

Committee: **Corporate Parenting Panel**
Date: **2 May 2014**
By: **Acting Director of Children's Services**
Title of Report: **Annual Report of the East Sussex Foster Care Association**
Purpose of Report: **To inform the panel of the Annual Report of the ESFCA**

Recommendation: The panel is recommended to note the Annual Report

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations of the report.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The Annual Report of the East Sussex Foster Care Association is attached at Appendix 1.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to note the contents of the report.

LIZ RUGG
Acting Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Steve Hunt - Operations Manager, Fostering Team (01323 747402)

Local Members: All
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Report to Corporate Parenting Panel

Overview of role, actions and aspirations

East Sussex Foster Care Association is a registered charity and limited company registered with both the Charity Commission and Companies House. The charity was established and registered in 1993 and is overseen and directed by a Board of Trustees that is currently comprised of nine Foster Carers. All Trustees discharge their responsibilities on a voluntary basis (none are in receipt of any emoluments, nor have any expenses been claimed). We have two part time members of staff engaged in vital fund raising and administrative support roles whose actions are directed by Trustees at our regular monthly meetings. All necessary insurances to protect the charity are in place and I am pleased to advise that our financial position is both secure and improving. Our incoming resources for the financial year ended 31st March 2014 (whilst yet to be finalised by our independent accountants) will definitely exceed the £53k we secured in 2012 (we anticipate final figures of approximately £60k) which affords Trustees the opportunity to serve our stakeholders through a myriad of provisions.

Our raison d'être remains as improving life experiences, opportunities and outcomes for the most vulnerable in society, being the children in the special care of our members. We remain independent of Children's Services with a mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship, whereby shared aims and aspirations are fulfilled through our different roles and autonomous actions.

We have served the needs of our stakeholders ie foster carers, children in their care and the birth/adopted/special guardianship order children of carers over the past year through varied actions and events which include;

- Three adventure weekends at PGL for children in care involving 65 children
- One adventure weekend at PGL for children who foster involving 28 children
- Christmas pantomime in Eastbourne attended by 200 of our stakeholders
- Christmas party for children in care and children who foster attended by 120 children
- Conference staged at Battle to enhance the professional development of foster carers attended by 90 carers
- Wild camping weekend at Battle attended by 12 children who foster

- The staging of a 20th anniversary ball which was hosted by our patron, Jayne Torvill, which raised over £3,000 on the night
- Facilitation of surgeries with Operational Managers for foster carers to address and resolve concerns
- Provision of suitcases for children entering care
- Provision of laptop computers for children in care
- In addition we have undertaken numerous fund raising events including the Arlington Bluebell Walk, Eastbourne Beer Festival, Eastbourne Carnival, a quiz night and numerous bag-packing events. We have also secured funding from a number of Trusts and Grant-making bodies including Children In Need, the Big Lottery, The Ernest Kleinwort Trust and Starr Foundation.

Our plans and aspirations for the current year include;

- The staging of a conference on May 21st where our guest speaker, Dr Margot Sunderland will address an audience of foster carers, adopters, social workers, educational professional, psychologists and others concerned with the care of vulnerable children. The event will take place at East Sussex National Golf Course, Uckfield.
- The delivery of four non residential adventure days at PGL to meet the needs of those children in care who are unable/unwilling to attend for overnight stays.
- A residential weekend at a Field Studies Council venue near Dorking, to allow children in care to learn more about the natural world.
- Establishing a Performing Arts Project for children in care and children who foster to attend together.
- A family forest day to allow foster carers, children in care and children who foster to spend quality time together.
- Two activity days for children in care with disabilities and their foster carers at Hindleap Warren.
- A repeat performance of all popular perennial activities including Christmas party, pantomime, day trips et al.

In now considering our funding sources we secure support from BBC Children in Need and various other charitable trusts which account for a significant part of our funding.

However I wish to formally acknowledge our sincere appreciation of the support we continue to receive from Children's Services executive management. This has comprised the allocation of £20k to defray our administrative costs together with the provision of office facilities. This essentially allows us to function and devote our time to critical fund raising and the staging of events as above. I also wish to acknowledge the support we have received over the past year from Lewes Soroptomists. The Soroptomists elected to support us through a Christmas event staged at Lewes town hall and provided extensive gifts for both Foster Carers and the children in our care. Their support has proved to be particularly memorable given the innovation and careful thought they provided.

Finally, the Trustees will be undertaking an extensive review of our strategy over the coming months to resolve how best we can continue to meet the needs of those that we serve. We adopt the maxim of 'there is always a better way of doing things', and my fellow Trustees will devote time and careful thought to how we should evolve as an organisation in the future.

In conclusion, I remain very optimistic for our future and our ability to meet the needs of our stakeholders through our partnership with Children's Services and complimentary roles.

Fred Livings

Chair

East Sussex Foster Care Association

