

**FOSTER CARE RECRUITMENT UPDATE**

*To:* **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **25 April 2018**

*From:* **John Heron  
Residential and Placements Provisions Manager**

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Purpose:* **This report provides an update to the Sub-Committee on foster carer recruitment activity.**

*Recommendation:* **The Committee is asked to note the report.**

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## Summary:

The Council needs to make sure it has enough foster carers for children who are Looked After. To do this we use publicity to let people know what it might be like to be a foster carer.

The Council has recently agreed to spend more money to help us have really good publicity and to make sure we have more staff to support foster carers. This report gives information about how some of the money will be spent.

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Provision of fostering services is a key statutory requirement of the local authority and is essential to enabling children living away from home to receive good quality family care.
- 1.2 A good in-house fostering service is essential to provide quality placements for children, and to enable management of placement costs.
- 1.3 In Cambridgeshire there is a need to increase the recruitment of in-house carers to ensure that there is a choice of placements to meet the numbers and needs of young people and to manage placement budget spend.
- 1.4 On 28 November 2017 the General Purposes Committee (GPC) agreed investment in this area from the Transformation Fund over a 3-year period.

## 2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 GPC have agreed additional investment for 2018-19 as follows:

• Up-front marketing investment through three years tender; up to:	£225,000
• Additional capacity – marketing officers:	£80,000
• Staffing capacity – recruitment, support and business support:	£210,000
• Marketing – direct campaign costs	£20,000
• Other recruitment incentives including introduction fees and golden hellos:	£70,000
• Additional funds to improve support for foster carers:	£100,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£705,000</b>

On-going investment in future years is to be met from savings in the placement budget from increased in-house provision and anticipated reductions in the number of Looked After children.

- 2.2 A three year fostering recruitment strategy is being devised in conjunction with a local media company, the corporate Communications Team, the Fostering Service and a focus group consisting of Foster Carers, Councillor Simon Bywater (Chairman of the Children and Young People Committee) and Cambridgeshire County Council staff. The strategy will include;
  - Concept and branding

- Development and production of creative media including videos and an improved web presence
- Social media input and advertising materials
- Engagement with media organisations and generation of publicity for the service

2.3 Additional staffing for the fostering service is being identified to ensure an efficient recruitment pipeline, including additional marketing, training and business support capacity as well as social work assessment

2.4 The support offer to foster carers is being reviewed to ensure appropriate clinical support and effective engagement through a foster carer association.

### **3. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

#### **3.1 Resource Implications**

The fostering service is delivered within the available budget. There are no significant implications from this report.

#### **3.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications**

The media company engaged is on the council procurement framework

#### **3.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications**

None

#### **3.4 Equality and Diversity Implications**

None

#### **3.5 Engagement and Communications Implications**

The Corporate Communications team are part of the focus group and will assist with oversight of any proposed communication and engagement activity.

#### **3.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement**

None

#### **3.7 Public Health Implications**

None

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>General Purposes Committee report re: Transforming Outcomes for Children and Young People in Care (Item 6a refers)</b>	<a href="https://cmis.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ccc_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/585/Committee/2/Default.aspx">https://cmis.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ccc_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/585/Committee/2/Default.aspx</a>

