

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

19 OCTOBER 2021

FOSTER WALES LAUNCH

Reasons for the Report

1. This report provides the Committee with information in relation to the launch of Foster Wales, national partnership of local authority fostering services. The report aims to inform the Committee on the purpose of Foster Wales, how it will look and the impacts we expect to see from the project.

Background

2. The National Fostering Framework was established as part of a work programme, led by the Ministerial Advisory Group. The group aims to improve outcomes for looked after children and young people, and the people and families who care for them.
3. This programme identified the need for a national framework for Local Authority fostering services. A collaboration of fostering professionals from across Wales who share a common purpose to meet the evolving needs of foster children and the people who foster them. This is the National Fostering Framework.
4. The National Fostering Framework (NFF) leads many workstreams across Wales to achieve its goals, one of which was to develop an **All Wales Brand for Local Authority Fostering**. The NFF commissioned communications consultancy Narrative Edge to work with key stakeholders to deliver that workstream.
5. Between August 2018 and August 2019 Narrative Edge worked with a nominated and empowered working group representing Local Authority fostering services across Wales to co-create a brand proposition for Local Authority Fostering, that will support the recruitment and retention of more foster carers for the 22 Local Authorities across Wales. That brand has now been completed and approved and launched July 2021

6. Local Authority Fostering is facing a recruitment challenge; put simply, there are more children in need of foster placements than there are registered carers.
7. It is estimated that across Wales we need to recruit 550 new foster carers and families every year to keep up with the increase in numbers of children who need that care and support, whilst also replacing carers who retire or don't take on a new placement.
8. Local Authority Fostering Teams across Wales have decided to take action, to significantly increase the number and range of foster carers recruited directly to Local Authorities. This requires Local Authority fostering and recruitment teams across Wales to think bigger, to combine our efforts and expertise to create a significant national impact on awareness that fostering is an option, and that fostering with your Local Authority is the best option.
9. By working in this way, we will create an integrated approach on a bigger scale to make a national impact across Wales, without losing the advantages of our specific local expertise and community roles. This new collaboration is called Foster Wales.

Issues

10. Developing a new way of working collaboratively with all 22 other local authorities, embedding the regional marketing role, and making Foster Wales work for Foster Wales Cardiff. Ensuring we support the national campaign, while meeting our own specific recruitment needs.

Financial Implications

11. Any costs that have previously arisen or will arise in the future, in connection with the delivery of Foster Wales Cardiff have been, or will be, met from existing Council resources, supplemented by national resources. Where costs exceed resources available then action will need to be taken in order to ensure that costs are contained within the budgetary resources available.

Legal Implications

12. There are no legal implications arising from this report. If the creation of this new collaboration named "Foster Wales" results in any changes to the legal structure of the National Fostering Framework, consideration should be given to taking legal advice.

RECOMMENDATION

13. The Committee are recommended to note the Foster Wales update and to make any observations or comments

DEBORAH DRIFFIELD
Director, Children's Services
28 September 2021