

From: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education
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To: Corporate Parenting Panel 25th July 2019

Subject: Kent Fostering Service Annual Report 2018 / 2019 & Kent Fostering Service Business Plan 2019

Classification: Unrestricted

<p>Summary: This Annual Report provides Members with an overview of the Kent Fostering Service from March 2018 - April 2019. The report details statistical information relating to the approval of new foster carers along with recruitment activity undertaken by the service.</p> <p>The Kent Fostering Service Business Plan 2019 details the areas of priority in the coming year, for both the recruitment and retention of Kent Foster Carers.</p> <p>Recommendations: Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to NOTE the information contained within the Kent Fostering Annual Report and Business Plan 2019.</p>

1. Introduction.

- 1.1 Kent County Council aims to ensure that the Kent Fostering service recruits and supervises the very best foster carers to promote a safe and secure environment for children and young people in Kent. The Annual Report outlines the key functions of the Kent Fostering service and a summary of work undertaken from April 2018 to March 2019. The annual report is an opportunity to celebrate our successes as a service and to identify areas for improvement as we work towards our ambition for the service to be judged by Ofsted as 'Outstanding'.
- 1.2 The business plan sets out how the Kent Fostering Service intends to deliver its services to ensure children feel safe, secure, loved, fulfilled, happy and optimistic about their futures. The plan details how we will support our foster carers to achieve this for our children. It uses the National Minimum Standards (NMS) applicable to the provision of fostering services. The NMS together with the Fostering Regulations form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of fostering agencies.

2. Body of the Annual Report and Business Plan

- 2.1 The annual report focuses on the two key challenges for Kent Fostering, the recruitment of new foster carers and the retention of our experienced foster carers.
- 2.2 The service has demonstrated a variety of new initiatives that have been used to attract new applications and the new branding has now been implemented. It continues to be a very competitive and challenging market in Kent, in which to recruit.
- 2.3 The Business Plan sets out the direction of the service and our ambition to achieve the recruitment of 120 new foster carers. The service has secured Transformation funding, to use to improve placement stability and this will be used to offer more flexible support to our existing in-house foster carers in the aim to improve our retention.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 Kent County Council are committed to ensuring that children can remain in the care of their parents and birth families where possible. However, if it is not possible for the child to remain living in their birth family, we plan for alternate care within a family setting, both as a short term or permanent arrangement. The annual report demonstrates the work that has been undertaken during the last financial year. The Kent Fostering service has been part of the Change for Kent Children programme, wherein our aim is to consolidate areas of good practice and improve the support services provided to our in-house foster carers, children and young people.

4. Recommendation

Recommendations: Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to **NOTE** and **COMMENT** on the information contained within the Kent Fostering Annual Report and Business Plan.

5. Background documents

- 5.1 The Annual Report March 2018 - April 2019 including:

- Kent Fostering Service Structure Chart Appendix A
- Kent Fostering Business Plan Appendix B

6. Contact details

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