



# Surrey County Council Fostering Service



**Annual Report 2019-2020**

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## **1. Introduction**

This Annual Report should be read in conjunction with the Foster Care Statement of Purpose for 2020. The Statement of Purpose sets out the legislative and regulatory context under which Surrey County Council carries out the functions of the Fostering Service. The Fostering Service is a regulated service and subject to inspection under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Surrey County Council's Fostering Service provide a range of short term and permanent foster carers who have a diverse range of skills and experience. Foster carers provide family-based services ranging from weekend respite/short breaks to supporting birth parents and carers, preparing a child for adoption, or providing a permanent home for a child through to independence. There continues to be a high number of family members and friends who come forward for assessments within legal proceedings.

In April 2019, the Fostering Service underwent a large change management programme and now has specific teams to undertake particular fostering functions for the wider Children's Service. There are 2 Service Managers and 9 Team Managers, overseeing General Fostering, Short Breaks, Family and Friends Assessments, Special Guardianship assessments, Supported Lodgings, Private Fostering assessments and visits and Foster Carer Recruitment and Training. At full capacity, there are 46 (FTE) Supervising Social Workers, 4 Supported Lodgings Officers and 3 Marketing Officers.

This Annual Report will identify areas of improvement over the last financial year and provide a forward plan for 2020-21.

## **2. Children Looked After in Surrey**

On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 there were 983 Looked After Children in Surrey County Council, of which 72% were living with foster carers. This is an increase of 1% compared to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

There were 280 general foster carers available to the Fostering Service at the end of March 2020.

445 children were living with in-house foster carers with 320 children in general foster care, 123 in Friends and Family placements and 2 young people placed in Supported Lodgings. This equates to 45% of the overall Looked After Child population of 983. A further 88 young people were subject to a Staying Put or over 18's Supported Lodgings arrangement.

As of March 2020, 216 children were living in placements provided by Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA), equating to 21.9% of the overall Looked After Child population.

During the reporting period there has been a 7% increase in the number of children placed with Surrey foster carers and a corresponding decrease in the use of IFA provision. There has also been an increase of 4% of children living within Surrey County Council compared to 2018/19.

Below is a breakdown of the demographics of the children looked after in Surrey as of March 2020.

- 55% of looked after children are males
- 30% of the children are from a BME background
- 70% of the children are from a White British background
- 34% of the children are 0-10 years old
- 66% of the children are 11-16 years old
- 21% of the children are living with IFA carers
- 45% of the children are living with in house carers

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number of children</b>	<b>%</b>
Female	436	45%
Male	547	55%
<b>Total</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Ethnicity %</b>		
Asian / Asian British	60	6%
Black /African / Caribbean / Black British	85	9%
Mixed	85	9%
Other ethnic group	5	6%
White	691	70%
<b>Total</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age band</b>		
	<b>Number of children</b>	<b>%</b>
0-4 years	132	13%
5-10 years	198	21%
11-15 years	343	35%
16 years plus	311	31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>984</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 3. Placement stability

In the reporting period, the figure for children passing their two years in placement rose from 157 in April 2019 to 192 on 31 March 2020. This equates to 67% of the overall cohort of children living with in-house foster carers for over 2 years.

During the same period there were 42 children who experienced three or more placement moves as identified in the table below.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Apr 2019</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Jan 2020</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>
<b>SCC Total Placed</b>	132	135	136	144	143	140	134	131	130	135	130	143
<b>In-house number</b>	2	3	4	5	3	3	5	4	4	5	1	3

#### **4. Allegations against Foster Carers**

During the reporting period, there were thirty referrals to the LADO service.

- Two were duplicated cases, two carers living in the same household and allegations being made against one carer only
- Three referrals were made for IFA carers living in Surrey
- Seven referrals were for advice only as they did not meet threshold for further action
- Seven referrals were found to be substantiated
- Five referrals were found to be unsubstantiated
- One referral was found to be malicious

Two further cases are ongoing as the foster carers have appealed to the IRM following the Fostering Panel decision to terminate their approval. Three further cases are ongoing as there are Standards of Care investigations being undertaken. Other outcomes include specific training being recommended and referral to a Mockingbird constellation. In two cases where the allegation was substantiated the child was moved.

#### **5. Complaints made against the Fostering Service**

During the course of the reporting period, the Fostering Service received seven complaints. Only one was from a looked-after child. Three complaints were made in relation to Post Order Support, one was in relation to a lack of communication and the other two were in relation to the quality of service received. All were resolved at stage one of the complaints process and all but one within a suitable response time.

