



Item No: 10

Meeting Date: Wednesday 21st February 2018

Glasgow City Integration Joint Board Performance Scrutiny Committee

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FOSTERING SERVICE

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| Purpose of Report: | To inform the IJB Performance Scrutiny Committee about the fostering service provided by Families for Children. |
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| Background/Engagement: | <p>At its meeting on the 8 November 2017 the Integrated Joint Board agreed to the strategic direction and key work streams for the Children's Services Transformation Programme https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/ITEM%20No%2006%20-%20Transformational%20Change%20Programme%20-%20Childrens%20Services%202018-21.pdf</p> <p>The meeting of the HSCP Integration Joint Board held on 8th November 2017 requested a report on the fostering services provided by Families for Children be presented to a future Committee meeting.</p> |
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| Recommendations: | <p>The IJB Performance Scrutiny Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Note the contents of the report;b) Note the connections to the Transformational Agenda; andc) Note the challenges for Fostering in Glasgow. |
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Relevance to Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan:

The IJB Strategic Plan outlines 5 key priorities that apply to all HSCP services including those that support young people and children:

- Early intervention, prevention and harm reduction.
- Providing greater self-determination and choice.
- Shifting the balance of care.
- Enabling independent living for longer.
- Public protection – including keeping vulnerable people safe from harm.

Implications for Health and Social Care Partnership:

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| Reference to National Health & Wellbeing Outcome: | All 9 of the Outcomes. |
| Personnel: | The report includes details of the staffing profile for the service. The Transformation Programme for Children's Services is likely to require our workforce to work in different ways to support families in the future and we will fully engage with our staff and the trade unions as we develop the new models of care and support. |
| Carers: | Implications for foster carers with a specific focus on supporting carers through early assessment and on-going support and the challenges of recruiting, retaining carers, especially to increase the number of carers living in and around Glasgow. |
| Provider Organisations: | This report relates to our directly provided foster care service. In addition to the foster family placements offered by Families for Children, Glasgow accesses purchased foster placements offered by a number of fostering agencies who have tendered and been commissioned through an agreed framework. Our Transformation Programme for Children's Services proposes that we reduce the number of placements in purchased foster care placements as a result of our increasing investment in provided foster care and family support to prevent more children from coming into care. The relationship between provided foster care and what the service purchases will require ongoing reflection. |

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| <p>Equalities:</p> | <p>An EQIA has been initiated to cover the overall transformation programme and is at the stage of gathering evidence to support the process and will be completed by 31st March 2018.</p> <p>This report provides details of our support for black and minority ethnic foster carers and also indicates the difficulty of finding foster carers with suitable accommodation for children who use a wheelchair.</p> |
| <p>Financial:</p> | <p>The overall transformation of children's services is envisaged to make a saving of around £6.7m each year for the next 3 years, initially in relation to reducing our reliance on high cost purchased residential placements and purchased foster care placements. Given that our objective is to invest more heavily in family support in the City to prevent children and young people coming into care we may see a reduction in future years in the level of need for provided foster care placements, which would free up staff and resources to further increase the capacity for early intervention and prevention.</p> <p>Carers are paid a fee, which is their income, and an allowance to meet the care needs of the child. The Service Managers are currently participating in the National Care Allowance Review, led by the Scottish Government, which is considering whether there should be a nationally agreed child's allowance. This could result in increased financial pressure for the Council.</p> |
| <p>Legal:</p> | <p>The Fostering and Adoption services provided by Families for Children are separately registered, regulated and inspected by the Care Inspectorate in accordance with the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001.</p> <p>In addition the following wider legislation is pertinent to fostering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Children and Young People's Scotland Act 2014 • The Public Bodies Act 2014 • Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 • Equality Impacts as per the Equality Act 2010. |
| <p>Economic Impact:</p> | <p>Improving the life chances for looked after and accommodated children should have a positive impact on the City as the young people will be able to more fully contribute to Glasgow's economy. Providing stable and caring foster families for children is an important factor in promoting positive short and longer term outcomes in their quality of life.</p> |

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| Sustainability: | Not applicable. |
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| Sustainable Procurement and Article 19: | Not applicable. |
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| Risk Implications: | <p>The Transformation Programme for Children’s Services has a risk register. Particular risks for foster care highlighted in this report include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to recruit sufficient numbers of foster carers in Glasgow City will restrict our capacity to provide care for young people and impact on our ability to reduce the number of young people residing in placements outside Glasgow. This will undermine sustaining more children in Glasgow schools. • Increased numbers of placement breakdowns and/or placement breakdowns occurring more frequently for individual children. • Providing on-going training, development and support for foster carers and for the children is crucial to promote sustainable placements. Difficulties in recruiting and sustaining qualified and experienced staff may limit our ability to provide this support. |
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| Implications for Glasgow City Council: | A high quality foster care service is a vital part of the spectrum of support and accommodation for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in Glasgow. |
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| Implications for NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde: | Key issues relate to the provision of assessment, treatment and care for looked after children and young people, especially child and adolescent mental health services for children who have often experienced traumatic situations in their life. It is vital that the HSCP works closely with the Health Board’s Specialist Children’s Services and the primary care services, such as GPs to continue to improve the care and support for children in foster care. |
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1. Background

1.1. The introduction of the Health and Social Care partnership (HSCP) has precipitated and necessitated a comprehensive review of the child care system in Glasgow. In tandem with the recent integrated children’s services inspection, this has enabled all key stakeholders to critically analyse and evaluate the outcomes for children and young people in Glasgow.

