

Foster Care Scrutiny

28th November 2023

Types of Care

- ❑ Kinship Care
- ❑ Foster Care – West Berkshire Council (in house)
- ❑ Foster Care – Independent Fostering Agency
- ❑ Residential Care – Childrens Homes
- ❑ Supported living - for some 16 & 17 year olds

Foster Care Recruitment process

- ❑ Initial enquiry - on line or by phone
- ❑ Contact for initial discussion/screening within 24hrs
- ❑ Social worker allocated for initial visit within 5 days-
assessment completed covering:
 - employment
 - education
 - availability
 - motivation to foster
 - household members
 - experience of caring for children
 - home environment
 - health
- ❑ Background Checks, references and medicals undertaken

Foster care approval

- ❑ Training- 'Skills to Foster'
- ❑ Social Worker completes comprehensive report and presents to foster panel
- ❑ Foster carer approved for:
 - A given number of children
 - An age range
- ❑ Annual reviews at panel for continued registration



Connected Persons carers (Kinship)

- ❑ Immediate approval for a 'connected person' as a foster carer for 16 weeks (can be extended to 24 weeks)
- ❑ Support and allowances equivalent to mainstream carers
- ❑ Social worker completes a connected persons assessment
- ❑ Presented to fostering panel for approval to care for a specific child

Data and trends – recruitment January 2023 to date

| | |
|---|---|
| Skills to Foster Course | 4 organised 3 held 1 cancelled due to low numbers prior to groups |
| Skills to Foster Attendees | 15 |
| Enquiries made | 55 |
| Initial visits made | 25 |
| Applications sent out | 23 |
| Application forms received following on Skills to Foster Course | 5 |
| Carers currently under assessment | 4 |
| Carers approved since January 2023 | 3 |
| Expected approvals by April 2024 depending on receipt of the application form | 13 |

Data and trends - retention

| Foster Carers | Oct 21 | Jan 22 | Apr 22 | Jul 22 | Oct 22 | Jan 23 | Apr 23 | Jul 23 | Oct 23 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Number of new foster carers recruited - YTD (commencing in April) | 11 | 14 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 11 | 1 | 8 | 13 |
| Number of foster carers that have left - YTD (commencing in April) | 8 | 13 | 2 | 14 | 17 | 19 | 0 | 2 | 6 |

Reasons for foster carers leaving:

- Lapsed approvals- No children cared for
- Resignations due to changes in circumstances
- Children remaining under a staying put arrangement
- Carers applying for an SGO

No foster carer moved to another LA or IFA during this period.

Regional Comparison Data

| | Any and all contact in 2022/2023 | Number that went to Stage 1 | Conversion % |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Reading | 340 | 11 | 3% |
| Slough | 126 | 10 | 8% |
| Southampton | 146 | 14 | 10% |
| Hampshire | 1067 | 110 | 10% |
| West Sussex | 237 | 25 | 11% |
| Oxfordshire | 215 | 24 | 11% |
| Portsmouth | 237 | 29 | 12% |
| Bracknell Forest | 36 | 5 | 14% |
| Wokingham | 76 | 11 | 14% |
| Surrey | 221 | 33 | 15% |
| West Berks | 51 | 8 | 16% |
| Brighton and Hove | 117 | 19 | 16% |
| Medway | 125 | 21 | 17% |
| Milton Keynes | 62 | 11 | 18% |
| Kent | 691 | 132 | 19% |
| Isle of Wight | 57 | 12 | 21% |
| East Sussex | 274 | 79 | 29% |
| RBWM | 18 | 6 | 33% |



Raising the profile