During the reporting period eleven compliments were received by the service. The main focus of the compliments relates to the quality of service delivered or for positive communication and interaction undertaken by the person involved.

#### **6. Standards of Care Investigations**

In October 2019, the Fostering Service introduced a new Standards of Care Investigation template. Clarity of the process and use of the format was provided to all staff members during a whole service development day.

Standards of Care investigations should be concluded within a twenty-eight-day period with the outcomes signed off by a manager from the service. Due to the process being new to Surrey, some latitude was permitted, and a longer period allowed in order to complete reports and ensure the learning process was embedded with staff.

For the recording period in question, there were fifteen Standards of Care investigations, ten were referred to the Fostering Panel for consideration alongside recommendation for further training, buddying and support.

## Annual Reviews/Unannounced Visits

Due to staffing vacancies within the West teams, the numbers of completed Annual Reviews and unannounced visits was lower than in the East teams, particularly from November 2019 onwards. The General West teams were heavily depleted during that reporting period due to illness, leave and staff members leaving the service. This has since been addressed and numbers are improving.

The East teams were well staffed throughout the reporting period and have higher completion figures throughout.

The Fostering Service is currently undertaking steps to ensure that Annual Reviews are celebrated as an event and undertaken in a more independent manner than they are currently. To this end, a business plan has been submitted in order to create two Independent Review Officer posts. The postholder will provide independent oversight of the reviewing process, ensuring challenge is held towards the service and the carer. The post holder will also offer consistency to the role of panel advisor in order to raise practice standards in assessment and reviews.

Whilst planning for the implementation of the reviewing officer role, additional scrutiny and independence is provided by a process of oversight by two Team Managers prior to being sent for Agency Decision Maker agreement. This allows for quantitative and qualitative assurance of the document. Feedback is gathered from all relevant professionals and includes all children currently living in the home and those who have lived there in the preceding twelve months.

