

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 13th September 2012

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Fostering Service Annual Report

Purpose of Report

1. To present the annual report on the Fostering Service in Dudley for 2011/12 to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Background

2. Local Authorities are required under the Children Act 1989 Section 17 (6) as amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 to provide accommodation for children in need who require it as a result of:
 - there being no person with parental responsibility for them
 - their being lost or abandoned
 - their carers being prevented (for whatever reason) from providing them with suitable accommodation
3. The Fostering Service in Dudley provides a comprehensive range of fostering provision working closely with the Social Work Teams to secure appropriate placements for looked after children. The Service also provides family finding for children who require permanent foster placements, recruits, train and supervises mainstream foster carers and Family and Friends foster carers and facilitates carers support groups and groups for young people in care and birth children of families who provide fostering.
4. The service delivers a specialist foster care therapeutic treatment programme known as Flipside. Flipside is an intensive placement option for a small number of children. It provides an evidence based intervention which has been nationally evaluated.
5. The fostering service is subject to inspection by OfSTED. It is inspected against the national minimum standards for fostering service and the requirements of the care standards act 2000, the fostering service regulations 2002 and the children act 1989. The service was last inspected in March 2009 as satisfactory and we are awaiting a

further inspection under the new National Minimum Standards and regulations introduced in April 2011.

6. Attached at Appendix 1 is the annual report of the Fostering Service which details levels of service, placement activity, key achievements and future developments for the service.

Finance

7. The total funding for 2011/12 for the Fostering Service is as follows:

	<u>Revenue Budget</u>	<u>Other Income</u>	<u>Grant Income</u>	<u>Total Funding</u>
Internal Fostering Service (including Price Street)	768,200	0	0	768,200
Fostering Allowances	5,078,400	0	0	5,078,400
Treatment Foster Care	687,300	120,900	0	808,200
Intensive Evidence Based Programme Grant (KEEP/MTFC/Sector Advisor). Figure is based on actual funding spent during 11/12.	0	0	80,200	80,200
Independent Fostering Agencies	5,206,500	0	0	5,206,500
TOTAL	11,740,400	120,900	80,200	11,941,500

Budgets reflected above do not include departmental administrative recharges.

Law

8. The law relating the Local Authority's duty to provide foster care services is governed by the Children Act 1989 and the Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

Equality Impact

9. The provision of a fostering service contributes to the provision of stable, secure and safe care for children looked after in order that they can achieve good life chance outcomes. It assists the Council in discharging its corporate parenting responsibilities to ensure that looked after children are not disadvantaged by being in care and that they receive the support, care and security that we would wish for our own children.

Recommendations

10. The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee receive and make comments where appropriate to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services on the annual report of the Fostering Service.



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