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Item No: 15

Meeting Date: Wednesday 28th June 2023

Glasgow City Integration Joint Board

Report By: Mike Burns, Assistant Chief Officer, Children's Services

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Foster Care Update

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update to the Integration Joint Board in relation to the action plan developed following the foster care summit. To ask the IJB to note the action plan and the recommendations contained within.

Background/Engagement:

Foster carers have been involved in a variety of discussions with officers following the summit to agree how best to provide the support they are seeking.

Governance Route:

The matters contained within this paper have been previously considered by the following group(s) as part of its development.

HSCP Senior Management Team ☐
Council Corporate Management Team ☐
Health Board Corporate Management Team ☐
Council Committee ☐
Update requested by IJB ☒
Other ☐
Not Applicable ☐

Recommendations:

The Integration Joint Board is asked to:

- a) Note the contents of the report in relation to delivering the plan for foster care; and
- b) Note the plan to re-establish the Champions Board for Glasgow and the associated event to celebrate the achievements of care experienced young people.

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Relevance to Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan:

Foster Carers are integral to the delivery of high-quality care for children in Glasgow who cannot live at home with their own families. The Families for Children Service (Glasgow's provided fostering arrangement) is critical to the delivery of the children's transformation programme to sustain children as close to Glasgow as possible to maintain children and young people's links to their schools and communities.

Implications for Health and Social Care Partnership:

Reference to National Health & Wellbeing Outcome(s):	Foster care contributes to some of the key National outcomes in terms of improving outcomes for children and young people and improving support for foster carers in order to ensure that children and young people who use health and social care services have positive experiences of those services, and have their dignity respected. Key to any improvements is to ensure that children and young people are safe from harm and delivering effective services which make efficient use of health and social care services. Such outcomes are aligned to the HSCP's transformational agenda and the desire to shift the balance of care, and secure better outcomes for all children and young people living in the City.
Personnel:	Some staff may be asked to work differently to support the development of tests of change in order to explore approaches which are effective in meeting children, young people and carers' needs.
Carers:	Foster Carers are key to the effective delivery of services and meeting good permanence outcomes for care experienced children and young people. This paper presents a proposal for improving the service, taking into account feedback from children, young people and carers.
Provider Organisations:	None
Equalities:	The report is referencing current practice and outcomes, and proposals for next steps, and as such an EQIA is not deemed necessary at this stage. The wider Children's Transformation Programme, of which the work detailed in this report is a part, has been subject to a recent EQIA .
Fairer Scotland Compliance:	The Children's Transformation Programme actively seeks to reduce inequalities and to support children, young people and carers to improve their quality of life and reduce the impact of health and social inequalities.

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Financial:	Some of the requests made by foster carers at the summit have financial implications which, if to be considered, needs further scrutiny.
Legal:	Normal legal processes and procedures for Glasgow City Council will be followed in relation to developing practitioners' roles to support children, young people and carers in accordance with feedback about the service and continuous improvement of the service.
Economic Impact:	Providing children and young people with high quality care makes best use of resources, and helps to ensure positive long-term outcomes, thereby reducing future need for further specialist supports, including Adult Services.
Sustainability:	This work fully aligns with the Christie Commission report the principles of GIRFEC, the children's transformational change programme and the aspirations of 'The Promise,' which emphasise the need to deliver the right high quality support at the right time to improve outcomes. Given that the key point of leverage to deliver the transformational change programme is to develop practice at the frontline – at the point of interaction with children, young people and their families and carers – the current workforce represents a considerable resource in terms of its contribution to achieving sustainable change across all supports and services to ensure best outcomes.
Sustainable Procurement and Article 19:	None
Risk Implications:	Good support to foster carers ensures they feel valued. Should this not be provided there is a risk that they will leave the service and either cease to foster or join private or third sector fostering agencies creating a financial risk to the service as well as a risk that care placements cannot be provided when needed.
Implications for Glasgow City Council:	None
Implications for NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde:	None

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Direction Required to Council, Health Board or Both	
Direction to:	
1. No Direction Required	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>
2. Glasgow City Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Glasgow City Council and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide an update to the Integration Joint Board in relation to the action plan developed following the foster care summit. To ask the IJB to note the action plan and the recommendations contained within.