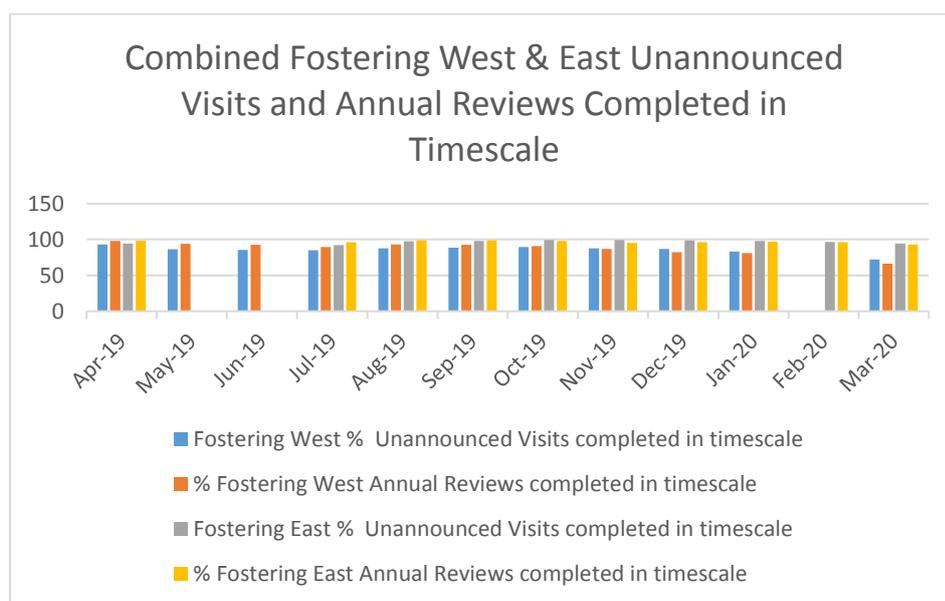


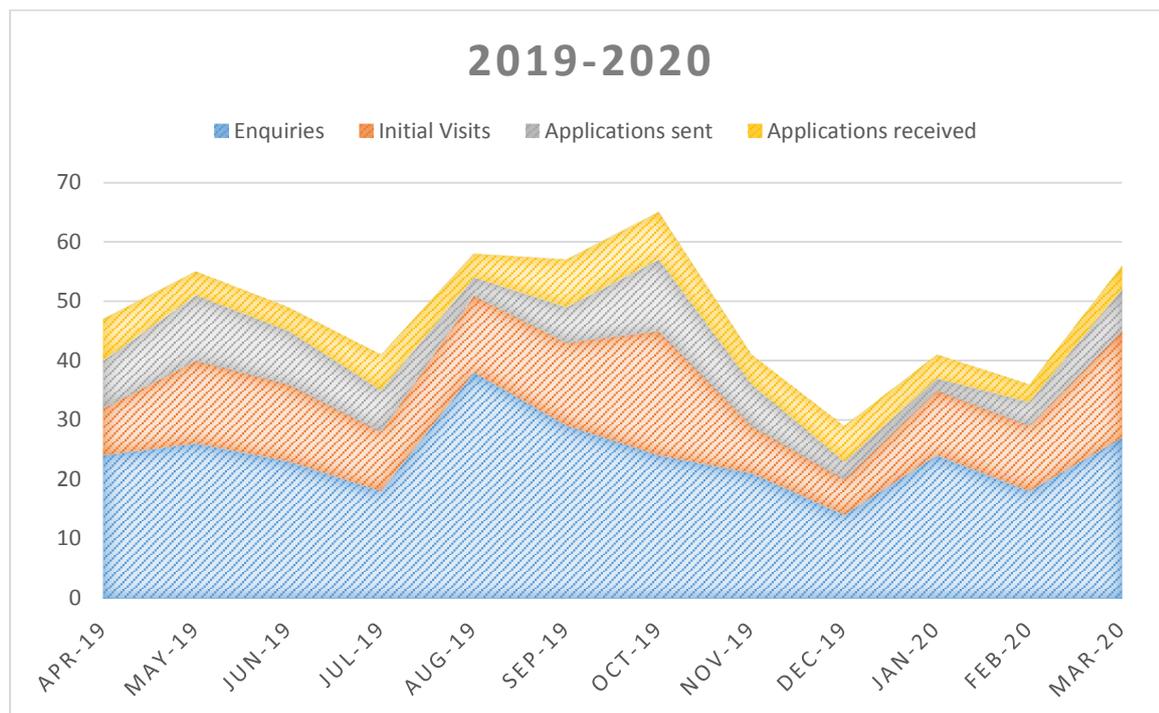
Table 4

## 7. Recruitment and Assessment

In 2019-20 the team received 286 fostering enquiries, 63 applications and approved 37 fostering households and 5 supported lodgings carers.

During the year, 28 fostering households had their approval terminated at panel and 4 supported lodgings carers also had their approval ended. Therefore, the net gain of fostering households in 2019-20 is 9 and there is a net gain of 1 supported lodgings carer.

Throughout the year, 18 households did not complete the assessment process. At the end of the year there were 28 general fostering ongoing assessments and 5 supported lodgings assessments. There were 53 connected persons assessments presented to panel this year compared to 29 in 2018/19, which is an increase of 46%.

