

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)	Date of Meeting:	Tuesday 25 September 2018
Subject:	Fostering Service Annual Report		
Report of:	Director of Social Care and Health	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:			
Is this a Key Decision:	N	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	N,		

Summary:

This report provides information about the Fostering Service and outcomes for children and young people looked after by Sefton M.B.C, from 1st April 2017- 31st March 2018. The purpose of the annual report is to inform the Public, Elected Member's, Partners and Staff of the progress and developments in the Service during this period

Recommendation(s):

(1) To note the activity that has taken place in relation to fostering in the year 2017 -18.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To provide assurance that Sefton's fostering service meets fostering national guidance and standards

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

N/A

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

(B) Capital Costs

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):
Legal Implications: The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and the Care Leavers (England) Regulation 2010
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Looked After Children who cannot live with members of their own family should be afforded good quality care in family arrangements within their local community.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Foster carer recruitment remains a focus to ensure that looked after children are afforded the highest quality of care.
Commission, broker and provide core services: Fostering services meet national guidance and standards.
Place – leadership and influencer: N/A
Drivers of change and reform: N/A
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: N/A
Greater income for social investment: N/A
Cleaner Greener; N/A

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD. 5302/18) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD 4527/18) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

N/A

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

(Please delete as appropriate and remove this text)

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Fostering Annual Report 2017 /18

(Please delete as appropriate and remove this text)

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 In 2017/18 the Fostering Service has continued to develop and improve practice to meet the needs of children/young people looked after by Sefton and address the requirements of national guidance and fostering standards.

The remit of the Fostering Service is highly circumscribed by legislation and regulations. The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 are the primary sources of legislation that guide fostering practice, but the service also takes account of other child care legislation such as the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and the Care Leavers (England) Regulation 2010.

When a child/young person becomes looked after, it is one of the most important and significant changes in their life and it is critical that the families who look after these most vulnerable children/young people through foster care are the best they can be. Sefton Council wants to create a fairer future for our most vulnerable children/young people and their families; we want every child/young person to grow up in a safe, stable and loving home. For those young children who cannot remain or return home safely to their birth families, good quality foster care offers them the best opportunity to experience a warm and loving family environment while appropriate plans are made for their future.

The aim of the Fostering Service is to provide high quality care for children and young people in safe, secure and nurturing families by means of recruiting and developing highly skilled foster carers.

Sefton currently has 89 mainstream fostering households, comprising of 73 couples and 16 single carers, with a total capacity of 236 children placed in short-term and long-term placements as of March 2018. There are 66 Connected persons/ kinship households, 108 carers, 42 couples, 24 single carers. Our foster carers do a good job in supporting children and young people who do not move placements frequently and as a rule they stay with their carer(s) until either the outcome of care proceedings or if the care plan is for them to return to the care of birth parents or alternative family members. There has been an increase in the number of children becoming looked after, 170 the previous year compared to 236 this year.

Recruiting sufficient foster carers to meet current demand remains a significant challenge, economic necessity may mean all adults in a family need to work; adult children remain at home longer; families may have less physical space and these, and other issues, together, all have an impact on the capacity of families to foster.

The Annual report details the activities in 2017 – 2018.