

Fostering and Recruitment Task and Finish Group (Cabinet, 14 September 2011)			
Recommendation to Cabinet (accepted)	Status	Information	Contact Officers
<p><u>Recommendation one</u> That an online enquiry form be created on the Fostering page of the council's website, Barnet Online, to allow people thinking of fostering to register their interest with the Fostering Team.</p> <p>Complementing the creation of an online enquiry form, the Fostering Team should update the Fostering Information Pack provided via the Fostering webpage to include clear guidance on the type of personal information applicants will be expected to divulge during the application process.</p>	Green	<p><u>Cabinet resolution:</u> "That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be approved as submitted."</p> <p><u>Update March 2012:</u> An online enquiry form has been developed and will go live with the Council's website in April.</p> <p>The Fostering Information Pack has been updated and is currently with the graphic design team. It will be completed and printed by the end of April 2012.</p> <p><u>Update September 2012:</u> The online enquiry form went live in May 2012. Twenty people have used the enquiry form to register their interest in fostering with us since then.</p> <p>The Fostering Information Pack now includes clear information about each stage of the assessment process, a role description of what foster carers do and a quiz to encourage enquirers to have considered the key sticking points, (experience, support network, finances and assessment and training) before applying.</p>	<p>Ann Graham Assistant Director, Children's Social Care</p> <p>Debbie Gabriel Service Manager</p> <p>Debbie Biss Fostering Recruitment Team Manager</p>

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<p><u>Recommendation two</u> That the Fostering Team, as a means of enabling contact and mutual support among foster carers, should:</p> <p>(i) ensure the engagement of experienced foster carers to develop a support network for newly recruited foster carers via the proposed buddy scheme.</p> <p>(ii) as foster carers may not be able to attend the regular meetings of the Foster Carers Support Group due to child care commitments, the Fostering Team should identify suitable council properties in the borough to enable foster carers to bring children with them to assist in providing a local support group that meets their needs.</p>	Green	<p><u>Cabinet resolution:</u> “That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be approved as submitted.”</p> <p><u>Update March 2012:</u> A ‘buddy’ scheme for newly approved carers has been put in place for task-centred carers (carers looking after children whose future placement is still uncertain), linking them to experienced carers who support them through their early experiences as foster carers.</p> <p>Creation of a Peer Support Scheme - to extend opportunities for foster carers’ involvement by offering education, support and practical help.</p> <p>Introduction of monthly coffee mornings at Eversfield Centre, Mill Hill (from September 2011). These are co-hosted with Barnet Foster Carers. Toys and a soft play area are provided so that foster carers can bring their children with them.</p> <p><u>Update September 2012:</u> The ‘buddy’ scheme has been extended to Family and Friends carers, to ensure they too have access to experienced carers who can support them through their early experiences as foster carers.</p> <p>The Peer Support Scheme is continuing to grow, and foster carers are very positive about it, both those receiving peer support and</p>	<p>Ann Graham Assistant Director, Children’s Social Care</p> <p>Debbie Gabriel Service Manager</p> <p>Debbie Biss Fostering Recruitment Team Manager</p>

		<p>those providing it.</p> <p>The monthly coffee mornings, co-run with Barnet Foster Care Association, continue to take place in Mill Hill.</p> <p>A review of the structure of our support has begun, with a working group of staff and foster carers.</p>	
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<p><u>Recommendation three</u> The Fostering Team continue to monitor, compare and contrast the cost of placements with independent fostering agencies as well as the content of support services provided by these agencies with in-house fostering services.</p> <p>The purpose of this monitoring being to ensure that by comparing and contrasting service provision the council is achieving value for money and identifies opportunities for service improvements and efficiencies.</p>	Green	<p><u>Cabinet Resolution:</u> “That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be approved as submitted.”</p> <p><u>Update March 2012:</u> A cost comparison of in-house and Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) foster placements has been undertaken. This work has taken overheads associated with in-house foster placements into account, including support services.</p> <p>This cost comparison found that an in-house foster placement week for one child in 2010-11 financial year cost the council an average of £776. Over the same timeframe, an IFA foster placement week for one child costs the Council an average of £998 which is £222 more per week.</p> <p>Whilst the Council will always try and achieve best value for the public pound, it needs to balance this with its corporate parenting</p>	<p>Ann Graham Assistant Director, Children’s Social Care</p> <p>Debbie Gabriel Service Manager</p> <p>Debbie Biss Fostering Recruitment Team Manager</p>

