

Children and Young People's Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel 9th January 2015 - Agenda Item 9

Councillor Lisa Pilgrim - Assistant Executive Member Update November 2014 to January 2015

We must not lose sight of our 3 'Obsessions' for our Children Looked After.

The right home for each child

Their emotional needs are being met.

Achievement at school and that all Care Leavers should be in Education, Employment or Training.

(1) Adoption

- IAAM's, out of the 7 children identified, one sibling group is going forward and we are meeting with adopters in January.
- Adoption West-no further progress regarding this.

(2) Fostering

- Recruitment.

The revised recruitment strategy has nearly been completed. I hope that this will be ready to be taken to Children's Champion on the 23rd January for comments.

As you know our application to be included in the government funded project to help authorities with recruitment was successful. A workshop has been attended and it was very helpful eg, looking at ways of targeting recruitment and utilising the character types information to inform strategy. The Fostering Network also runs a Recruitment Lead Network in the South West. Some of the benefits so far have been the sharing of expertise and also investigating joint training with other authorities.

A meeting is taking place in January with Agilisys to look at how the call handlers can deal with enquiries regarding Fostering. This will involve training, possibly a script and also a call length which will allow a good first contact.

- Retention.
 - The foster carer agreement is also being revisited and hopefully will be taken to the Children's Champion on the 23rd January.

- Matching.
 - Improvements are being made in this area which will include a proforma containing the foster carers' details for the young person to have a look at. This was requested during the review of the service and is a positive improvement.

(3) Invest to save

- The Social Impact Bond and any other invest to save project will need an in depth study to look further at the challenges we face and what action we can put in place to help prevent children from going into care and/or to help them return home asap. This would be an expensive undertaking and so an application was made for funding. We were successful in our bid for £104,000.00 and we are currently working on the procurement for this project. A draft specification has been completed the project should start in February 2015.

(4) Sharing of services

- Progress is slow, however, it is something we need to pursue and I will continue to pick this up with the Lead Member in Banes. It is disappointing that more progress has not been made but we do have areas where shared services are being taken forward eg. Adoption West.

(5) Care Leavers

- Apprenticeships update.
 - We now have a robust data tracking system in place that lets us know the exact situation of all our Care Leavers, whether they are in a placement , what work is being done with them etc.
 - Helping Young People Into Work (HYPE). Funding has been secured through the LEP to help young people between the ages of 18 – 24 into work. Knightstone Housing won the contract to do this work. Currently, 29 of our care leavers are eligible for HYPE, 14 are already in a better place and 3 are in North Somerset Apprenticeships.
 - Team North Somerset is in place. This is a group of partners - Weston College, North Somerset Partnership, Alliance Homes, Knightstone Housing, some employers, HYPE and the voluntary sector working together to support young people into work. The framework to find apprenticeships is improving, what we need now is the support to keep them there.
- Accommodation – An issue which is raised often so in January I will be visiting 5 different types of accommodation that our young people use and will update you at the next meeting. The Staying Put policy has been updated

and the Supported Lodgings policy will mirror this. Continued support in this area is vital for positive outcomes for our Young People.

(6) Emotional Wellbeing

- I can confirm that the additional Children Looked After Nurse is now in place and we welcome him.