

## Select Committee on Children's Services

Update on Progress of the Fostering Service Action Plan in response to an OFSTED inspection I

### Appendix 1

#### Inspection Actions

- We have focussed our activities on improving the safeguarding of young people who are looked after
- Put in place procedures to ensure we meet the additional recommendations identified by Ofsted in their inspection report
- A Fostering Programme Board chaired by the Director of Children's Services has been set up and the service of an independent consultant (a former DCS) has been engaged
- Dedicated staff time has been allocated to review and revise processes and procedures
- Redirection of resources has been agreed to remunerate carers
- A detailed action plan has been submitted to Ofsted
- A mock inspection has been undertaken in readiness for a re-inspection
- Developed a new Family and Friends Policy and Procedure that includes a Risk Assessment at the point of placement, the preparation of a Viability Assessment and completion of BAAF Form F2, specialist support from the Fostering Team throughout the assessment process and clear time scales for completion of both the viability and full assessments
- Full Family and Friends assessments are now completed by specialist workers from the Fostering Team
- A revised payments structure has been agreed for Family and Friends carers
- At the point of request for a placement Matching and a Risk Assessment is carried out in all cases and a subsequent check done regarding information provided to carers at the point of placements
- A revised protocol is in place to ensure that Foster Carers are provided with copies of Health Plans in respect of all children placed with them
- A new process for managing Exemptions/Variations is in place requiring any changes to fostering limits or the fostering category to be reported to Fostering Panel
- There is a process in place to ensure that Strategy Meetings in relation to complaints against carers are conducted in a timely manner and monitored accordingly, and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Graham Tilby has been identified to manage this task
- Fostering Panel will no longer recommend 'interim approval' in respect of 'immediate placements' with Family and Friends carers. From 1 July 2008 Fostering Panel will be recommending 'Approval with Conditions'
- Guidance to Fostering Panel has been enhanced with a copy of the BAAF publication 'Effective Panels'
- Resources have been redirected to provide additional staffing to support Family and Friends and proposals are being considered to reconfigure the Fostering Service
- The Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care Service has secured funding for 2 new projects which means that children and young people

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aged between 3 years and 16 years will benefit from additional resources

- Dudley (along with a neighbouring authority) has secured funding to pilot a new development called 'The Keep Project'. This is the first time the programme is to be developed outside of the USA and we are very proud to be piloting this initiative aimed at assisting carers supporting young people in foster care aged between 7 and 11 years
- Funding from the 'Care Matters' grant has also been agreed to secure an Independent Reviewing Officer to conduct annual foster care reviews
- Accommodation has now been fully soundproofed