		<p>responsibility. Whilst every effort will be made to provide in-house foster placements, there will be occasions where an IFA foster placement will need to be taken up to deliver the best positive outcomes for these vulnerable young people. The balance of foster placement provision has been moved to provide the majority of foster placements in-house (please see recommendation four update for further details).</p> <p>There remains a role for IFA provision, particularly for children with complex needs. IFA foster placements and services are commissioned on the basis of individual children's needs. IFA placements will continue to be monitored to ensure every child in an IFA placement is there because professional judgement deems it the best way to meet the child's needs.</p> <p>This continual analysis will enable better targeting of the fostering recruitment programme to seek to recruit in-house carers to meet identified needs, for example, where there is demand for sibling group placements.</p> <p><u>Update September 2012:</u></p> <p>The costs of internal fostering placements have not changed since the 2010-11 review. Similarly, the costs of external placements have remained roughly as previously (a few agencies have put up costs, but a few also have reduced costs).</p> <p>Following an options analysis of spending on parent and child assessment placements, Barnet is developing an in-house parent and child fostering scheme. This scheme will work collaboratively across the North London Fostering Consortium (Barnet, Enfield, Haringey, Camden and Islington), to maximise cost-effectiveness.</p>	
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		Later this year Barnet, as other LAs, will become responsible for placements of young people remanded to care as an alternative to custody. In order to save on the high cost of specialist placements for these young people, Barnet is collaborating across the North London boroughs to set up an in-house remand fostering scheme.	
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<p><u>Recommendation four</u> The Fostering Team to focus customer research and analysis to ensure that future marketing campaigns include the targeting of demographic groups that are under-represented among the in-house foster carer pool when considered against the borough's overall demographic make up.</p> <p>Further, as a means of monitoring the effectiveness of marketing campaigns the Fostering Team continue to</p>	Green	<p><u>Cabinet Resolution:</u> "That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be approved as submitted."</p> <p><u>Update March 2012:</u> Foster Carers Recruited 2011/12 = 17</p> <p>Foster Carers Deregistered 2011/12 = 10</p> <p>Total number of placements as at the end of February 2012 = 226; 57% are in LLB foster placements. This exceeds the performance target of 55%</p> <p>Of foster placements, the total number of LLB placements as at the end of February 2012 = 147; the performance target is 145 or over. The total number of IFA placements as at the end of February 2012 = 78: the performance target is 80 or less.</p>	<p>Ann Graham Assistant Director, Children's Social Care</p> <p>Debbie Gabriel Service Manager</p> <p>Debbie Biss Fostering Recruitment Team Manager</p>

<p>analyse the performance of ongoing and previous advertising and marketing campaigns and report:</p> <p>(i) The number of new foster carer recruitments</p> <p>(ii) The number of foster carers de-registering</p>		<p>We have received 40% of our enquiries through the internet (see graph below). This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • internet advertising on Facebook, Netmums and the local Times newspapers website • through the Google search engine • through the North London Fostering Consortium website. <p>We expect this to increase significantly in the future therefore the new look website and enquiry form will be really beneficial.</p> <p>Other successful campaigns have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a newspaper wrap on the local Times newspaper (October 2011) • targeting 'Creative lifestyle' types using Mosaic typology. Posters were displayed in the following underground stations, the majority of which are within the borough boundaries. Stations included Totteridge and Whetstone, Hampstead, High Barnet, Edgware and Finchley. • 'word of mouth' through the foster carer referral reward scheme • joint fostering campaigns with the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium. <p>An analysis of the home postcodes of enquirers (see final graph) shows that we have had more enquiries from areas in Barnet where 'Creative Professionals' live; particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Barnet • Barnet • Totteridge 	
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		<p>completed Skills to Foster and have been invited to apply.</p> <p>The need to be able to speak, read and write in English is a barrier to recruiting under represented ethnic minority groups. To combat this we have joined together with Barnet and Southgate College to run an English language course specifically designed for people wanting to work with children. The course started this month and we have 13 households attending.</p> <p>Like most local authorities we have a shortage of foster carers for teenagers. As a result of joint working with other local authorities (The North London Fostering Consortium) we have created a recruitment film about fostering teenagers. The Fostering Network and BAAF supported our launch event on 3rd October and the Department of Education have contacted us to request a copy of the film too. We will use social media platforms such as Youtube, Facebook, Twitter and Council and Consortium websites to promote the film.</p>	
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