



Edward Timpson MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

2 May 2013

Dear Directors of Children's Services,

Foster carer recruitment and retention

I am writing to draw your attention to an exciting and innovative project that aims to provide new insight into the foster carer population and to help support local authorities to attract a broader range of people to fostering.


The Government is committed to supporting local authorities to recruit and retain the best foster carers to look after some of society's most vulnerable children. We have awarded a contract to the Fostering Network to develop materials to support local foster carer recruitment and to provide bespoke support for 25 local authorities between now and March 2015.

The Fostering Network is working with consultancy iMPower to deliver this work which will start with two surveys:

- a **benchmarking survey** which will gather and analyse recruitment data from local authorities, including data on enquiries and approvals. Local authorities will then be able to compare their performance against national benchmarks and identify areas for improvement.
- a **Values Modes survey** which will increase understanding of the motivations of the foster carer population in England. This will increase understanding of how to recruit carers for harder to place children and reach out to new foster carers.

I urge you to respond to the benchmarking survey, the greater the response rate the greater the value of the data. The Fostering Network will contact foster carers directly about the Value Modes survey, but please do encourage your foster carers to participate. The results of the surveys can be used by local authorities across the country and will inform the bespoke 1:1 support that the Fostering Network will provide for local authorities during 2013-15.

I know from my own family's experience that fostering can transform young lives for the better. I will be doing what I can to raise awareness of fostering during Foster Care Fortnight. I'm sure that you are all busy preparing for this important event too – I wish you every success.

Yours sincerely,


Edward Timpson MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families