 The PFCC held two meetings in the first Quarter of 2022. The following matters were raised:

- Foster Carers continue to experience some issues with transport, particularly instances where taxis have not been provided for children's appointments or where transport needs have changed. Carers have found that they are unable to inform anyone of the changes in a timely manner to make amendments to the journey or to avoid unnecessary journeys.

Service response: The Fostering Service Manager attends all Transport-related meetings about the development of the transport portal and reports the progress to the PFCC. A review of all transport arrangements for Children in Care is currently underway and both the Service Manager and Team Manager are working closely with the Transport Service to resolve issues. The Team Manager for Passenger Transport Operations has been invited to the next Peterborough Support Group.

- There continue to be ongoing discussions between the PFCC and the service about Junior ISAs and Trust Fund Accounts for Children in Care (CiC). The PFCC note that they still feel they do not have a clear understanding of the LA's policy & procedures around the opening of ISAs/Trust Fund Accounts for CiC and would like further clarity regarding roles and responsibilities.

Service response: The service will continue to work with the wider organisation and appropriate officers and will report back the PFCC and Elected Members regarding progress.

- Foster Carers acknowledge that the Additional Allowance Consultation and outstanding document are now complete and that the PFCC are pleased with this and the 2% increase in Foster Carer payments they received in April 2022.

- Foster Carers continue to experience delays within the application process for CiC passports. This leaves Foster Carers feeling frustrated and unclear about their role in this process. Carers have requested some guidance with regards to legal responsibilities for the application of passports for children, and some clarity regarding responsibility and accountability within the organisation.

Service response: The Fostering Service will endeavour to work with the wider organisation to provide carers with clear guidance and is waiting for the review being undertaken by Corporate Parenting colleagues regarding passport applications.

4.3.2

The service continues to invite the PFCC to contribute to the newsletter and the service welcomes material for future issues. The service works collaboratively with both the PFCC and the CFCA offering opportunities to attend events and contribute to service development.

In this quarter this included:

- Inviting both the CFCA and PFCC Chairs and Vice Chairs to the Fostering Transformation event held on 1 April 2022.
- Inviting the PFCC to the New Carers Event held on the 13 May 2002 to talk about their role and offer to Foster Carers and also to celebrate Foster Carers who have joined our community during the height of the pandemic to date.
- Ensuring Supervising Social Workers share information about the PFCC with the Foster Carers they support.

Service response: The Fostering Service will endeavour to continue to ensure that the PFCC are invited to events and contribute to service development as appropriate.

- The PFCC have requested that the service does more to raise awareness of the PFCC to ensure that all carers are aware of and are provided with the opportunity to be involved, be supported and to contribute.

Service response: The service is working with both the PFCC and CFCA Chairs to identify all opportunities to support this, for example the new Foster Carer Agreement will include a request to carers to agree to provide their personal contact details with the PFCC should they wish to learn more about the support it offers. The service is committed to supporting the awareness of the Foster Carer Community and Association within the wider Fostering Community.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 N/A

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 Foster Carer views will feed into the key priorities of the service

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Corporate Parenting Committee members have a duty to review the performance of Children's Social Care.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 N/A

9. IMPLICATIONS

9.1 **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications associated with this report

9.2 **Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications associated with this report

9.3 **Equalities Implications**

There are no equalities implications associated with this report

9.4 **Other Implications**

This report relates to the services provided for Children in Care and Care Leavers and ties into the Pledge and Charter that the Local Authority respects the differing wants and needs for all.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

10.1 N/A

11. APPENDICES

11.1 N/A

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