

Update on Plans for 2022-23

Service Development Plans 2022-2023

What	By Whom	When	Progress
Our training opportunities for foster carers will develop into a blended approach of face to face and webinars or online training	Training SSW	April 2023	Completed - Mandatory training offer revised and annual training plan was launched April 2023.
Re – launch of Reflective Groups for foster carers, facilitated by staff and carers themselves	Training SSW & SSWS	August 2022,	Completed - The Reflective Support Groups run monthly. The group is run jointly by a foster carer and the training officer and is well attended. Foster carers feedback is very positive.
We will continue to promote placement stability and to match children into long-term placements where that is the right thing to do	All	Ongoing	<p>There has been a year-on-year increase in the numbers of children placed with family and friends foster carers.</p> <p>9 children were Long Term matched with their foster carers within this period.</p> <p>This is an ongoing area of work – to pull forward into 2023/4 targets</p>
We will continue to support special guardians and their children, and we note that there seems to be a more general acceptance and commitment nationally to the importance of this work	SGO Team	Ongoing	<p>In the last financial year April 22/March 23 £48,000 of ASF funds were spent on therapeutic support for children subject of an SGO to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapeutic parenting courses • Specialist assessments

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDP informed interventions <p>Sensory attachment interventions.</p> <p>This area of work is increasing and is ongoing – to pull forward into 2023/4 targets</p>
We will launch our second Mockingbird constellation	Mockingbird Lead Team Manager	January 2022	Completed
We will explore the use of concurrency placements with Adoption Counts, our regionalised adoption service	Service Manager	Ongoing	We have been working closely with Adoption Counts and Cared4 services and have successfully placed 3 babies with 3 FFA foster carers in April 2022 to March 2023
We will continue to use Foster to Adopt where possible in order to promote early permanence for children	All	Ongoing	Ongoing
We will continually review our performance in key areas and make changes where they are needed in order to ensure that the service is self-critical and responsive	All	Ongoing	<p>The Service Manager and Team Managers have access to the Fostering Reports available within PowerBi and have been working with the LCS Team to ensure data accuracy.</p> <p>Meetings now take place monthly with the LCS Team and there will be monthly performance meetings with the Service Manager.</p> <p>Monthly Dip Sample Audits to continue</p> <p>The Fostering Panel have developed an Advice Tracker that is reviewed monthly by the Service Manager and Team Managers within the Foster Service.</p>

		October 2023	Introduction of mid-point review meetings to identify any potential delays for connected assessments.
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Diversity Plans 2022-2023

What	By Whom	When	Progress
Increase the diversity of the fostering panel central list to ensure that we have a wide variety of ages and cultural backgrounds and in particular, representation of people with an experience of having been cared for	Panel Advisor and Panel Chair	April 2022	Ongoing recruitment for central list member. 1 new Panel member was recruited to join the Panel.
We will ensure that our recruitment materials, advertising, and methods of recruitment are accessible to all and are reflective of the diverse population that live in Cheshire East and will attract a wide range of people to become foster carers for Cheshire East.	Comms Lead, SM & Recruitment TM	Ongoing	The new marketing materials and methods are reflective of the diverse population within Cheshire East - This is a key priority that will pull forward into 2023/24
We will undertake targeted recruitment to find warm and welcoming homes for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.	Comms Lead, SM & Recruitment TM	January 2022	Completed A targeted recruitment campaign is planned to focus on nesting to be advertised by September 2023.
We will continue to ensure that all foster carers receive training in relation to diversity which encompasses ethnicity, social class, gender identity, sexuality and disability	Training SSW and SSW	Ongoing	Achieved

Consultation and Involvement Plans 2022-2023

What	By Whom	When	Progress
We will continue to ensure that foster carers are routinely involved in the development of the service.	HOS, SM, TMs Training SSW, & FIRO	Ongoing	<p>The Foster Carer Survey (July 2021) highlighted that whilst 82% of foster carers feel proud of their role and 76% felt committed to what Cheshire East are trying to achieve, there were several areas where feedback was not as strong. Key feedback from foster carers which we would like to improve included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 63% agree they are treated fairly, 17% disagree. ○ 57% agree they would recommend to people that they should foster for Cheshire East, 24% disagree. ○ 53% agree the fostering service is improving, 19% disagree. ○ 50% agree they feel part of a team, 29% disagree. <p>57% agree their contribution is valued, respected, and appreciated, 25% disagree.</p> <p>A foster carers survey was completed in November 2022, this was led by Foster Carers Association.</p> <p>31 foster carers completed this survey. Of these carers 81% were mainstream and 9% family and friends' carers.</p>

