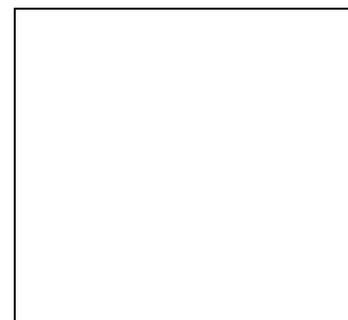


Calderdale MBC

**Wards Affected:
All**

Cabinet

June 2019



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES SCRUTINY BOARD – FOSTERING DETAILED SCRUTINY REVIEW – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Report of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Board

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Board approved the findings and recommendations of a scrutiny review report on fostering on 09 April, 2019.

The Board also resolved that the scrutiny review report – fostering should be submitted to Cabinet and the Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) Directorate Leadership Team (DLT) for their consideration and for their responses to the Scrutiny Board's findings and recommendations.

2. Need for a decision

- 2.1 Under Rule 15 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules at part 4 of the Constitution, Cabinet is required to consider reports from Scrutiny Boards.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That Cabinet and the CYPS Directorate Leadership Team considers the findings and recommendations of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board scrutiny report on fostering and provide responses to these findings and recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1	That Officers examine a wider range of strategies and initiatives to try to increase the number of foster carers recruited, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Meetings with community sports groups, parent and friends associations, faith groups; ❖ Targeting the recently retired and people made redundant and jobseekers, particularly those from the caring professions; ❖ Visiting local businesses especially the large businesses; and also exploring the Council as a Fostering Friendly employer; ❖ Improved use of social media.
Recommendation 2	That support is offered to potential foster carers between the expression of interest and actual recruitment in order to reduce the drop off rate.
Recommendation 3	That, wherever possible, the number of expensive external placements are kept to a minimum by increasing the provision of internal places, including residential places for some young people with complex needs.
Recommendation 4	That increased consistency of support carers should be provided especially for the most vulnerable young people.
Recommendation 5	That work is undertaken with experienced foster carers to develop a 'buddy' system which could offer support and advice to newer recruits and help to improve the ways in which the emergency and out of hours services operate.
Recommendation 6	That the much valued induction training involves other family members in order to enhance their skills and involvement in the process.
Recommendation 7	That staffing levels are reviewed, and adjusted where identified, to take account of any efficiencies in the operation of the fostering service whilst ensuring that caseloads remain manageable.
Recommendation 8	That foster carers are given advice and support to allow them to keep a young person in placement post 16 without financial loss.
Recommendation 9	That the team ensures effective and sensitive liaison is made with the Pathways Team in order to better prepare young people for leaving care and good future relationships with the foster care family.
Recommendation 10	That Officers look for and provide details of examples of best practice elsewhere in working with schools and placements, including costings and proof of outcomes for Children Looked After (CLA) placed in such settings; and thereafter look at and report back on the feasibility of working with local schools, with suitable facilities, to secure some places for some of Calderdale's Children Looked After (CLA).

4. Background and/or details

The Scrutiny Board agreed to undertake this review as part of its work plan.

5. Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications identified at this time. However, should Cabinet determine to explore the recommendations put forward (as outlined in the scrutiny recommendations listed in paragraph 3 above), there could be financial implications.

6. Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications identified at this time. However, should Cabinet determine to explore the recommendations put forward (as outlined in scrutiny recommendations listed in in paragraph 3 above), there could be legal implications.

7. Environment, Health and Economic Implications

None identified at this time.

8. Equality and Diversity

The recommendations focus on areas for improvement in the policy and procedures and the delivery of the Council's fostering service.

9. Summary and Recommendations

- 9.1 This is a report of a detailed review on fostering undertaken by a review group of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Board in the 2018/19 Municipal year
- 9.2 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Board, through its review work on fostering has submitted a number of findings and recommendations from its scrutiny review

for consideration by Cabinet and the Children and Young People's Service's Departmental Leadership Team (DLT).

Appendix – Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Board – Fostering detailed scrutiny review report – April, 2019.

For further information on this report, contact:

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The documents used in the preparation of this report are:

Children and Young People's Scrutiny Board 2018/19 municipal year – Board meetings, reports and review group meetings.

The documents are available for inspection at:

Town Hall, Crossley Street, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX1 1UJ