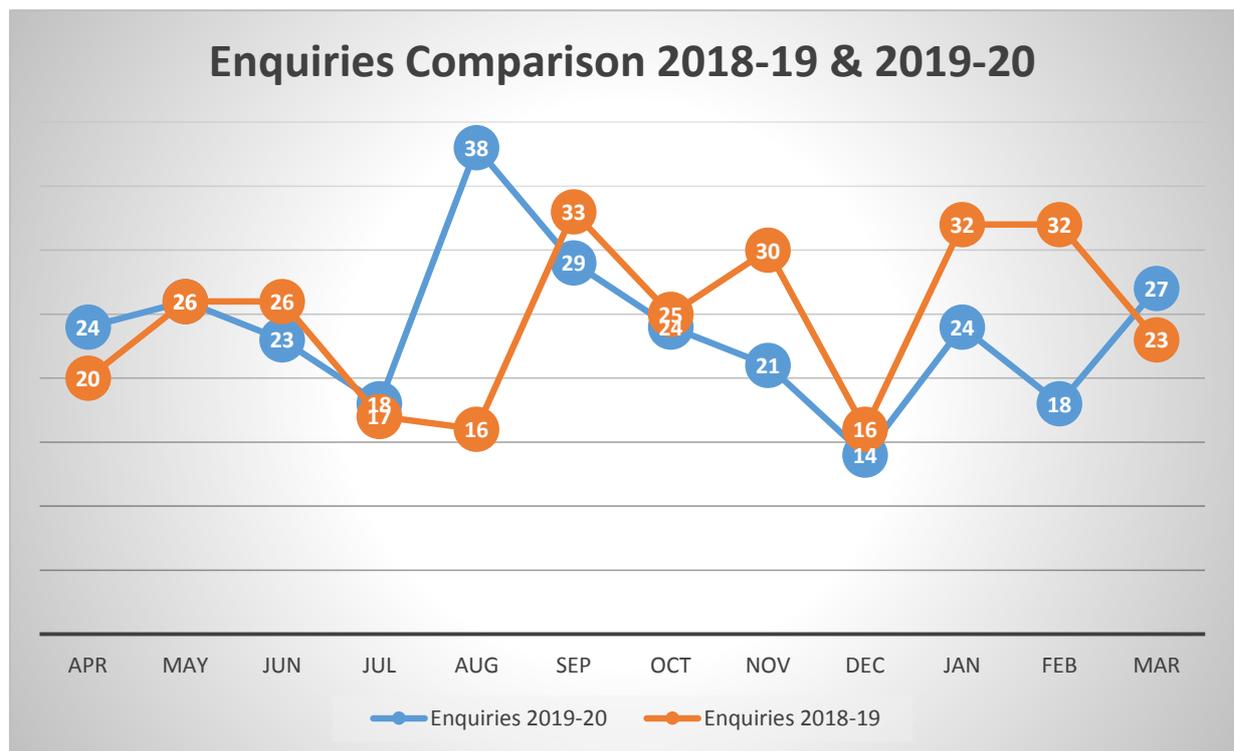


#### Conversion Rates

The following table shows conversion rates as a percentage of the whole number:

Enquiry to Approval	15%
Enquiry to Initial Visit	51%
Initial Visit to Application Sent	54%
Initial Visit to Application Received	43%
Application Received to Approval	67%
Enquiry to Application Received	22%

## Enquiries Comparison



## Assessments and Approvals



## 8. Panel

Fostering Services Regulations (2011) and National Minimum Standards (2011) require a Fostering Panel to be constituted, chaired by an independent person. The Agency has a “Central List” of people who have experience, expertise and knowledge about fostering matters who will make up the Fostering Panel.

There are currently 18 members of the Fostering Panel Central List, including the Independent Chair. The voice of the child/young person is represented by members of Surrey Participation and User Voice apprentices and one independent member who all have care experience. The voice of the foster carer is represented by a member of one Fostering Panel and this remains an area of need. The Fostering Panel Central List also has registered social work members and representatives from health, education, disability and elected members.

The panel has maintained a very stable membership during the year with regular attendance by panel members across the four panels ensuring the panel was always quorate.

The Central List would benefit from being increased to include a wider membership in the areas of education, mental health and Family and Friend’s carers. It is also acknowledged that the panel needs to have a more diverse membership to better reflect the population of Surrey.

An Independent Vice Chair was recruited in November 2019; however other members of the Panel have largely remained the same. This has ensured continuity and consistency during this period.

The key areas identified by the Independent Chair as themes for the panel are:

### **Themes**

#### **1) Children’s Social Worker Feedback / attendance at panel**

In the year April 2018/19 80% of children’s social workers either attended panel or provided feedback on the care the children were receiving. This is a marked improvement from the year before where a 68% attendance was reported. The Fostering Service Managers have been receptive to feedback on the crucial need for children’s social workers to provide information to panel and they have supported escalation processes to enable this to happen.

#### **2) Safeguarding**

Discussions have taken place between the Panel Chair and the Service Managers in relation to aspects of the panel’s safeguarding role with foster carers. There have been improvements in the escalation of issues and direct communication with the panel chair about actions taken. Panel concerns are addressed by the Fostering Service.

#### **3) Children’s Participation**

Supervising Social Workers are now more responsive to finding creative ways to gain children’s direct feedback and where this is not possible to provide evidence informed information on children’s experiences of their care. Further work is needed to ensure that all children are provided with numerous inclusive opportunities to communicate their feelings about the care that they

receive through different mediums that they are comfortable with. This remains an area of need that panel will continue to report on.

#### 4) Foster Carer Training and Support

Most of the feedback pertaining to the fostering service is positive and evidences that social workers have high aspirations for children and provide the necessary support and guidance for the foster carers. Where issues have been highlighted such as placement breakdowns, communication issues/ delays and a lack of support during standards of care investigations, this has been addressed by the Service and Team Managers.

#### April 2019 – March 2020 - Cases considered by Fostering Panel.

Case Type	Total	Unanimous Positive recommendation	Majority Positive recommendation	Unanimous Negative recommendation	Majority Negative recommendation
Mainstream Assessments	44	40	3	1 (Stage 2 report)	0
Short-term / long-term	34				
Respite only	2				
Family and Friends assessments	53	49	1	2	1
Family and Friends eight-week extensions	46	42	3	1	
1 <sup>st</sup> Foster Carer Reviews (mainstream)	16	16			
1 <sup>st</sup> Foster carer reviews (Family and friends)	13	13			
Post approval allegations / Standards of Care	9	8	1		
Change of Approval	21	19	1	1	
Long Term Matches	8				
Variations	4				
Exemptions	1				

## **9. Covid-19 support to Foster Carers**

It is well documented that the Coronavirus pandemic has had a profound impact on the way services have operated, particularly during the 'lockdown' phase of the government issued guidance. The service maintained regular communication with foster carers throughout the pandemic, offered support, provided regular updates and ensured twice weekly liaison with the chair of the Fostering Executive.