		<p>54% of carers wanted to see geographical based groups. Since August 2023 we have groups based in Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield.</p> <p>22% of carers said they would like to see age related groups, e.g., babies/toddlers, teenagers. Since September 2023 we have introduced stay and lay groups, sons and daughter, walk and talk.</p> <p>2% have expressed the wish to see specialist groups, i.e., fetal alcohol and children with disabilities. Since September 2023, we have relaunched the fetal alcohol group and are looking to start children with disabilities group in the new year (January 2023).</p> <p>13% stated they would like to see arise in the fostering allowance. Since 01/06/2023, all foster carers received a 12.43% rise in foster allowance.</p> <p>7% wanted out of hours support. From 1 October 2023, the service has implemented a rota to provide support to carers in the evenings and weekends. This is ran by a foster carer and team manager.</p> <p>33% of carers said they would like to see a buddy scheme in place. A buddy scheme was put in place by the service July 2023.</p>
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			<p>Another survey will be completed by April 2024.</p> <p>Foster carers have participated in the FIRO review of the fostering policies and policy development.</p> <p>100% of Foster Carers have contributed to and have attended their Fostering Annual Reviews.</p> <p>4 Foster mainstream carers have taken part in the recruitment to the Service Manager post in February 2022.</p> <p>There is a foster carer representative on the Mockingbird Steering Group.</p> <p>Foster carers' Support Groups have met monthly.</p> <p>Several face-to-face events are planned for 2022/23 to include:</p> <p>Son's and daughters' event, Walk and talk group, Stay and play.</p> <p>Throughout the year various events for FCF including a celebration lunch, Line Dancing Event, Summer BBQ, long Service Awards Lunch and Christmas party.</p> <p>Seasonal newsletter has replaced monthly newsletter, this includes contributions from Foster Carers.</p>
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We will begin to work with carers to develop a Foster Carer Association with key foster carer representatives with whom the service can consult.	HOS, SM, TMs	April 2024	Cheshire East Foster Carers Association – this action will pull forward into 2022/23 targets. Contact has been established with Fostering Network to seek support to re-establish the FCA. Unfortunately, the association was dispended April 2024. Plans to re-establish this by April 2024.
We will develop a year-long plan of quarterly catch ups with foster carers which will be undertaken either virtually and face to face to ensure that carers have the chance to meet and mix with each other and talk things through with service representatives	HOS, SM, TMs	December 2023	The quarterly catch ups will start from offering a daytime and evening session for carers to attend virtually or in person at Delamere House.
We will continue to ensure that complaints are dealt with promptly and thoroughly and respond to all concerns raised	HOS, SM, TMs	Ongoing	Completed

Mainstream Fostering Household Recruitment Plans 2022-2023

What	By Whom	When	Progress
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Cheshire East intends to become a Fostering Friendly Employer	HOS	March 2022	Not achieved – this action will pull forward to 2023/24
We will get out and about to shows and other events in the Cheshire East area, such as The Cheshire Show and Geronimo and become involved in local networking events to promote the Cheshire East fostering service and enhance our foster carer recruitment	HOS, SM, TMs, SSWs, Comms Lead	January 2022	A programme of events has been booked and planned for 2022/23. Recruitment Events resumed all over CE with good attendance.
We will undertake more community-based advertising and recruitment activities, developing links with local groups and organisations.	Comms Lead, Recruitment TM, SSW & FSW	April 2022	Planning is underway to maximize the opportunity to build on the annual National Fostering Network Foster Care Fortnight campaign in May 2022 – Completed Face2Face Monthly Information Sessions have been booked and advertised to take place at Cledford House in Middlewich, but other venues are being explored.
We will develop and share a recruitment strategy 2022 - 2023, we want to be ambitious and regularly active to meet our sufficiency demands and attract new foster carers	Comms Lead, SM, & Recruitment TM	December 2022	There were 13 placements for 10 young people 12 of the placements were for mainstream and one for family and friend. Recruitment of new carers who want to care for UASC, Not achieved – this action will pull forward to 2023/24
We will start targeted recruitment to find homes for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children	Comms Lead, SM & Recruitment TM	December 2022	See above

We will undertake targeted recruitment to find homes for young people who are in residential settings who want to live in a family, and to find homes for young people who may otherwise go into a residential setting	Comms Lead, SM & Recruitment TM	January 2023	Not achieved – this action will pull forward to 2023/24 A draft policy has been completed; this needs to be costed alongside an analysis of the demand for this service – this action will pull through to 2022/23
We will develop a Parent and Child Fostering Scheme to work with adult parents, and with young people under 18 who are to become parents	SM & Recruitment TM	March 2023	Not achieved – this action will pull forward to 2023/24

