

‘Siblings Forever’ Project Report 2021-22

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 3rd August 2022

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

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: Not applicable

Outcome: This report is submitted to each formal and informal Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee as part of the standing work programme item in relation to performance.

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of the report, and
- b) Raise any questions with the lead officer

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1. Background

- 1.1 The report provides an overview of the activities and impact of the Siblings Forever project in Cambridgeshire for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.
- 1.2 The report notes that the project had been suspended over most of 2020 and 2021 because of the Covid pandemic, but that once restrictions were relaxed the team were able to provide two trips for sibling groups to have memorable bonding experiences together.
- 1.3 The report will note the benefits of the project, give some detail about the children and young people who were involved and their thoughts on what the experience gave them.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 **Background:** Siblings Together is a project that brings together siblings who have been separated through care for a short residential multi-activity trip at Grafham Water. The project has been running since 2013 and is staffed by volunteers from Children's Social Care who give their time to facilitate the trip. The project is designed to strengthen family bonds that would otherwise be fragmented when a child is in care which supports children in developing social capital as they move into adult life.
- 2.2 **The young people:** Workers in Children's Social Care nominate sibling groups for the project and, in 2021-22, 6 sibling groups (19 children) attended one of two residential trips. The young people were aged between 9 and 16, and over half live outside Cambridgeshire. Two brothers were placed together until a year ago and now live some distance apart, so the project was ideal for giving them a memorable holiday together.
- 2.3 **Impact of the project:** The project allows siblings to spend quality, relaxed time together, which is a contrast to often constrained contact time with parents or carers present. Young people are asked for feedback about the trip, and the attached report gives further detail of their experiences. Common themes include:
 - Young people would recommend the project to others.
 - Young people enjoyed all aspects of the trip even routine bickering with their siblings.
 - Young people stayed up chatting with siblings and everyone went home exhausted but happy.
- 2.4 **Future plans:** The project is being funded for 2022-23, with two trips being planned.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Environment and Sustainability

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.2 Health and Care

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.3 Places and Communities

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.4 Children and Young People

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in paragraph 2.1.

3.5 Transport

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4. Source documents

4.1 The full project report is attached.