The outcome from the range of additional support measure appears to have been very well received with calm amongst foster carers and no great shift in terms of the numbers of children needing to be moved due to unplanned placement endings. Foster carers have fed back that Fostering teams had acted responsibly and professionally and continued to deliver a highly supportive service throughout the Covid-19 crisis.

The authority chose not to incorporate Children Act 1989 Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. It was felt that the current legislation enabled Surrey County Council to continue with its improvement journey particularly the role of Fostering Panel in continuing to hold the service to account.

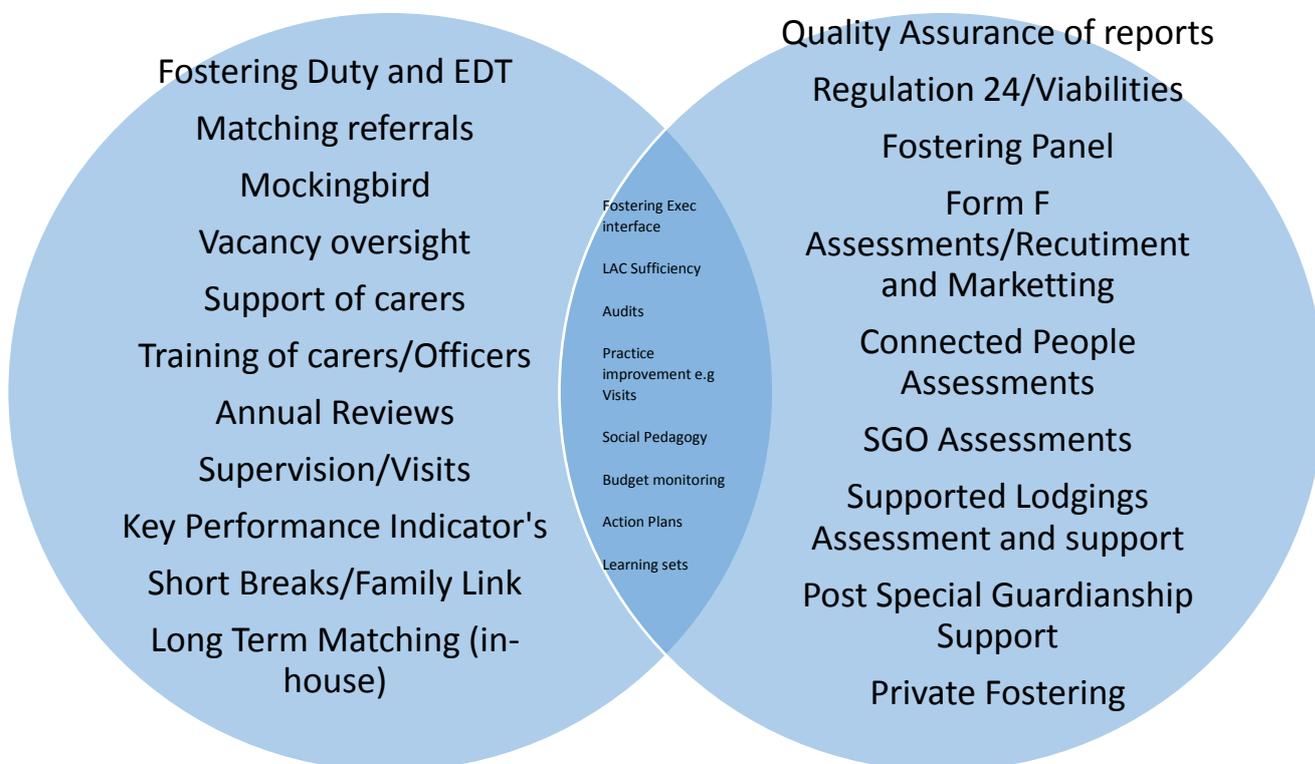
## **10. In Service Developments:**

### **Change management process**

From October 2018 to May 2019, Surrey County Council underwent a large change management consultation, implementation and delivery programme, which included the Fostering Service. Changes were made at Service Manager level and a recruitment project undertaken to recruit to the managerial vacancies as well as the social worker vacancies. The 9 Team Managers were provided with clarity of role and the Fostering Service divided into two areas: Assessment and Support.

