

REPORT TO:	Corporate Parenting Panel 6th March 2019
SUBJECT:	Recruitment and Deregistration of Foster Carers
LEAD OFFICER:	Robert Henderson, Executive Director for Children, Families and Education Nick Pendry, Director of Early Help and Children’s Social Care
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Alisa Flemming, Lead Member for Children, Young People and Learning
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:	
This supports Croydon’s Corporate Plan for “our children and young people to thrive and reach their full potential” in accordance with its statutory duty under the Children Act 1989.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	
Although it has no direct financial implications, the delivery of the plan will promote efficient use of Council resources.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Corporate Parenting Panel to note the report which is an update on our recruitment of foster carers and provide details of foster carer deregistration’s since April 2019.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is to notify panel of progress in our recruitment and deregistration of foster carers.

3. DETAIL OF YOUR REPORT

Recruitment of Foster Carers

The Recruitment of Foster Carers is a statutory task of the Council’s duty to ensure the availability of good quality foster homes for children in care. Due to the retirement, resignation and de-registration of foster carers, there is constant movement in the numbers of registered households and placements available for looked after children. The ongoing recruitment of new foster carers is essential to ensure there the Council is able to meet its sufficiency duty.

In June 2015, the Council commissioned the recruitment of foster carers to an independent provider, Network Recruitment Solutions (NRS) for 3 years. This contract ended on 31st October 2018 during which a total of 54 foster carers were recruited. The contract target was not achieved in full.

The Council made the decision not to renew the contract with NRS. On 1st November 2018, the Council commissioned Coram I for two years to deliver its recruitment of foster carers function.

Coram I has a proven track record in both successful recruitment of new foster carers and the supporting local authorities to build internal teams. The terms of the contract states that the first year is devoted to the recruitment of 30 Foster Carers while the second year is for building an in-house Fostering Recruitment Team. Coram's operation is based in the Fostering Service in Bernard Wetherill House with a close working relationship with the fostering service to enable a smooth transition for new carers from the assessment to registered carer stage. The first applicant recruited by Coram is scheduled to be presented to the Fostering Panel on 5th March 2019.

Coram staff have access to Croydon CRS, for the recruitment of carers function only.

Early indications demonstrate interest in the new recruitment materials with follow up processes in place.

Coram attended Croydon Foster Carers Association monthly forum on 4th February 2019 and they offered a £250 voucher to anyone who recommends an applicant.

In January, Coram received 35 enquiries, same as November and December combined. 69% of all enquiries are received by telephone. 16% of all enquiries received have been referrals from Croydon foster carers.

Monthly performance data will be supplied by Coram I to the Head of Service for Corporate Parenting, the Fostering Service Manager and the Commissioning Contract Manager. Monthly monitoring meetings are scheduled and formal contract monitoring meetings are held quarterly, with senior representation from Coram and the Head of Service for Corporate Parenting, the Fostering Service Manager and the Commissioning Contract Manager

Coram are working with Croydon's marketing and communication team to ensure good quality marketing materials, published information and the website provide good quality information for people wanting to know more about fostering for Croydon.

De Registration of Foster Carers

From April 2018 to date, a total of 31 fostering households were deregistered for variety of reasons detailed in the table below:

	Change in foster family circumstances	Foster care granted SGO	Health Reason	Connected foster carers child turned 18	Allegations	Resignation	Foster to Adopt	Family Breakdown	Career /FTE Employment	Housing	Moved to IFA
Households	5	6	2	4	2	3	2	2	2	2	1

4. CONSULTATION

N/A

5. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

There are no financial implications.

6. FUTURE SAVINGS/EFFICIENCIES

As per the Council's Sufficiency Plan, it is hoped that the ongoing and increasing use of in-house foster carers will support the cost effective use of council resources.

7. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

N/A

8. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

N/A

CONTACT OFFICER: Spencer Duvwiama, Service Manager, Fostering Service.

APPENDICES: None