

New Beginnings Event held on 19 January 2017

Purpose of the report and Summary

The purpose of the report is to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with information regarding the recent New Beginnings event held by Lancashire County Council (LCC) Fostering and Adoption Service.

Key Information for Board Members

Children profiled

Approximately 35 children's profiles were made available at the event. Lancashire profiled 13 children and this was made up of three sibling groups of three, one sibling group of two and two single children both of whom were boys. The profile of the children featured were all children who were likely to be waiting longer given they were siblings of differing age range and boys all of whom tend to wait longer.

Adopters

In total approximately 45 families were invited; 23 of these were Lancashire approved families.

Outcomes

A Lancashire family who were initially considering adopting a sibling group of two attended the event, which enabled discussions with the social worker for a sibling group of three. This has now progressed to a formal link and we are pursuing the placement of these children under Foster to Adopt Regulations. This will enable the children to be placed with the adopters prior to the linking being formally agreed at adoption panel which will be early May 2017.

Whilst only one match has been achieved from this event, as a service we feel the event was successful on many fronts; for a number of Lancashire adopters it was the first time they had attended such an event. It therefore gave them the confidence to attend other such events, they were able to network with other families in similar situation to themselves. For some families it was the first time they had seen children profiled in this way and therefore gave them a greater insight into the types of children who were waiting to be adopted. Also, for a number of families who only thought of adopting one child, it has opened their mind to considering adopting siblings.

The feedback from the families who attended was extremely positive.

In future years, Lancashire hopes to hold two such events a year. Our next event is planned to take place in September 2017.

Background

On the 19 January 2017, Lancashire County Council hosted a New Beginnings Event. The event was arranged with a focus on the 'harder to place children'. Whilst the event was arranged by Lancashire, it was extended to our colleagues from other North West Local Authorities and adoption agencies. In attendance were colleagues from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Bolton Council, Blackpool Borough Council, Tameside Council and Caritas Care. All the Authorities profiled children and Caritas Care invited a few of their families.

The event was opened by County Councillor Prynne, chair of the Corporate Parenting Board who spoke about the need to avoid delays for children and if families could open their minds to considering Fostering for Adoption/concurrency as an option, this would allow children to be placed with adopters at a much earlier stage thus ensuring the reduction of fracture attachments and ensure greater stability.

An adoptive parent who had adopted one child and was in the process of adopting the sibling gave very inspiring talk about her experience of adopting children whose matching consideration was different from what she originally thought she could consider.

Decisions required

No decisions are required. This paper is for note and information only.

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