1.2 The meeting of the Integration Joint Board held on 8th November 2017 requested that a report on the fostering services provided by Families for Children be presented to a future Committee meeting.

2. Personnel

2.1 The Families for Children staff complement is:
Service Manager x 2
Assistant Service Manager x 2.8
Team Leader x 7.6
Recruitment and Communication Manager x 1 (2 x 0.5)
Supervising Social Worker x 44 (WTE)
Senior Learning & Development Officers x 2.5

3. Legal Framework

3.1 The Fostering and Adoption services provided by Families for Children are separately registered, regulated and inspected by the Care Inspectorate in accordance with the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001.

3.2 Carers are approved, reviewed and deregistered on the recommendation of fostering and adoption panels, whose functions are defined by regulation. Legal advisors offer a valuable service and support to the panels in respect of provision of information in relation to the children and adults being presented to panel.

4. Carers

4.1 As at 24th January 2018, there were 578 registered fostering households, including 311 short-term and 167 long-term fostering households. In addition, there are another 100 Carers who provide respite for other foster carers, family based respite and shared care; a service for children with additional needs. Foster carers offer a range of different care placements: short-break, emergency, interim, long-term, permanent and shared-care. The range of resources provided reflects the changes as detailed in the National Review of Foster Care (2013), taking account of changes in placement limits.

4.2 Glasgow is a diverse city with 15.4% of its population consisting of different ethnic minorities. There are currently 119 different languages spoken, 80 of which are being used regularly. (Glasgow City HSCP Integrated Joint Board Strategic Plan 2016-2019).

4.3 The service strives to recruit a diverse range of carers in accordance with the wide range of differing needs of Glasgow's children and young people. There are currently registered 11 foster carers who identify themselves as coming from a Black and Minority Ethnic background.

- 4.4 Each foster carer has an allocated Supervising Social Worker who visits on a regular basis to conduct supervision and perform a range of regulatory duties. Supervising Social Workers play a key role in the development of carers' continuous learning and development and in supporting carers to attend formal meetings as required by children's care plans. Joint visits with the child's allocated social worker are promoted to ensure effective partnership working with area service colleagues.
- 4.5 The service provides monthly support groups, with day and evening options, taking account of the geographical spread of foster carers. In recognition of carers' diverse cultural needs, a Black and Minority Ethnic support group has been running for a number of years.
- 4.6 Service Managers attend support group meetings on occasion to ensure there is a direct link between senior management and the carers, and in order to inform carers of strategic and practice development, both within the service and nationally.
- 4.7 The service has an established training team of Senior Learning & Development Officers, who are all qualified Social Workers. The team is responsible for providing training to all fostering households. There is a training pathway of mandatory 10 session Post-Approval training in addition to three core courses that have been devised for all foster carers. The team has established links with relevant partners to provide stand-alone courses on a wide range of topics, such as Understanding Challenging Behaviour; Autism Awareness; and Sexual Health.
- 4.8 In accordance with the Review of Foster Care (2013) and the implementation of the Standard for Foster Care (April 2017) all courses have been reviewed to adhere to the framework for the learning that foster carers are required to undertake for their role. There are three training pathways identified in the new standards, Pre-approval, Post-Approval and Continuous Professional Development, which will include stand-alone courses as well as e-learning, journals, reading materials and support groups.
- 4.9 The Learning & Development team provide compressed training for Supervising Social Workers and area service social workers to ensure that all professionals working with carers enable the promotion of greater understanding, consistency and partnership working.
- 4.10 Carers are invited to support the service at preparation groups and in co-facilitating training courses provided by the Senior Learning and Development Officers.
- 4.11 One of our Senior Learning and Development Officers, together with a Team Leader from the fostering team, has been undertaking Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP) training with the support of our educational psychologist colleagues. It is planned that these staff will then train our wider team to be able to offer new methods for carers to develop their approach in supporting challenging youngsters.

