

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Meeting of the Executive

11th July

Report from Director of Children and Families

For information

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Fostering Statement of Purpose

Forward Plan ref: SS/04/05/29

1.0 Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to obtain agreement from members of the Statement of Purpose for the Fostering Service in Brent. The document was updated for the recent Fostering Services Inspection in March 2005, carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000. The full detail of the Statement of Purpose is presented in Appendix 1 which accompanies this report.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That members agree the Statement of Purpose.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Where it is not possible to place a child within their own family or community, the Council will look to finding carers outside of the child's community through adoption, long term foster care, short term foster care or residential care to meet the child's needs for protection and stability. The Statement of Purpose relates to Brent's fostering service and has been prepared under the requirements of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

3.2 The overarching aim of the Brent Placements Service is to provide safe and appropriate placements for Brent's Looked After Children in an

environment that is nurturing and promotes their social, physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual development.

- 3.3 Brent Placements Service aims to take a child centred approach to finding placements for Looked After Children, ensuring that their welfare and safety is paramount. This includes actively seeking and taking into account the child's wishes and feelings in age appropriate ways.
- 3.4 Fostering is considered a positive option for all looked after children in Brent who are unable to live with their birth family. Short term or task focussed foster care is the placement of first choice when a child or young person first becomes looked after.
- 3.5 Long term foster care placements are the placements of choice when placement within the child's extended family (Kinship Placements) or adoption is not considered a viable option. The choice of long term fostering as a permanent placement is most likely to be made for children over ten years with strong family links or for children with complex needs.
- 3.6 The Fostering Statement of Purpose was made available to the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) for the purposes of a recent inspection of the fostering service. The inspection report is still in draft but the statement of purpose has met the requirements of Standard 1 of the National Minimum Standards and Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Weekly allowances are paid to task-centered, long term and kinship foster carers. Adopting this Statement of Purpose will not incur any additional costs. However, 2005-06 costs are outlined in the table below:

Age Band	Task-centered Fostering	Long-term Fostering	Kinship Fostering
0-4 years	£208.49	£136.57	£136.57
5-10 years	£239.76	£155.71	£155.71
11-15 years	£260.61	£193.90	£193.90
16+ years	£302.31	£247.06	£247.06

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Regulation 3 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 state that the Local Authority must compile a statement of purpose which must set out the aims and objectives of the fostering service and the services

and facilities which are to be provided by the fostering service. The statement of purpose must be available for inspection by certain prescribed persons e.g. foster parents, parents of fostered children and children themselves. There is also a requirement to keep the statement of purpose under review.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 Brent Children's Services is committed to promoting diversity and to ensuring that all children and families have access to services in the Borough. This includes access to the specialist placements service for children when they can no longer be cared for by their own family.
- 6.2 The assessment of the Statement of Purpose is that it is not discriminatory in itself, but the following observations are important to note.
- 6.3 Out of the 388 Looked After Children, the highest proportion (51%) are in the ethnic group of Black, that is, African Caribbean, Black African and Black other. This compares with only 26.4% of all children in Brent from the same ethnic groups. Children in this category are therefore over-represented in the looked after population.
- 6.4 Brent Placements Service aims to value a child's cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic background and not discriminate against any aspect of their identity. It does this by applying careful matching criteria when making a placement.
- 6.5 The Inspector found that the Fostering Service exceeded the standard regarding ensuring that children and young people and their families are provided with foster care services which value diversity and promote equality.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications

- 7.1 There are no staffing implications arising from the Fostering Statement of Purpose.

Background Papers

Fostering Services Regulations 2002

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