Fostering Support Functions- Carol Norrington  
Directly managing Bethany Florence, Mandy Knight,  
Gianna Forward, Dipti Pandya and Louise Erskine.

Fostering Assessment Functions- Clark McAuley  
Directly managing Clare Mynett, Debbie Church,  
Lizanda Earle and Fiona McGowan



The Fostering Service was reshaped to allow for dedicated teams in a couple of areas where the work was previously spread throughout the service; A bespoke Fostering Recruitment Team with dedicated supervising social workers and Marketing Officers, including a nominated individual solely for the purpose of improving recruitment of carers for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

The Fostering Service also now has two bespoke teams for the assessment of Family and Friends carers. Regulation 24 assessments, due to capacity and volume of these assessments, are undertaken by the whole service on a rota basis. The Family and Friends teams are also responsible for the provision of post order support, SGO assessments and Private Fostering arrangements.

### 11. Current Staffing Structure and recruitment

During the course of the reporting period, all vacancies have been filled with experienced and capable staff members, raising the overall quality of the service.

The culture of the service has improved with a professional and supportive outlook engendered with quality assurance and professional challenge becoming the norm. Managers regularly attend foster carer support groups across the county, building relationships with foster carers, addressing issues arising and increasing confidence in the service. This has been well received as carers report better access to decision makers and subsequent reduction of delays in making decisions.

The staffing group is predominantly female with a high number of workers identifying as white British. This would reflect the predominantly white British county in which we are based but not necessarily the cohort of children and young people or foster carers, however steps are being taken

to challenge any unconscious bias within the county's recruitment processes, with learning and development opportunities being rolled out. The Fostering Service is implementing peer learning opportunities to ensure ongoing learning in the area of anti-discriminatory practice and cultural competence training being at the forefront of all we do, with space to challenge and learn from colleagues and peers.

The Fostering Service has 21 Senior Supervising Social Workers bringing a wealth of knowledge and expertise. The Senior Workers are expected to take a lead in the learning and development of colleagues and students within the team, lead on supporting and developing foster carers and having a thorough, reliable knowledge on fostering regulations in order to ensure a high standard of practice.

## 12. General fostering

Surrey County Council awarded foster carers with an allowance uplift above that of the recommended DFE annual guidance of 1%. Both the foster carer skills allowance *and* child allowance were raised by 10% on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. This raise has allowed Surrey to be more competitive in recruitment and reputation with our comparative neighbours and local IFA's.

Child allowance		Skills level payments		Under-10 total payment	Over-10 total payment
Under 10	Over 10	1	£0	£185.11 level 1 skills	£279.90
£185.11	£279.90	2	£101.94	£287.05 level 2 skills	£381.84 skills level 2
		3	£142.29	£327.40 level 3 skills	£422.19 skills level 3

Table 6

## 13. Mockingbird

Since engaging with The Fostering Network (TFN) in May 2018, the Fostering Service had completed a self-assessment questionnaire and Operations Protocol. The documents were delivered in the autumn of 2018, marked and a Coach appointed by TFN in April 2019.

An ambitious Action Plan was written and implemented in May 2019 with a view to achieve launching the service in October 2019. Foster carers were invited to express their interest and a formal recruitment process was implemented. Job descriptions, financial matters and expressions of interest in joining the constellation were arranged and the Action Plan, which TFN recommends can take up to 12 months to implement and complete, was achieved in a 6-month period.

The well attended Launch Event took place in Cobham and the first constellation was implemented on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The second Constellation was launched in February 2020. A third constellation is due to launch in August 2020.

Constellation 1 (Redhill- South West)	Numbers
Number of fostering households involved	10
Number of foster children involved	11
Number of care leavers involved	1

Number of Staying Put young people involved	1
Number of foster carer birth children involved	20
Number of placement disruptions avoided	4
<b>Constellation 2 (Farnborough- South East)</b>	
Number of fostering households involved	8
Number of foster children involved	11
Number of Care Leavers involved	1
Number of Staying Put young people involved	1
Number of foster carer birth children involved	3
Number of placement disruptions avoided	4
<b>Constellation 3 (Sunbury on Thames-North-West) to be launched August 2020</b>	

Table 7

### **Foster carer handbook**

The new Foster Carer Handbook was written and launched following consultation with the Fostering Executive from February 2020. There are alterations proposed to the way summer payments are made and to firm up the intention of weekly savings for children. At the time of writing, both areas are currently being finalised.

There are plans in the future for the Handbook to be made an electronic document enabling easier access to carers and staff and a swifter process of updating.

