

ED2. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS BY A CABINET MEMBER OR AN OFFICER

A. Report Title: Independent Foster Care Provision - Eastern Region Rolling Select List	
B. Report Author(s): Edward Davidge Contracts Manager Children's Commissioning Team	Tel: 01375-652814 E-mail: edavidge@thurrock.gov.uk
C. Decision Maker: Carmel Littleton	
D. Position held: Director of Children's Services	
E. Key decision: Key	F. Delegation ref: Item 18 – 0110412 Dated 13 th June 2012.
G. Is the decision urgent? No	
H. If yes, state why.	

I. DECISION (strike out whichever does not apply) : 1. I agree the recommendations in the attached report for the reasons given in the report; OR 2. *My decision is: To award Rolling Select List Contracts to the providers identified in the attached Appendix which have satisfied the Eastern Region Foster Care Rolling Select List Tendering process organised by Cambridge County Council, Essex County Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Peterborough City Council, Suffolk County Council and Thurrock Council. *The reason for my decision is: To ensure that there are sufficient quality foster care placements available at a pre-agreed price when the In-House Foster Care can not make a suitable match. * Continue overleaf or on an additional sheet if necessary.	
Signed: <i>C Littleton</i>	Date: <i>8/4/13</i>

URGENCY

Democratic Services will arrange for the completion of the following:

J. I confirm that in my opinion a decision on this matter is urgent and cannot reasonably be delayed:

Signed:

Date:

To be completed by Democratic Services

Date decision received by Dem. Services: Click This Box Once - Enter The Date On Which The Decision Was Received	Date decision published: Click This Box Once - Enter The Date The Decision Is To Be Published
Implementation date: Click This Box Once - Enter The Date Upon Which The Decision Is To Be Implemented	
Relevant O & S Committee: Click This Box Once - Type The Relevant O&S Committee The Decision Would Come Under	

Eastern Region Foster Care Rolling Select List

List of Independent Foster Care Providers in each Need Group to be awarded a Rolling Select List contract.

Ranked according to Tender Scores.

Name of Provider	Score
Limited Support	
Tier 1 (15%)	
Tier 2 (25%)	
Tier 3 (60%)	
Standard Support	
Tier 1 (15%)	
Tier 2 (25%)	
Tier 3 (60%)	
Intensive Support	
Tier 1 (15%)	
Tier 2 (25%)	
Tier 3 (60%)	

Parent and Baby	

Briefing Note

Eastern Region Foster Care Rolling Select List

The Eastern Region Foster Care Rolling Select List (ER6) tender process has now been completed with 29 Independent Foster Care Providers (IFPs) successfully passing the Select List Tender Process. This is an increase in the number of providers over the previous Foster Care agreement – ER5.

An ED2 form is attached to this brief. As this is a Select List, the normal 10 day "Standstill" process does not apply.

These IFPs will be placed into three Tiers shortly which, will be reassessed according to their price, performance and availability of foster carers in our area at regular intervals.

Placements made under this agreement will be fixed for an initial period of four (4) years, with no fee increases during this period, and like the previous ER5 agreement the fee will include Home to School mileage (up to 20 miles in one direction) and replacement clothing, including school uniforms.

There are a further 22 IFPs that did not fully meet the Minimum Standards of the Select List Tender Process and the ER6 Steering Group will be working with these providers to ensure that they are able to satisfy the Standards by the next entry / review date of the 1st October 2013. There is no issue with retaining placements with these unsuccessful IFPs as the meeting of the Minimum Standards relates to the Select List Tender process not OFSTED requirements.

The unsuccessful IFPs are being advised by Suffolk County Council and these IFPs will be allocated to members of the ER6 Steering Group to mentor and to work with to ensure they can join the Select List on the 1st October 2013.

The ER6 Steering Group consists of Commissioning and Procurement Officers from Cambridge County Council, Essex County Council (Legal Lead), Hertfordshire County Council, Peterborough City Council, Suffolk County Council (Tender Lead) and Thurrock Council.

Making Placements.

During the first six to nine months of the contract it is expected that placements will be made in all the Tiers and possibly with IFPs that are currently not part of the Select List. As the contract matures, and more Foster Carers are recruited, more placements will be made in the higher Tiers and less placements made outside the contract.

They may always be requirements to place outside this agreement where a match can not be found. In these circumstances Corporate Procurement Forms will be required and the National Foster Care Contract will need to be issued.

A regular "Rogue" Spend analysis will be undertaken to review the spend outside of this agreement.

Review Points

As this is a Select List, new IFPs will be able to join the Select List at regular intervals, the first of which will be the 1st October 2013 then at intervals of every twelve months.

At these review points the Council will advise the IFPs details of placements made and the IFPS will advise the number of new carers available in our area, their success rate and they will have the opportunity of reviewing their fees.

Once details of the foster carer availability, outcomes and fees are known, the Tiers will be reassessed and IFPs may move up or down the Tiers.

Benefits of the Tiering System.

One criticism of the previous ER5 agreement was the lack of a direct relationship with Local Authorities. This criticism has been accepted and a Contract Manager for the Select List will not be appointed. Instead, each participation LA will be responsible for their own relationships with providers.

As part of this new, closer, relationship IFPs in the Top Tier will have regular contact with the Placing LAs which will include discussions with the Foster Care Manager and the placing teams.

New Placement opportunities will be offered to those IFPs in the Top Tier first, should they be unable to make a match then the opportunity will be offered to the second Tier, and if they can't match the third Tier. Only when all the IFPs have been unable to make a match would it be placed outside the contract.

It is envisaged that the Tiering system should facilitate the increased availability of Foster Carers in our area and maintain keen pricing as IFPs seek to retain / obtain Top Tier status.

Future Activities of the Steering Group

A providers event will be held with the successful IFPs in Ipswich on Monday 29th April 2013.

Unsuccessful IFPs will be mentored by allocated ER6 Steering Group members to enable them to join the Select List on the 1st October 2013.

Regular quarterly meetings of the Steering Group will take place to discuss the operation of the Select List. These meetings will be hosted by the participating LAs on a rotating basis.

Suffolk County Council will issue a regular newsletter with contributions from all the participating LAs about Foster Care needs, successes and any changes to the review process and documents.

An information Sharing Protocol is to be produced.

The Steering Group will also develop a system to regularly monitor the performance of the IFPs and the quality of the service. Participating LAs will be allocated IFPs to monitor with their reports shared with the other participating LAs and, subject to agreement, recorded on the CCRAAG Data Base.

A meeting is being arranged with Mr Harvey Gallagher of the National Association of Fostering Providers, to discuss issues raised. However, the Association is not party to the agreement and the discussions will therefore concentrate on general issues and lessons learnt during the Select List Tender process.

Edward Davidge
Contracts Manager
Children's Commissioning Team
2nd April 2013