

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee
Date: 8th October 2019
Report for: Information
Report of: Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care

Report Title

Fostering capacity

Summary

Recruitment activity

The current target for 2019/ 2020 is to recruit 18 fostering households.

4 fostering households were approved in May 2019, 1 of which was a Foster to Adopt approval. This is an increase of 4 with the same month last year.

2 fostering households were approved in June 2019, 1 of which was a Foster to Adopt approval. This is an increase of 2 with the same month last year

3 fostering households were approved in August 2019. This is an increase of 3 with the same month last year.

1 fostering household has been approved in September and there are 2 more fostering households booked in panel in September.

There are currently 9 households being assessed, all with panel dates.

Service delivery risks

Over recent months there has at time been a delay in allocation for assessment due to capacity within the Family Placement team however at present there are no applicants who are unallocated. This is within a wider context of increasing pressure on the team related to court timetabled assessments. The team already uses casual foster carer assessors to meet this demand and allocates some assessments to agencies. There is a request for additional staff in recognition of the increasing workload.

It is likely that delays in the allocation of assessments is likely to impact on successful recruitment in light of the quick turnaround within

competitors' recruitment processes.

Fostering Plus

There is currently 1 approved Fostering Plus Household. The service continues to actively recruit to our Fostering Plus scheme and we are currently seeking to approve an additional 5 carers to this scheme however this remains an area of risk. Linda Crabtree has undertaken a review of the scheme which will in mid October.

Kindle Lodge (No Wrong Door)

The implementation of the Kindle Lodge Project (No Wrong Door) is ongoing but there are currently no foster carers recruited to the model. Recruitment of the Supervising Social Worker for the project has now taken place. Initially the focus of this post will be to drive recruitment of foster carers for Kindle Lodge.

It is recognised that the recruitment of Fostering Plus carers is likely to be impacted by the recruitment of foster carers to Kindle Lodge as the roles are similar.

Specialist Fostering and Step Downs from external residential to family based care

Excellent progress has been made to reduce the numbers of children in external children's homes and enable children to move to family based care, but there is currently no capacity to progress the development of an in-house Specialist Fostering Scheme and this presents a risk with regards to developing our capacity for children who could step down from external residential care to foster placements. A request for additional Supervising Social Workers for the team has been made.

Children placed with in house foster carers

At the end of August there were 108 children placed with in house general foster carers which is 2 less than the number placed in July and 18% down from the beginning of April however there were unprecedented numbers of children placed with foster carers at this time.

One foster carer has resigned since 1 April 2019 following concerns that were raised about standards of care.

In the first 4 months of the year (April-July), Foster placements have ended due to the following reasons:

Discharged from Care	6
Turned 18	3 – Staying Put 1 – Moved Home

Placed for Adoption	5 (1 with In-House Carer)
Moved to Connected Persons	2 – Planned 1 - Unplanned
Moved to Placement with Parents	3 – Planned 1 – Unplanned
Moved to IFA	4 – Planned 1 – Unplanned
Moved to External Residential	4 – Unplanned
Moved to 16+	1 - Unplanned

In summary although there are 32 children who were no longer fostered during the period, 8 of these remained in the same placement but the status of the placement changed i.e. they were either adopted or remained as a Staying Put placement and 6 were discharged from care and so had a positive move out of the Looked After system.

Of the remaining 18 children that actually moved the majority moved in a planned way, however 8 of these were not in accordance with the child's agreed care plan at the time. Of these 8, there were 5 children who moved from family based care to children's homes or supported living placements although it should be noted that overall the number of children living in children's homes or supported living placements also declined during the period.

Recommendation(s)

That there is a further analysis of the 8 placements that ended during this period to understand future support needs for children and foster carers.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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