

Report for: Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee 19 October 2017

Item number:

Title: In-House Fostering Status Update

Report authorised by: Assistant Director

Lead Officer: Erica Owusu-Boateng, Project Manager, 020 8489 4629

Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Non Key

1. Describe the issue under consideration

This report is to provide CPAC Members with an update on In-House Fostering.

2. Recommendations

- Invest to save to embed a strong workforce in the interim at a cost of £50k, with views to increase for the long term model.
- Increase marketing campaign budget to at least £5-10k
- Develop retention model based on best practice and including more incentives for foster carers; reduction in council tax, reward scheme, as part of a Council pledge to endorse the key role that in-house foster carers play.

3. Background information

3.1 The primary objective of the project is to provide a commissioning plan for the recruitment and assessment of foster carers (in house model) looking to:

- implement an in-house delivery model
- recruit a workforce and improve the sustainability of the market
- Recruit more foster carers to meet the needs of our emerging LAC population
- ensure sufficiency of fostering provisions in Haringey to meet the needs of the children and young people LAC population.

3.2 The project will take a two-stage approach.

1. Short term interim solution:
 - a. Implement an interim recruitment team.
 - b. Develop retention programme for existing and new foster carers.

2. Long term solution:
 - a. Design an integrated in-house fostering recruitment and retention model.

4. The following has been achieved:
 - Governance set up for the project, which consists of weekly Working Groups to maintain pace, a monthly Steering Group and regular slots in team meetings to ensure that all staff are engaged in the progress;
 - Project Brief presented and signed off at both P1 Board and OIA Board.
 - Web page updated to remove all references to NRS
 - New publicity material produced:- leaflet, information pack, pull up banners
 - Agreed performance targets and success criteria which have been embedded into fostering recruitment workflow on mosaic (IT system to support staff and collate data)
 - Recruitment process for a Recruitment & Marketing Officer in progress. CVs received for agency post. Interviews to take place.
 - Reviewed capacity of current team and allocated four social workers with the capacity to deliver a total of six recruitment assessments
 - Bid submitted to the Transformation budget to secure extra funds for marketing and communication.
 - Implementing communication plan, with a limited budget of £1500, which means that only an online campaign is feasible at this stage, which includes:
 - updated web page
 - regular social media posts
 - advert on all council customer service TV screens
 - three-part case study - on a foster carer, social worker and a care leaver – will be published in December's *Haringey People*.

5. **Upcoming activities**
 - First Information Session planned for Wednesday 18th October.
 - Developing a retention model, reviewing other best practice models for inspiration
 - one potential foster carers in progress
 - Social workers booked to attend training session on delivering recruitment assessments
 - Mapping exercise of current foster carers to enable targeted marketing in areas with a higher need

6. Issues encountered

- 6.1 Initial plans to recruit a Fostering Recruitment Team of four staff members was descaled due to budget pressures. Therefore, a skeleton team was developed using existing staff taking on recruitment assessments, with the recruitment of a Recruitment & Marketing Office to support with administration task and engaging with the community.
- 6.2 Delayed recruitment of an agency or redeployment staff member to bridge gap till fixed term post can be recruited as finance challenged supremacy, after it had already been agreed by Finance and all necessary boards. This delayed the interview dates by another week, therefore unlikely the recruitment will be completed for September. Need someone in place by 13 October to support the first information session, planned for 18 October.
- 6.3 Small budget for an intensive marketing campaign, limits volume and reach of campaign. Requesting funds from the Transformation budget.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

These proposals relate to Priority 1.