- 4.12 The service can provide additional support via an established relationship with the Includem support service, which can provide tailored, direct 1:1 support for the child/young person and the foster family. This service is reviewed regularly and evaluated annually.
- 4.13 In addition, support is also offered from Looked After and Accommodated (LAAC) Health teams, LAAC Mental Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services and Educational Psychology.
- 4.14 The service also works closely with the NSPCC Glasgow Infant Family Team (GIFT), which provides detailed attachment based assessments of children within the 0-5 years and their parents. GIFT together with our own service, the Family Assessment and Contact service (FACS) is part of a research trial undertaken by Glasgow University and children are randomised to either service. The GIFT service works with looked after children, birth parents, social workers and foster carers over a 9-15 month period. Consent is required from the birth parent before any work is undertaken. Assessments help professionals make timely decisions about whether a young child should stay with their birth family or whether a permanent substitute family should be sought. In contrast to the FACS team that provides a comprehensive assessment solely, this team also provides a range of interventions that support the foster carers to develop and stabilise the children's mental health.
- 4.15 In addition to the foster family placements offered by Families for Children, Glasgow accesses purchased foster placements offered by a number of fostering agencies who have tendered and been commissioned through an agreed framework.
- 4.16 Families for Children is developing stronger links with the Commissioning Team and greater involvement in the contract monitoring process for purchased placements. This is being pursued to achieve greater scrutiny of the care plans for children in purchased placements to maximise opportunities, where appropriate, to have them placed within provided foster care, or, where appropriate and authorised, to assist in progressing permanence plans, for children to remain in purchased placements where they are settled.

5. Looked After And Accommodated Children and Young People

- 5.1 Of Glasgow's total number of Looked After and Accommodated children and young people (1232), 710 were resident in Families for Children's provided fostering service (57.63%). A further 291 were resident in a range of purchased foster family placements (23.62%). Just over 81% of the LAAC population reside in foster family placements. (Figures as at 21st December 2017)
- 5.2 There are currently 51 young people aged 18 years and over residing in provided foster care. In addition, there are 122 young people aged 18 years and over residing in Supported Care placements.

5.3 In the financial year 2016/17, the outturn for provided foster care was £15.17m and for purchased foster care was £16.24m. The projection for the financial year 2017/18 is an outturn of £13.96m for provided foster care and £15.63m for purchased foster care.

6. Recruitment

6.1 While there is currently one vacancy, the service has two part-time dedicated Recruitment and Communication Managers, who utilise a range of marketing strategies, including TV, radio and billboard advertising and social media platforms. There are links with partner activities in education and health, and attendance at city events, such as Pride and the Blue Lights Festival.

6.2 The fostering service has moved to localised recruitment activities in Glasgow and the surrounding areas with the aim of maintaining children and young people in or near their communities and also reducing the level of spend which leaves the city.

7. Challenges

7.1 Fostering agencies across Scotland are facing difficulties recruiting new carers, particularly for sibling groups and teenagers. This is partly as a result of the National Review of Foster Care (2013), which introduced placement limits. Families for Children is also experiencing this recruitment challenge, with the number of approved fostering households having reduced in the last year as the number of newly approved carers has not matched the number of carers being deregistered.

7.2 Families for Children has similarly experienced staff reduction over the past due to staff securing posts outwith the team; resignations and retirements; and reduction in working hours through work life balance arrangements. It is anticipated that there will be further contraction over the next year due to flexible retirement applications.

7.3 A particular challenge for the service is sustaining placements and preventing breakdowns, which can result in an emergency move of a child or young person. Every effort is made to support carers and foster children during periods of challenge or crisis.

7.4 Foster carers are paid a weekly fee of £150 per child, which is the carer's income, and an age-related allowance to meet the care needs of the child, ranging from £137.18 to £236.64 per week. They also receive additional payments of the child's allowance – one week at Christmas; one week at the child's birthday; and two weeks in the summer.

7.5 The Service Managers are currently participating in the National Care Allowance Review, led by the Scottish Government, which is considering whether there should be a nationally agreed child's allowance. This could result in increased financial pressure for the Health and Social Care Partnership and not only in relation to additional cost within foster care, but also consequently in Kinship Care.

8. The Way Forward

- 8.1 In line with the transformational agenda and the move to increase the provision and spend within our family support services within Glasgow, Families for Children is also developing a strategy that will support this agenda. Our future recruitment will concentrate on attracting applicants from Glasgow and its close neighbours. Our service will link more closely with our residential services and the purchased sector to seek to move children timeously into the provided fostering sector where appropriate.
- 8.2 We are reviewing how we can build on our short breaks services to provide more support to those families whose children are on the edge of care. As well as looking to expand our family based respite and shared care services we are also in the process of considering a short breaks at home service. We are currently seeing a significant increase in requests for day respite to support kinship carers through holiday periods or for pre-school children. In addition shared carers often cannot accommodate children with wheelchairs. We know that the biggest reason we have to turn interested applicants away is because they do not have a spare bedroom. In consideration of all of the above we would wish to build a service where Glasgow carers can provide support to families within the children's own home.
- 8.3 We will constantly review our systems – we are currently undertaking a review of our recruitment team – to ensure that we are offering the right support for our looked after children preventing breakdowns by anticipating difficulties and providing appropriate training.
- 8.4 The Young Champions' Board is another group that we will consult closely with as we listen to the views of young people who have experienced our service.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 The IJB Performance Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
- a) Note the contents of the report;
 - b) Note the connections to the Transformational Agenda; and
 - c) Note the challenges for Fostering in Glasgow.