

18 July 2023		ITEM: 8
Corporate Parenting Committee		
Fostering and Adoption Annual Panel Report 2022-2023		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key decision	
Report of: Liz Shields – Service Manager Peter Turner – Panel Advisor		
Accountable Assistant Director: Janet Simon –Assistant Director Children’s Social Care and Early Help		
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy – Corporate Director of Children’s Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

The Thurrock Fostering and Adoption Panel provides a statutory function providing recommendations on

- The suitability of persons wishing to foster, including friends and family members of a child in care
- The continued suitability of those already approved to foster, including where there have been serious allegations or standards of care issues
- The suitability of persons wishing to adopt a child subject to a Placement Order
- The suitability of a match between a child subject to a Placement Order should be matched to a particular set of approved adopters
- Other areas are required by law

The Panel is independently chaired and all members have relevant experience in Fostering, Adoption and Children’s services. The panel is supported by a professional advisor. The attached report is the report of the Independent Chair and reflects the work of the panel

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 That the Members of the Committee review the report of the Independent Chair of the Thurrock Fostering and Adoption panel.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Fostering and Adoption Annual Panel Report provides an overview of the work of the panel through the year. As noted above the Fostering and Adoption Panel has a range of duties under law in relation to the approval of adopters and foster carers. It also has certain duties to children who are relinquished for adoption or who are to be placed for adoption. The Panel makes recommendation to the 'Agency Decision Maker' (ADM) on each case and the ADM then takes the final decision.
- 2.2 The Fostering and Adoption Panel meets every other week and is composed of a wide range of panel members who have relevant experience. There is a central list which allows Panel Members to be selected for each panel according to the needs of the cases presented and the legal requirements. Panel receives detailed documentation for each case and applicants are invited to attend for their case to be heard. The relevant social worker attends for each case and the Panel is supported by a professional advisor,
- 2.3 The Fostering and Adoption Panel provides vital independent oversight of the work of the service and feedback is provided on each case. The panel and the Chair are able to escalate any issues to the Strategic Lead or Assistant Director for Children's Services. Thematic learning and areas for improvement are discussed in quarterly meetings between the Chair and the Agency decision maker. Each panel member receives training and an appraisal. References and checks are made and renewed for each panel member.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Thurrock's Fostering and Adoption Annual Panel Report 2022-2023 is attached.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 Members of the Committee invited to review the report of the independent Chair and make comment

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 None

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 None

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

Funding is provided through Children Services annual budget.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal (Social Care and Education)

There are no legal implications to this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project monitoring Office

The Fostering and Adoption Panel is committed to practice which promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, and will carry out its duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and related Codes of Practice and Anti-discriminatory policy. Panel members are from diverse backgrounds and heritage to reflect the characteristics of our Looked After Children as well as our foster carers and adopters. Thurrock Council welcomes applications from prospective carers irrespective of characteristics including age, sex, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation and disability.

All information regarding Community Equality Impact Assessments can be found here: <https://intranet.thurrock.gov.uk/services/diversity-and-equality/ceia/>

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e., Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children

None

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

9. Appendices to the report

Appendix 1 - Thurrock Fostering and Adoption Annual Panel Report 2022-2023

Report Author:

Peter Turner – Panel Advisor

Liz Shields – Service Manager