2. Background

- 2.1. A summit for foster carers was held on 1st February 2023 to provide all Glasgow's carers (including short breaks carers) an opportunity to meet with a range of Elected Members and officers to express their views about the service in the City.
- 2.2. 51 of Glasgow City's 394 foster carer households, meaning approximately 12.9% of Glasgow's carer households were represented on the day.
- 2.3. Feedback from the summit was gathered, collated and analysed with some clear themes emerging. These centred around financial support; practical support; the status of foster carers; retention of carers, organisational issues; and trade union recognition.
- 2.4. Following the summit, a report was considered at the IJB on 22nd March 2022. The report and action plan can be found [here](#).

3. Update on Actions

- 3.1 **Communication and consultation with foster carers.** While the timescale for this action was June 2023 and some planning activity had taken place this action has stalled due to the Care Inspectorate announcing at the end of April 2023 an inspection of the service commencing 15th May 2023 taking approximately 5 weeks to conclude. The service has therefore had to prioritise resources on providing the requested evidence, including facilitating the Care Inspectorate's interface with carers. This has involved carers being asked to complete questionnaires, attend meetings and undertake individual interviews with inspectors.
- 3.2 The fostering service is developing a questionnaire/ survey which will go to all carers to ask for initial thoughts on what they need to support them to care for Glasgow's children. This will be distributed to carers post the school summer holiday period. It is hoped to have the findings of this survey available by mid-November.

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- 3.3 As part of the survey, it is intended to explore with foster carers their interest in being part of a consultative group, that would meet regularly with senior managers within the service and periodic meetings, at least annually, with the Chair and vice chair of the IJB. In addition, carers will be asked to become involved in service developments e.g., the redesign of the fostering handbook/ the welcome pack for adopters.
- 3.4 **Support to foster carers.** Following the summit, in person support groups have been re-established. From the foster carers, carer champions have been identified and they are involved in the planning and facilitation of the sessions.
- 3.5 A good practice development session for the fostering and adoption services staff has taken place with Polly Cowan, Trainer /Consultant from the Association for Fostering, Kinship and Adoption in Scotland (AFKA) to consider her research into unplanned placement endings and good practice in relation to children moving or transitioning between carers. Following this it is the intention to look at a working group to develop a protocol which will include carers/ adopters and staff.
- 3.6 The service continues to promote the support that is available to all carers via the Fostering Network which includes priority access to counselling/ financial advice and legal advice.
- 3.7 **Support for Children and Young People.** It was noted during the summit that there had been delays in care planning for children and young people primarily due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Since then, the service has largely focused on getting plans for young people back on track. This has included supporting the development and trialling of the Family Connections Plan. This has been created to consider important relationships for children and young people who are not living with birth families. In addition, the service is working alongside Family Group Decision making teams in the 3 locality areas who continue to robustly identify extended family placements/ short break opportunities for children and young people. Further, permanence forums in the 3 locality areas have been re-established with fostering service staff representatives on each of them. A new simplified permanence review report structure has been developed and the Service Manager Lead for permanence and the adoption service now meets regularly with the 3 Looked After Children lead Service Managers from localities to consider all children in foster care, their plans and actions required. This includes offering workshops and 1:1 peer support and coaching for less experienced staff. Finally, within the Children's Hearing Improvement Partnership for Glasgow the team have offered training and development regarding the role of social workers in relation to permanence planning for children's panel members.
- 3.8 **Financial Considerations.** To date there remains no resolution to the proposed national allowance for foster carers in Scotland. Officers, via Social Work Scotland continue to lobby COSLA and the Scottish Government for a solution in this regard. Cllr Cunningham, as chair of the IJB, has written to the Minister to request an update on the decision around timescales for the implementation of the national allowance.