### **14. Long term matching**

In the reporting period six children were permanently matched to in-house foster carers. Due to the low numbers of children who have been long term matched throughout the reporting year a new process has been devised to address this.

### **15. Fostering Executive**

The Executive Committee is made up of two Members from each of the four Surrey Fostering quadrant Committees plus the Chair. It also consists of volunteer carers from the whole of Surrey. It is chaired by Jane Porter. The Fostering Constitution requires updating as the Executive continues to provide support as follows:

*3.1 'Membership of the Association is automatically open to all present, prospective Foster Carers and Kinship Carers approved by Surrey.' And 3.3 'The Fostering Executive will seek to support all carers currently, or previously registered as Foster Carers by Surrey'.*

Work has been ongoing with the Chair of the Executive to alter the Constitution to 'present day foster carers' as they are, by definition still providing a service to foster carers who have been de-registered. This leads to more support than they are currently able to offer. To enable overall improvement of the Executive, an action plan has been developed. This has been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The fostering service and chair of the Fostering Executive meet fortnightly in order to share issues pertinent to carers. This is in addition to the Service Managers attending the Fostering Executive meetings bi monthly and AGM.

## **16. Short Breaks for Disabled Children**

Short Breaks play a vital role in enabling children with disabilities to remain in the full-time care of the birth families by providing regular short breaks, preventing family breakdown.

Children who access the short breaks service of fostering receive a service from social workers within Children with Disabilities Team. Their care packages are funded via the DPR process.

Short Breaks foster carers are recruited and assessed in the same manner as general carers but with an additional slant of disability awareness and understanding. Short Break carers are reviewed and supported in line with The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010.

The matching process within short breaks is thorough and considered, in close consultation with the child, their parents, social workers and short break carers. The process is child lead in preparation for this relationship to be long standing.

At the present time, there are 13 Short Break foster carers offering short breaks on a regular basis to nine children. Short Break carers are very experienced and well trained in the provision of care for children with a disability. They receive specialist training in order to meet the child's health care needs and are offered an additional support group for short break carers and foster carers who care for disabled children full time. Specialist equipment is provided and adaptations are made to houses in consultation with the OT service.

There is a dedicated team within the Fostering Service to support Short break carers and foster carers who care for children with disabilities made up with three FTE social workers and one part-time Team Manager. These workers all have a background in the field of disability and can offer the specific knowledge and expertise these carers need in order to meet the needs of the children.

There is currently an ongoing recruitment plan to seek more carers for this area.

## **17. Foster carer relationships with the service**

Over the course of the last 12 months, the Fostering Service has endeavoured to build positive relationships between carers and the service in the context of reorganisation and ongoing improvement journey. Service Managers have ensured that each quadrant has a regular Fostering Support Group and have attended those support groups on a regular basis, taking part in Question and Answer sessions and ensuring that they have undertaken requested tasks in a prompt manner.

Support groups are facilitated by a Supervising Social Worker with a guest speaker often involved from other agencies or from different teams around Children's Services. This has been well received and attendance figures have improved as a result of this. Guests from the Virtual School, Housing, Social Care and Leaving Care have all attended Q and A sessions. Feedback has been highly positive.

Virtual Support groups, introduced during the Coronavirus pandemic have been well received and attended, enabling more carers to attend due to not needing to find childcare. There is a view that the service will adopt this form of support group, alongside face to face support groups in the future.

The new Service Managers have introduced “Breakfast with the Service Managers” which will be an opportunity for all foster carers to meet with the service managers and hear of new developments within the service and have an open Q&A session quarterly. The first was held virtually and was well attended.

### **18. Foster carer continuous training and development**

There is a vast amount of training on offer to Surrey’s foster carers on different platforms. Foster carers have access to classroom and virtual training via platforms on Olive, AC Education, Care Knowledge, National Association of Therapeutic Parenting (NATP), Cornerstone Project (Virtual Reality training) and The Fostering Network.

Prior to attending panel all general foster carers are required to have attended the following training;

- \* Recording
- \* Working Together to Safeguard Children
- \* PREVENT
- \* Intro to Trauma & Attachment
- \* Total Respect

Post approval training is compulsory for all new foster carers as part of their Training Support and Development Standards (TSDS) and there are monthly TSD workshops facilitated by a foster carer which have helped new carers and existing carers towards completing their standards.

All registered foster carers are expected to attend regular training activities throughout the year and this contributes to their skills fee element in recognition of their knowledge translating to being better able to meet the needs of our children. Carers are expected to complete a PDP each year, highlighting their gaps in knowledge and future training they, and the service, feel to be necessary.

