

## Appendix 1

### Local Picture – Data

By far the biggest impact on the fostering service in Dudley is the rising numbers of looked after children which has been well documented in other reports. We were looking after 144 more children in March 2011 than we were 5 years ago in March 2007. As at 11 November 2011 that number has continued to rise and a further 41 children are looked after by Dudley making a total rise in approximately 5.5 years of 185 children.

77.5% of Dudley looked after children are placed in foster placements (Local authority, agency and family and friends). This is higher than the national average.

18.6% are placed with family and friends carers (which again is higher than the national average) which stands at 11%. The use of family and friends foster care nationally has remained about the same over a 5 year period. Dudley's use of family and friends care has gone up, clearly as a response to the rising numbers of looked after children.

In 2007 there were 34 children placed in agency foster care placements. At the end of March 2011 it was 134, as at 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011 it was 156.

Approximately 2/3 of all our children that are in foster care placements (excluding family and friends placements) are in internal provision with the remaining 1/3 in agency foster care placements.

In 2007 an analysis of our children placed in agency foster care showed that the children were being placed mainly for permanency, were we had sought through a family finding process a planned permanent long-term fostering placement often for a sibling group. The picture is very different today, whilst we still have and do place children in long-term permanent placements, more are now placed at the point of entry into care often with a sibling or siblings due to capacity with the rate of internal recruitment not being able to keep up with the demand. The agency foster care market has in the last 5 years predominantly been used to provide the necessary placements for our growing looked after population.