Plan for 2023-24

Service Development Plans 2023-2024

What	By Whom	When	How
<p>Our training opportunities for foster carers will develop into a blended approach of face to face and webinars or online training</p> <p>Staff will receive core training in Support and Supervision Skills and in Making Good Assessments</p>	Training SSW / in Collaboration with Foster Carers	<p>April 2023</p> <p>By 30/09/22</p>	<p>Completed - We have published a comprehensive training offer and annual training plan.</p> <p>Completed -We will include foster carers as part of the Skills 2 Foster Training and Skills to Care Training</p> <p>Completed</p>
We will continue to embed and develop Reflective Groups for foster carers, facilitated by staff and carers themselves	Training SSW & SSWS	Ongoing 23/24	We will develop a 2 nd group and expand the model into additional reflective groups for connected carers and other groups.
We will continue to promote placement stability and to match children into long-term placements where that is the right thing to do	All	Ongoing	We will identify and track the cohort of children living in foster care with a care plan of LT foster care who are not, yet LT matched to improve performance in this area
We will continue to support special guardians and their children, and we note that there seems to be a more general acceptance and commitment nationally to the importance of this work	SGO Team	Ongoing	
We will embed the Mockingbird Model and continue to work with the Foster Network	Mockingbird Lead Team Manager	Ongoing	Completed -We will review the TOR for the Mockingbird Steering Group.

			We will consider the case for the development of a 3 rd Constellation – this action will pull forward 2023/24
We will explore the use of concurrency placements with Adoption Counts, our regionalised adoption service	Service Manager	Ongoing	We have been working closely with Adoption Counts and Cared4 services and have successfully placed 3 babies with 3 FFA foster carers in April 2022 to March 2023
We will continue to use Foster to Adopt where possible to promote early permanence for children	All	Ongoing	
Funding has been secured for a programme of optimization of the fostering areas of Liquid Logic, our case management system which will ensure that the processes and workflows for fostering are more closely synchronised with the way in which cases evolve, particularly for connected carers. This will mean in turn that we have accurate reporting of performance and timeliness for the fostering service and will be better positioned to understand and develop our own performance	All, in consultation with Project Manager for Optimization and ICS team	April 2024	<p>We will focus on the following workstreams have been established which are overseen by officers and service users. These are (with timeline dates)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Portals (23/24) 2. Special Guardianship Workflow (22/23) 3. Private Fostering Workflow (22/23) 4. Staying Put Workflow (22/23) 5. Supported Accommodation / Lodgings Workflow (22/23)
We will continually review our performance in key areas and make changes where they are needed to ensure that the service is self-critical and responsive	All	Ongoing	<p>Meetings will continue to take place monthly with the LCS Team and there will be monthly performance meetings with the Service Manager.</p> <p>A programme of monthly Dip Sample Audits has been agreed.</p>

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Diversity Plans 2023-2024

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Increase the diversity of the fostering panel central list to ensure that we have a wide variety of ages and cultural backgrounds and in particular, representation of people with an experience of having been cared for	Service Manager and Panel Chair	Ongoing	
We will ensure that our recruitment materials, advertising and methods of recruitment are accessible to all and are reflective of the diverse population that live in Cheshire East and will attract a wide range of people to become foster carers for Cheshire East.	Comms Lead, SM & Recruitment TM	Ongoing	
We will undertake targeted recruitment to find warm and welcoming homes for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.	Comms Lead, SM & Recruitment TM	August 2024	
We will continue to ensure that all foster carers receive training in relation to diversity which encompasses ethnicity, social class, gender identity, sexuality and disability	Training SSW and SSW	Ongoing	

Consultation and Involvement Plans 2023-2024

What	By Whom	When	
We will continue to ensure that foster carers are routinely involved in the development of the service.	HOS, SM, TMs Training SSW, & FIRO	Ongoing	
We will begin to work with carers to develop a Foster Carer Association with key foster carer representatives with whom the service can consult.	HOS, SM, TMs	July 2024	
We will develop a year-long plan of foster carer forums which will be undertaken either virtually or in person (depending on Covid) to ensure that carers have the chance to meet and mix with each other and talk things through with service representatives	HOS, SM, TMs	Ongoing	
We will continue to ensure that complaints are dealt with promptly and thoroughly and respond to all concerns raised	HOS, SM, TMs	Ongoing	

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What	By Whom	When	Progress
Cheshire East intends to become a Fostering Friendly Employer	HOS	September 2024	
We will get out and about to shows and other events in the Cheshire East area, such as The Cheshire Show and Geronimo and become involved in local networking events to promote the Cheshire East fostering service and enhance our foster carer recruitment	HOS, SM, TMs, SSWs, Comms Lead	Ongoing	
We will undertake more community-based advertising and recruitment activities, developing links with local groups and organisations	Comms Lead, Recruitment TM, SSW & FSW	Ongoing	
We will develop and share a recruitment strategy 2022 - 2024, we want to be ambitious and regularly active to meet our sufficiency demands and attract new foster carers	Comms Lead, SM, & Recruitment TM	June 2024	
We will start targeted recruitment to find homes for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children	Comms Lead, SM & Recruitment TM	August 2024	
We will undertake targeted recruitment to find homes for young people who are in residential settings who want to live in a family, and to find homes for young people who may otherwise go into a residential setting	Comms Lead, SM & Recruitment TM	July 2024	
We will develop a Parent and Child Fostering Scheme to work with adult parents, and also with young people under 18 who are to become parents	SM & Recruitment TM	August 2024	

