

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

FOSTERING FORTNIGHT ACTIVITIES 16 TO 29 MAY 2011

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the North Lincolnshire activities and outcomes of Fostering Fortnight 16-29 May 2011.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 North Lincolnshire actively participates in the Annual National Awareness Campaign aimed at raising the profile of fostering and to recruit more foster carers. The strap line for 2011 was 'Time to Care'.
- 2.2 The Fostering Network estimates that there is a need for 10,000 more foster carers in the UK. The Council has an ambitious target to secure 30 new fostering placements by 2013 based on the premise that where possible children are cared for within a family setting.
- 2.3 To support this recruitment drive the Council have committed a further £25,000 in 2011. This will support the assessment, approval and support process for new foster carers.
- 2.4 To promote Fostering Fortnight the North Lincolnshire Fostering Team developed a local programme of promotional activities. This covered the widest aspect of the foster carer roles. All recruitment activities included materials regarding Fostering including mainstream foster carers the Butterflies Short Breaks Scheme for disabled children, Supported Lodgings for children and young people over 16 and awareness raising about private fostering.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Events during the fortnight were supported by Corporate Parents from across the Council. This included the use of Council facilities - road show events were set up at Epworth Leisure Centre, 20/21 Visual Arts Centre, Water's Edge Centre in Barton and Brigg Farmers Market with staff and existing foster carers available to talk to interested members of the public.

- 3.2 There was a one council approach to supporting the recruitment of foster carers with officers working together to increase awareness. An article was published in the People's Newsletter that went to all staff in with the April salary advice, informing the council employees of Fostering Fortnight and the venues for the road shows. Fostering Fortnight was highlighted in the council wide weekly messages for all North Lincolnshire employees to access.
- 3.3 Pop up banners were situated at Hewson House and The Angel Courtyard, Brigg. Fostering posters and information were rotated on the LCD screens at Learning Development Centre and Pittwood House, Scunthorpe.
- 3.4 The Councils Communication Team created a 'virtual event' to raise awareness of Fostering Fortnight. This commenced on 1st May 2011 and ended on 31 May 2011. A hyperlink to North Lincolnshire Council's website's fostering information page was created so people could gather information and contact the Family Placement's Recruitment Officer directly.
- 3.5 Four foster carers shared their views on fostering in the local press. Their aim to inform the public on the role of a foster carer and the rewards it can offer. The local press also signposted people to the road show events.
- 3.6 One North Lincolnshire foster carer wrote an article for the National Fostering Network's website published during Fostering Fortnight. The article was about 'what's it like to be a foster carer with a teenage family of your own'.
- 3.7 A poster campaign took place during Foster Care Fortnight across North Lincolnshire, which included displays and posters in public areas and venues frequented by families.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 The campaign was a success, so far the Fostering Fortnight campaign, has resulted in:
 - **13** households having enquired in person at the road show events as a direct result of seeing the adverts; and
 - **10** households having made telephone/email enquires as a result of the promotional material.
- 4.2 Following on from the success of Fostering Fortnight additional road shows were planned:
 - Armed Forces Day on 26 June 2011,
 - The Podium, Scunthorpe Market on 8 July 2011, and
 - Water Rescue Day at Seven Lakes, Crowle, 9 July 2011

As a result of the Armed Forces Day event a further 23 information packs were distributed to people interested in fostering.

4.3 The outcomes of the activities during Fostering Fortnight, which were supported by Corporate Parents, will help towards North Lincolnshire's target to secure more fostering placements over the next 2 years.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 All activities, events and resources were from within existing budgets.

5.2 The Council committed a further £25,000 to ensure that the service has capacity to assess, approve and support foster carers.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 – CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 None

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 Foster carers and children are integral to the publicity, recruitment and training of foster carers.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That Cabinet accepts the information contained within the report.

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Date: 1 July 2011

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: Nil