

Central Bedfordshire Council

Corporate Parenting Panel

Monday 26 July 2018

Fostering Recruitment and Retention Strategy 2018 - 2019

Report of:

Cllr Steven Dixon, Executive Member for Social Care and Housing,
(steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Responsible Director(s):

Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services,
(sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a decision that is Non-Key

Purpose of this report

1. This Recruitment and Retention Strategy outlines the target for 2018 – 2019, our current need and the successes and learning we have found through our analysis of the last financial year's activities. It gives an overview of our key marketing initiatives and targeted campaigns we will be undertaking for the next financial year (April 2018 to March 2019).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. Consider and note appendix; Fostering Recruitment and Retention Strategy 2018 – 2019.

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

2. This report has not been to or planned to go to Overview and Scrutiny as no recommendations/decisions are required. Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to consider and note the Fostering Recruitment and Retention Strategy.

Issues

3. The Fostering Network (the UK's leading fostering charity) states that a child comes into care in need of a foster family every twenty minutes with 7,000 new fostering families needed in the UK (Fostering Network Foster Care Fortnight statistics for Local Authorities, 2018).

4. According to the Fostering in England 2016 – 2017 main findings report, nationally the number of approved foster places continues to rise. However, while the number of places did rise, the number of places that were unavailable for children to be placed into increased at a faster rate. This in effect meant that there were fewer places for children who needed foster care than last year. The number of households and therefore the number of carers continued to steadily decrease, driven by the fall in mainstream (known as career carer) households. This would have been the biggest decrease in households in recent years but for the large increase in family and friend's households. However, if the decrease in mainstream households continues, along with a continued increase in children in care, there is a risk that the sector will reach a point where there are not enough suitable places available.
5. The above research and statistical information highlights the need for positive and proactive recruitment. This Recruitment and Retention Strategy outlines the current need and the successes and learning found through analysis of the last years activities and the recruitment targets for the year ahead. It gives an overview of the key marketing initiatives and targeted campaigns that the Service will be undertaking.

Council Priorities

6. The Fostering Recruitment and Retention Strategy meets the following Council priorities:
 - Enhancing Central Bedfordshire
 - Improving education and skills
 - Protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing
 - Creating stronger communities
 - A more efficient and responsive Council.

Corporate Implications

7. Legal, financial and equalities implications were requested, feedback can be found below.

Legal Implications

8. Reviewed by Jennifer Lee and suggested amendments made within report, see appendix.

Financial and Risk Implications

9. Reviewed by Denis Galvin, no issues from a finance perspective.

Equalities Implications

10. Reviewed by Clare Harding:

11. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This report highlights the work that is undertaken to recruit and retain carers from diverse backgrounds who can meet the needs of looked after children.

Conclusion and next Steps

12. If approved the strategy will shape the monthly working plan for the Marketing, Recruitment and Training Officer to recruit and retain foster carers for the Corporate Parenting Service in Central Bedfordshire Council.

Appendices

Appendix A:

Fostering Recruitment and Retention Strategy 2018 – 2019.

The following Appendix is attached/ provided through an electronic link:

<https://centralbedfordshire.box.com/s/xn5ycasrxavop73l9kdwt8eg3o573mky>

Background Papers

None.

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