Mandatory training includes

- \* Paediatric First Aid, (to be renewed every 3 years)
- \* Handling & Administering Medication (E-learning)
- \* Working Together to Safeguard Children (mandatory 3-year refresher)
- \* Ensuring Safe Care
- \* Training & Development Support Standards
- \* Managing Behaviour Part 1
- \* Life Story Work
- \* Safeguarding Disabled Children
- \* Cultural Competency

A bespoke Training and Development Steering Group is in place to address continuous development programmes for foster carers. This group sits bi-monthly and is formed of foster carers, managers

from the Fostering Service and members of Surrey's Academy. The group highlights and identifies developing training needs of foster carers and considers how these needs can be met.

The Fostering Network provides training specifically to those involved in the Mockingbird Family Model and the virtual reality training is used through the initial stages of assessment to enhance understanding of attachment and trauma. We have increased the volume of headsets due to the positive impact this training has had. This will also be linked with NATP as their therapeutic training will offer further assistance, particularly in placement stability.

Surrey's Parent and Child foster carers have additional opportunities to access therapeutic peer supervision from a Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychotherapist from the Parent Infant Mental Health Service and the infant observation training course is provided by the same team.

Foster carers for disabled children are provided with 1-1 specific training for children's individual health care needs via AC Education and health partners, and we are in the process of arranging therapeutic supervision for these carers via a Lead Consultant child and adolescent psychotherapist. Moving and handling training specific to individual children is provided by our partners in the OT service.

The Fostering Service has engaged with the National Association of Therapeutic Parenting (NATP) with over 100 households joining the online training programme. This has been particularly helpful for foster carers who were previously exhibiting 'blocked care' as they now recognise the signs, and this has led to placements stabilising across the quadrants.

The Fostering Service is working with carers who hold degrees and diplomas in Social Pedagogy to determine how this training can continue to be developed and delivered within Surrey.

Staff within the Fostering Service have access to the same training as foster carers and are encouraged to share their learning with others via peer supervision.

The fostering service, in addition to giving carers access to Care Knowledge, also hold a resource library in each area office, encouraging carers to borrow resources to enhance their learning. We encourage carers to write reviews of material they have found beneficial which is shared with others to encourage their interest.

### **19. Fab to Foster**

Fab to Foster training/workshops are for foster carer's own birth children, designed to assist them in coming to terms with sharing their parents with fostered children. Up to 4 sessions per year are held around the county. They are generally for children aged 8 – 18 but there can be flexibility around age if it is felt that the individual child can cope with the content. The aim is to give birth children more of an insight about fostering, to meet others and to have fun. There is a lot of emphasis about how important the role is that they play in fostering, after all, they are sharing their parents, their toys and their homes. The staff members involved also have a 'concern box' too for children who have questions that they do not want to ask on the day.

Sessions held in reporting period:

August 29<sup>th</sup> 2019 – 12 children

October 30<sup>th</sup> 2019 – 3 children

February 15<sup>th</sup> 2020 – 8 children

## **20. LCS end to end review**

LCS is the main recording system within Surrey Children's Services. The Fostering element of LCS has been underdeveloped. To address this several members of the Fostering Service have been involved with the redesign of element of the Fostering module within LCS to ensure it captures accurately the work of the service. On completion this will enable more accurate information to be held regarding the service and reporting on a range of Key Performance Indicators.

## **21. Management Priorities for 2020-21:**

- Recruitment of up to 65 new foster carers, with particular interest in teenage children and children with a disability.
- Embedding LCS changes, allowing the Fostering Service to collate and analyse data in all areas of the service.
- The quality and delivery of supervision, across the Fostering Service will be improved through individual, group and whole service learning and development.
- Key Performance Indicators have already been implemented but due to the issues created within LCS, we have not been able to progress. They can be progressed from September 2020 onwards.
  - Monitoring the reduction of external fostering placements
  - Recruit up to 65 new foster carers for 2020-21
  - Specific recruitment of BAME and LGBT+ carers
  - Annual Review assessments, quality and timeliness improved
  - Unannounced Visits, quality and timeliness improved
- Quarterly meetings with the Local Authority Designated Officer will take place in order to assist with improvements to safeguarding Looked After Children within fostering.
- Improve the quality and timeliness of Standards of Care reports to a 28 day timescale.
- Business case to be submitted to seek an Independent Officer to oversee the foster carer Annual Review process.
- DBS and Medical checks to be timely for all new and existing foster carers.
- Development and clarity of the Senior Supervising Social Worker role.

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