

**20 May 2019****Agenda Item: 7****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL  
WORK****DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks approval to:
  - a. establish 1 FTE permanent Team Manager (Band D) post within the Fostering Service to lead the development and implementation of a revised approach to recruitment and assessment of Foster Carers
  - b. establish 0.5 FTE permanent Training Social Worker (Band B) post
  - c. disestablish 1 FTE permanent Supervising Social Worker post (Band B) post.

**Information**

2. On 11<sup>th</sup> February 2019, the Children & Young People's Committee approved proposals to invest in the Fostering Service in order to increase the number of foster carers engaged by the Council. These proposals included the development of specialist Recruitment and Assessment team.
3. As part of this approval, the following posts were established to populate the Recruitment and Assessment team and to provide ongoing support for foster carers:
  - a. establishment of 3 FTE Supervising Social Worker (SSW) (Band B) posts to manage the recruitment, assessment and supervision of the new carers
  - b. establishment of 3 FTE Fostering Family Worker (FFW) (Grade 4) posts to provide support to foster placements and reduce placement disruption.
4. These posts were to be recruited on a phased basis over a three year period, and recruitment is now underway for some of these posts. However, due to the increase in Looked After Children, and the budget pressures that this creates, it is essential that the foster carer recruitment strategy is realised as soon as possible. It is therefore proposed that the following posts are included in the structure:

- a. a Team Manager to develop, implement and manage the new team and the achievement of the recruitment strategy. Of the three SSW posts which were established at the February 2019 meeting of the Committee, only two will be recruited to. It is proposed that the Team Manager is recruited in place of the remaining SSW post. The third SSW will be transferred to the Recruitment and Assessment team from the existing fostering establishment. This requires the establishment of 1 FTE Team Manager (band D) post, and the disestablishment of 1 FTE SSW (band B) post.
  - b. a Training Social Worker to enable newly-recruited foster carers to be ready for a placement as early as possible. The service already has 0.5 FTE Training Social Worker, but it is believed that the increase in foster carers will require more resource to train them, and so this report seeks approval to establish 0.5 FTE Social Worker (Band B) post.
5. It is therefore proposed that the Recruitment and Assessment team structure is amended to comprise:
- a. 1 FTE Team Manager (1 FTE new post)
  - b. 3 FTE Supervising Social Workers (2 FTE new posts; 1 FTE post will be transferred from existing establishment)
  - c. 1 FTE Training Social Worker (0.5 FTE new post; 0.5 FTE post will be transferred from existing establishment)
  - d. 2 FTE Recruitment Officers (2 FTE posts will be transferred from the existing establishment)
  - e. 3 FTE Fostering Family Workers (3 FTE new posts).
6. In order to deliver this team structure within the funding envelope which was approved at Committee in February 2019, the costs and cost-avoidance has been re-profiled as shown below. The reprofiled recruitment strategy has a net nil effect. It is believed that this approach is more likely to deliver the strategy effectively, and therefore the savings.

*Proposal approved by CYP Committee in February 2019:*

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Gross saving – IFA cost avoidance</b>	253	969	814	<b>2,036</b>
<b>Less: Reprovision costs:</b>				
<b>Cost of recruitment</b>	94	94	44	<b>232</b>
<b>Cost of payments for new carers</b>	128	492	413	<b>1,033</b>
<b>Cost of improved pay offer for existing carers</b>	200	100	0	<b>300</b>
<b>Net saving</b>	<b>-169</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>471</b>

*Revised proposal:*

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Gross saving IFA Cost Avoidance	387	1005	696	2,088
Less: Reprovision costs:				
Cost of recruitment	160	85	0	245
Cost of payments for new carers	196	537	339	1,072
Cost of improved pay offer for existing carers	200	100	0	300
Net saving	-169	283	357	471

## Other Options Considered

7. The original proposal was based on the new team being managed by the existing Fostering Service management team. On reflection it is thought this would dilute the focus of the team, and would also place too much pressure on the existing management team.

## Reason/s for Recommendation/s

8. In order to deliver improved outcomes for looked after children through increased foster placement capacity, great effort and focus is essential. It is believed that this can best be delivered by a team with a strong identity, focussed delivery, and robust, consistent management.

## Statutory and Policy Implications

9. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## Data Protection and Information Governance

10. A summary Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been completed for the project and a full DPIA is not required.

## Financial Implications

11. The cost of the new posts is £76,000 and this will be partly funded by bringing forward additional net cost avoidance of £13,000 through reduced usage of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) due to the earlier recruitment and assessment of new foster carers. The balance of £63,000 will be met by the disestablishment of the 1 FTE Supervising Social Worker post (£44,000) together with an additional £19,000 released from the original

estimate of £100,000 for support provision. The revised profile, therefore, has a net nil effect.

## **Human Resources Implications**

12. A recruitment process will be undertaken to recruit to the Team Manager post and Training Social Worker post, subject to establishment.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That Committee approves:

- 1) the establishment of 1 full-time equivalent (FTE) permanent Team Manager (Band D) post within the Fostering Service to lead the development and implementation of a revised approach to recruitment and assessment of Foster Carers
- 2) the establishment of 0.5 FTE permanent Training Social Worker (Band B) post.
- 3) the disestablishment of 1 FTE permanent Supervising Social Worker (Band B) post.

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## **Constitutional Comments (EP 26/04/19)**

13. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

## **Financial Comments (SAS 08/05/19)**

14. The 2019-20 Internal Fostering staffing budget is £2.232m and includes the budget for the development of the specialist Recruitment and Assessment team.
15. The cost of the new posts is £76,000 and this will be funded partly by bringing forward additional net cost avoidance of £13,000 through reduced usage of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) due to the earlier recruitment and assessment of new foster carers. The balance of £63,000 will be met by the disestablishment of the 1 FTE Supervising Social Worker post (£44,000) together with £19,000 released from the original estimate of £100,000 for support provision. The revised profile, therefore, has a net nil effect.

## **HR Comments (BC 25/04/19)**

16. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. Posts will be recruited to in line with the agreed vacancy control and recruitment procedures.

## **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Development of the Fostering Service – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2019

## **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

C1244