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4. The Champions Board for Glasgow

4.1 Following the summit, agreement was reached to reform the Champions' Board for Glasgow. This had been stood down during the pandemic. The Champion's Board had representation from elected members from all political parties, various corporate parents and a representative from the Young Champions Board referred to as PAC (People Achieving Change). This Board challenged and supported Corporate Parents to fulfil their statutory responsibilities. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 stipulates, it is the duty of every corporate parent, in so far as consistent with the proper exercise of its functions to:

- Be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of looked after children and young people.
- Assess the needs of looked after children and young people.
- Promote the interests of looked after children and young people.
- Seek to provide looked after children and young people with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing.
- Take action as it considers appropriate to help looked after children and young people access those opportunities.
- Keep its approach to corporate parenting under constant review, seeking out improvement wherever possible.

The Champions' Board for Glasgow had a role in ensuring the above were adhered to.

4.2 In addition, the Champions' Board hosted an annual event for care experienced young people to celebrate their achievements and successes. The event was planned in conjunction with PAC. Elected members and other corporate papers were invited to attend and sign a pledge to fulfil their commitment as corporate parents.

4.3 The IJB is asked to support the reforming of the Champion's Board for Glasgow and to work with a group of care experienced young people to consider how best to celebrate their achievements and successes.

4.4 A paper regarding the reforming of the Champion's Board will be presented at the Council's City Administration Committee following the summer recess.

5. Recommendations

5.1 The Integration Joint Board is asked to:

- a) Note the contents of the report in relation to delivering the plan for foster care; and
- b) note the plan to reform the Champions Board for Glasgow and the associated event to celebrate the achievements of care experienced young people.

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APPENDIX 1 - FOSTER CARE SERVICES – ACTION PLAN V.1 20/02/2023			
AREA FOR CONSIDERATION/ DEVELOPMENT			
Communication and consultation with foster carers	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Forum for foster carers to feedback views to be established and held at regular intervals, like the recent summit.2. All Foster Carers to be afforded the opportunity to submit their views on what they need to support them to care for Glasgow's children.3. Foster Care representation to be sought for the Children's Champions' Board and The Promise Board for Glasgow.	Cathy Coll, Service Manager Joanne Bradley, Service Manager Susan Orr, Head of Service	June 2023
Support to foster carers	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A review of support to carers to be undertaken.2. Support Groups to be re-established face to face to allow carers to meet with each other to benefit from peer interaction.3. The Nurture Framework, the model of care for Glasgow, to be introduced and carers to be invited to participate in learning opportunities in relation to this.4. The opportunity to access short breaks to be reviewed in line with the aspirations of 'The Promise,' including recruitment and retention of short break carers.5. Support available to foster carers to enhance their health and wellbeing to be reviewed and updated.6. Guidance on 'good transitions' to be developed that benefits both carers and children.	Cathy Coll, Service Manager Joanne Bradley, Service Manager Susan Orr, Head of Service	October 2023

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AREA FOR CONSIDERATION/ DEVELOPMENT			
Support for Children and Young People	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.Supports available to children and young people in foster care to be explored, detailed and shared with carers.2. Practice guidance to be developed along with TaSS to improve the experience of both children and foster carers in relation to transport provision for family time/ school and nursery.3. A renewed focus on care planning and permanence for children in foster care to be established.	Cathy Coll, Service Manager Joanne Bradley, Service Manager Susan Orr, Head of Service	October 2023
Financial Considerations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Further discussions to take place with Scottish Government, COSLA and Social Work Scotland regarding the proposed national allowance for foster carers in Scotland.2. Consideration of increasing allowances for birthdays and holidays to be explored.	Susan Orr, Head of Service Mike Burns, ACO, Children's Services	April 2023

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