

BRIEFING REPORT

Corporate Parenting Committee

Date of Meeting: 27 January 2022

Report Title: Cheshire East Fostering Panel and Fostering Service Annual Reports

Report of: Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children’s Services

Corporate Plan Priorities	Open	An open and enabling organisation	
	Fair	A council which empowers and cares about people	X
	Green	A thriving and sustainable place	

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The annual reports of the Fostering Panel and the Fostering Service for 2020-21 are presented to Committee to evidence the impact of our services and of our foster carers on outcomes for our children.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. These annual reports for 2020 to 2021 outline the delivery of our Fostering Service and impact of foster carers on outcomes for our children. They relate to pledge 3 of the Corporate Parenting Strategy: ***‘We will work to achieve permanence and keep children safe’***. The reports highlight the positive development and progress of work in Cheshire East between April 2020– March 2021. There are two reports:

2.1.1. **The Fostering Service Annual Report** – this report outlines the delivery of the Fostering Service in line with our statutory duty and national minimum standards during the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. This report

fulfils the obligations of Local Authority Agency Fostering Service National Minimum Standards.

- 2.1.2. This report sets out the current service structure and team responsibilities, with related performance information regarding the number of foster carers and their criteria, number of placements, work that has been undertaken during this period, and progress of the Mockingbird model and constellations. The report provides information on service management during the national pandemic and where services have been delivered differently during this time due to the associated restrictions that have been in place.
- 2.1.3. The report provides some feedback from service users to support the context and purpose of the service and positive impact that has been achieved for children, young people, families and foster carers.
- 2.1.4. The report also provides detail on service recruitment and marketing activity during the period as well as training delivery and how these areas have been impacted upon by the pandemic during this time.
- 2.2.1 **The Fostering Panel Annual Report** – this report outlines the operation of the Fostering Panel over the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, including changes as a result of the pandemic, frequency and panel membership. The report provides information around data and panel activity, include quality assurance and feedback, providing recommendations for development.
- 2.2.2 This report is written by the Independent Panel Chair and provides key areas of focus for 2021/22 on how to maintain and improve the operation of panel and therefore outcomes for children and the experience of panel attendees.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Fostering Service is responsible for discharging Cheshire East's responsibilities and duties as a fostering agency, to recruit, support and develop foster carers and meet local responsibilities to ensure sufficiency with Cheshire East foster carers.
- 3.2. The Fostering Panel Annual Report provides a foreword from the Independent Chair and highlights positive outcomes and work in Cheshire East between April 2020– March 2021.
- 3.3. The performance information evidences progress with recruitment/registering carers, and work around timeliness and quality assurance of reports.

4. Implications

4.1. Legal

- 4.1.1. This report fulfils the obligations in Fostering National Minimum Standards.
- 4.1.2. Legal advice will be sought, as appropriate, upon all relevant emerging issues.

4.2. Finance

4.2.1. There are no direct financial implications of these reports, during the time period.

4.3. Human Resources

4.3.1. Changes to working arrangements as a result of the pandemic are outlined in the reports.

Access to Information	
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Appendices:	Fostering Service Annual Report 2020 – 2021 and Fostering Panel Annual Report 2020 – 2021
Background Papers:	None