

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

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| DECISION MAKER: | <b>Cllr Chris Watt, Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b>    | EXECUTIVE FWD PLAN NUMBER |
| DECISION DATE:  | <b>On or after 20<sup>th</sup> November 2010</b>                  | <b>E2198</b>              |
| TITLE:          | <b>Response to Ofsted Inspection of Fostering Services (2010)</b> |                           |
| WARD:           | <b>All</b>  |                           |

### AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

#### List of attachments to this report:

1. Inspection Report September 2010 (Appendix 1)
2. Bath and North East Somerset Council's action plan to respond to the findings of the Inspection (Appendix 2)

## 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report presents the action plan compiled by the Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service to respond to the statutory requirements and good practice recommendations reported in the Ofsted Inspection announced inspection of Bath and North East Somerset Council's Fostering Service, which took place during 13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Endorse the action plan and instruct the Divisional Director Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service to report on its implementation.
- 2.2 Note that the Inspection Report is now a public document.

### **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The Fostering Services are provided within existing resources.

### **4 THE REPORT**

4.1 The Council has duties under the Children Act 1989 to provide services to children in need, including those in need of protection, and to looked after children. The Council has a duty to provide accommodation for all looked after children. This duty to care for looked after is primarily fulfilled in Bath and North East Somerset through the provision of foster home placements. Approximately 80% of our looked after children are cared for within family placements – the majority of these by foster carers registered with the Council.

4.2 Bath and North East Somerset's Fostering Service is provided by and is the primary responsibility of the Family Placement Team within the Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service of the Children's Service. All other child care teams contribute to the provision of the fostering service, as do other Council Services and elected members through their roles as corporate parents.

4.3 Bath and North East Somerset's Fostering Service is provided in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, the Care Standards Act 2000, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the Children Act 1989 as amended.

4.4 The Fostering Services Regulations 2002 are secondary legislation, with which a service provider must comply. Service providers are expected to fully comply with the National Minimum Standards. The National Minimum Standards form the basis for judgements by Ofsted in relation to local authority fostering services regarding notices to the local authority and reports to the Secretary of State under Section 47 of the Care Standards Act 2000.

4.5 The previous Ofsted inspection of our Fostering Service was undertaken in December 2007 and the Service was judged to be Outstanding.

4.6 The purpose of the inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standards of the Fostering Service provided by the Council. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000. The inspection report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The report details judgements in respect of how the Service helps children and young people to achieve the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes – being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and achieving economic well being – and a judgement about the organisation of the Service.

4.7 Ofsted uses the following inspection judgements:-

- Outstanding - this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality.
- Good - this aspect of the provision is strong
- Satisfactory - this aspect of the provision is sound
- Inadequate - this aspect of the provision is not good enough

4.8 The judgments in respect of the Council's Fostering Service are:-

- Overall rating - outstanding
- Helping children to be healthy - outstanding
- Protecting children from harm and neglect and helping them stay safe - outstanding

- Helping children to achieve well and enjoy what they do - outstanding
- Making a positive contribution - outstanding
- Achieving economic well being - outstanding
- Organisation of the Service - outstanding

4.9 The Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service has compiled an action plan to respond to the recommendations to secure further improvements. This has been submitted to the Ofsted. It is not included in the final report but will be reviewed at the next Ofsted inspection. This action plan is attached as Appendix 2.

4.10 The Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service will also take steps to ensure that the Fostering Service will build upon the improvements and maintain the outstanding practice noted in the Inspection Report.

## 5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation has taken place with staff in the Fostering Service and across the Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service to inform the compilation of the action plan.

5.2 All foster carers will be provided with a written briefing about the Inspection and action plan.

5.3 The Inspection Report is a public document and will be made available where applicable to service users, prospective service users, carers, staff, children, parents of children, placing authorities and other interested parties.

5.4 The Inspection Report will be placed on the Council Information Service Website.

5.5 The Trades Unions were sent a copy of the report on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

## 6 RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issues and recommendations has been undertaken in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

## 7 RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

7.1 This represents good practice and demonstrates the Council's implementation of its corporate parenting responsibilities.

## 8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 None. These inspections take place every three years and it is important to implement actions relating to any findings or good practice recommendation that arise.

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| <b>Background papers</b> |  |