

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 September 2019

### FOSTERING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19 AND 'CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS SUFFICIENCY STATEMENT' 2017-20

#### Report of The Strategic Director For People

Strategic Aim:	Safeguarding	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr D Wilby, Portfolio Holder for Lifelong Learning, Early Years, SEND, Inclusion, Safeguarding Children & Young People	
Contact Officer(s):	Dawn Godfrey, Deputy Director Children's Services	01572 758358 dgodfrey@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	All	

#### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1. Notes the contents of the Fostering Service Annual Report 2018/19 and the 'Children Looked After and Care Leavers Sufficiency Statement' 2017-20.
2. Endorses the actions planned in relation to the focus and direction of travel of future fostering recruitment.

#### 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the committee information on the activity of the fostering service and how the local authority is meeting its statutory sufficiency duty in relation to children looked after and care leavers.

#### 2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 The local authority fostering service is responsible for the recruitment, assessment, support and training of all approved foster carers who foster for the local authority. This includes "connected persons" (family and friends) who foster children looked after by Rutland County Council. This annual report details activity of the service and describes how well it meets statutory regulation and guidance.

- 2.2 Under section 22 of the Children Act 1989 (amended 2008) there is a statutory duty placed on local authorities to ensure there is sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of their children looked after (CLA). The duty requires local authorities to take steps that secure, as far as reasonably practical, sufficient accommodation for CLA within their local authority area. The aim of this duty – known as the sufficiency duty – is to improve outcomes for CLA. Sufficient accommodation must be provided ‘where reasonably practical’ (lack of resources is not considered a barrier), and having ‘regard to the benefit of having a number of providers and a range of accommodation’. The requirements of this duty were amended and updated under the auspices of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, and the Children and Families Act 2014.
- 2.3 The full fostering service annual report and sufficiency statement can be found at Appendices A and B.

### **3 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The reports highlight the need to increase the current foster carer pool and widen their skill set to reduce the need for the use of independent foster carers. This includes recruiting carers specifically targeted to care for older children and young people with complex and challenging needs, parent/child placements, supported lodgings and short stay.
- 3.2 There is additionally a requirement to embed the “Staying Put” scheme within our current cohort of foster carers and this is now an expectation of all new foster carers.
- 3.3 The fostering recruitment campaign scheduled for November will specifically target recruitment for the above groups of children.
- 3.4 It is recommended that the committee endorses the future fostering recruitment approach.

### **4 CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 This report is for information only and contains information already in the public domain.

### **5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 5.1 Not applicable.

### **6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The committed spend on agency fostering placements is £246,644 for the current financial year. It is anticipated that through targeted recruitment for in house foster carers, we will be able to reduce this figure and enable children to remain close to their home communities.

## **7 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1 There are no legal or governance considerations.

## **8 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed.

## **9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed as it is not deemed relevant to this report.

## **10 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 None identified.

## **11 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None identified.

## **12 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 There are no additional background papers to the report.

## **13 APPENDICES**

13.1 Appendix A: Annual Fostering Report 2018/19

13.2 Appendix B: 'Children Looked After & Care Leavers Sufficiency Statement' 2017-20

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.