

Report from Cambridgeshire Foster Carers' Association

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 14 July 2021

From: Ricky Cooper, Assistant Director Fostering, Regional Adoption and Specialist Young People's Services

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: This report has been submitted on behalf of the Cambridgeshire Foster Carer Association

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of the report
- b) Raise any queries they have with the lead officers

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1. Summary

This report is an overview of the role of the Foster Carers' Association and what work they have undertaken alongside the Fostering Service.

2. Main issues

2.1.1 A survey was shared with all foster carers and the responses will be used to inform improvements in support and development services.

2.1.2 Based on feedback previously received individually from foster carers, the service worked alongside both chairs to develop the following key questions which align to the overall service aims to improve the recruitment of carers who can provide safe and loving local homes for our children in care, the retention of foster carers and maximise the participation of foster carers in all the work that we do:

- Do you feel fully supported by the Fostering Service/Local Authority?
- What improvements or changes within the Fostering Service Department would assist you to reach your full potential in your role as a foster carer?
- As a foster Carer do you feel your thoughts, opinions and experiences are valued and taken into consideration when decisions/plans are being made for the child/young person in your care?
- What changes / strategies do you think would improve the lives of the young people in your care?
- Would you be willing/available to share your experiences/commitment to the young people in your care to others?
- There are a high percentage of children and young people; teenagers and those exhibiting challenging behaviour who are being placed with IFA's. In your opinion, what does the service need to do to encourage and empower in-house foster carers to be more confident and step out of their comfort zone to care for these young people?
- As a Foster Carer, if you had a magic wand what would your three wishes be that you would like to see the Fostering Service implement?
- Would you recommend other potential carers to join the LA in their fostering journey? Whether this be new carers or others transferring from an IFA
- Do you feel satisfied with the way that your Fostering Service works to retain and support its existing carers?
- Please select ALL relevant criteria from the list below, you may fall into two categories e.g. Foster and Adoptive Parent.

2.1.3 Feedback received has been invaluable in its challenge to the service and in identifying carers who wish to work alongside us for example on our training or mentorship scheme. Over the coming months we will continue to work in partnership with the Fostering Committee/ Association Chairs and our foster carers to address the comments received.

2.1.4 The service anticipates that some actions will be easily addressed whilst others we will work towards. Responsive and regular communication channels with our foster carers is a

priority and their voices are valued. Given this we will reissue the survey in February/March 2022 to measure the progress made.

2.5 Foster carer responses are detailed in Appendix 1.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone
There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.2 Thriving places for people to live
There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

The entire report is aligned with this priority as the Fostering Service is responsible for delivering safe, secure and local foster homes for Cambridgeshire's Children in Care

3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050
There are no significant implications for this priority.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications
There are no significant implications within this category.

4.2 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications
There are no significant implications within this category

4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications
There are no significant implications within this category

4.4 Engagement and Communications Implications
There are no significant implications within this category

4.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement
There are no significant implications within this category

4.6 Public Health Implications

5. Source documents

5.1 Not applicable