

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 11

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Annual Fostering Service Report 2010/11
Date of Meeting: 12th September 2011
Report of: Strategic Director, People
Contact Officer: Name: **Sharon Donnelly** Tel: **29-5549**
E-mail: sharon.donnelly@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: No Forward Plan No: N/A
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Fostering regulations require that an annual fostering report be provided to be received by the Council Executive. The annual report for 2010/11 found in Appendix 1 provides full information about fostering activity within Children & Families and a profile of the work of the Fostering teams with the Fostering & Adoption Service.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 That the Annual Fostering Service Report and the progress of the Fostering & Adoption Service in relation to fostering activity is noted.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 See Annual Fostering Service Report

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Annual Fostering Service report has been compiled in collaboration with managers from the Adoption and Fostering service and the report of the Independent Chair of Panel has been compiled in consultation with Fostering Panel members. The Brighton & Hove Foster Care association also provided input into the report.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The spending on in-house fostering allowances and other expenses during 2010/2011 totalled £4.603m. This was an increase of 7.4% on the spend in 2009/10. This rise was predominantly the result of increased numbers of placements with relatives, which rose from 46.35 FTE in 2009/10 to 54.81 FTE in 2010/11, with a subsequent growth in spend of £0.111m. Spending on Residence Orders Allowances fell slightly from £1.211m in 2009/10 to £1.164m in 2010/11. Spending on Special Guardianship amounted to £0.332m in 2010/11.

Spend on agency fostering rose by 23% in 2010/2011 to £7.167m. The numbers of placements started to rise considerably at the end of 2008 and have continued to grow during the last two years. There were 186 children in an IFA placement on 31/3/11 compared with just 153 twelve months previously. There has been considerable effort to control the costs of IFAs and this was reflected in the average direct cost of an IFA falling in 2010/11 by 0.4% to £835.44 per week.

The average direct unit cost for agency foster care of £835 per week compares to £494 per week for children placed with in-house carers.

Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis

Date: 13/02/2011

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The legal and regulatory context of fostering services are referred to in the body of the report. These services are essential to fulfilling the statutory obligations of the Trust to otherwise vulnerable children under both the Children Act 1989 & 2004. Children can only be placed into care with the express agreement of their parents or the approval of the Court. Fostering services should reflect the right of children to a family life, which is defined in law so as to include foster carers with whom they have formed a family like attachment, as well as to their birth family.

Lawyer Consulted: Sandra O'Brien

Date: 06/07/2011

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 There is a legal requirement for the local authority to provide foster carers who can reflect a child's religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background. BHCC actively encourages foster carer applications from citizens from a wide range of backgrounds and has an explicitly inclusive recruitment strategy.

An Equalities impact assessment was undertaken in 2009/10.

Sustainability Implications:

5.4 None

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 None

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 None

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 The annual report focuses on the work of a city wide service within the Children & Families Delivery Unit.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

6.1 None

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Required by fostering regulations

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Annual Report

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None