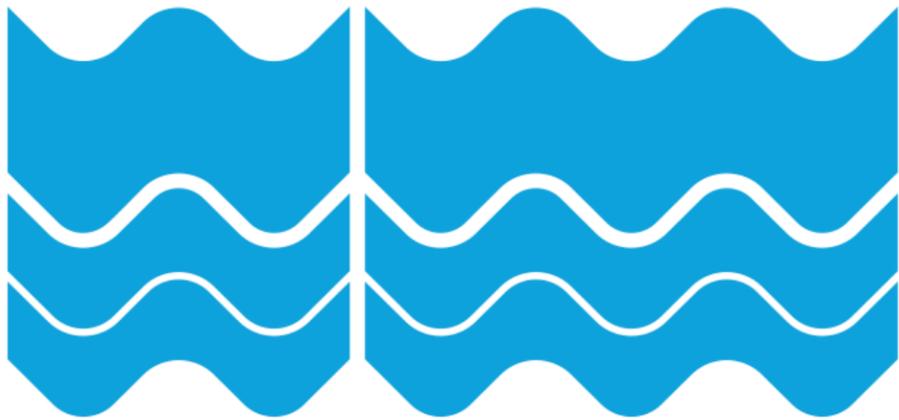




East Sussex
County Council



**East Sussex Fostering Services
Annual Progress Report
2019/20**

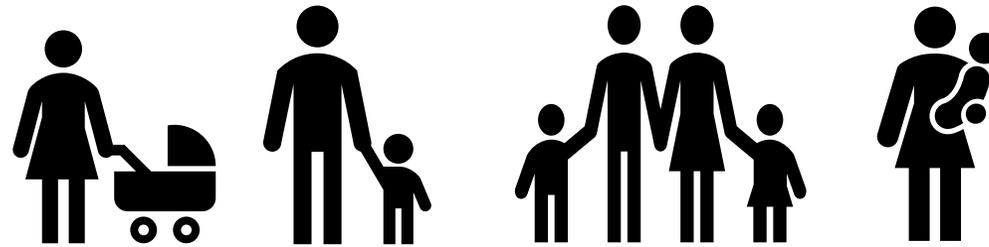
Appendix 1.

Adrian Sewell, Operations Manager

Fostering Duty

381 “in-house” placements were made during 2019/20

- The data below is a snapshot as of 31st March 2020.



Statistics	2018-2019	2019-2020
Matching referrals completed	532	553
Agency placements	99	77
In-house placements	385	381
Not required	121	95

Fostering Duty During Covid-19

Placement finding during Covid-19 period

- Figures drawn from the commencement of lockdown (21st March 2020 to 17th June 2020).
 - **122** Matching referrals' completed,
 - **32** Matching referrals were worked on and then not required.
 - **68** new “in house” placements identified.
- The challenge of finding appropriate placements was exacerbated by a number of placement disruptions of children with complex needs.
- The number of respite referrals greatly reduced due to children remaining in their substantive placement throughout lockdown.
- The fostering service received a significant increase in the number of parent and child referrals due to Covid lockdown compromising contact arrangements between babies and their parents.

Fostering Recruitment and Retention

- There were 22 foster households approved during 2019/20
- The conversions rates have continued to increase annually.
- The fostering service's recruitment strategy and advertising has been successful in targeting potential foster carers.
- The fostering service experienced a small increase in enquiries compared to 2018-19.
- At the close of 2019/20, the fostering service had 254 approved foster homes and 451 approved foster carers.
- All foster carer households have a supervising social worker who provide intensive support.

Retention	Households		
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Approvals ending Retirement	22	10	8
Approvals ending Change in circumstances	9	3	9
Approvals ending Terminated at panel	1	4	3

Recruitment	Households		
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Enquiries	346	266	268
Screening calls	157	118	114
Initial visits	86	70	71
Skills to foster training (STF)	43	29	21
Applications for assessment	31	35	35
Closed	5	3	7
Withdrew	7	11	6
Total allocated but did not progress	12	14	13
Approvals	19	21	22
Placements	37	36	39
Conversion rate Enquiry to approval	5.5%	7.9%	8.2%
Conversion rate Screening call to approval	12%	17.8%	19.2%
Conversion rate Initial visit to approval	22%	30%	31%

Fostering Recruitment:

Transfer of foster carers to East Sussex Fostering Service

- There were **3** households that transferred to the East Sussex Fostering Service during 2019/20.
- These transfers resulted in significant income and savings for the fostering service.
- The fostering service has reviewed the transfer process so it is a shorter, expedient process with prompt timescales.

Connected, Family and Friend Foster Carers

- The fostering service has seen an increasing number of assessments of connected family and friend foster carers.
- There were **5** connected households approved during 2019/20.
- The fostering service offered advice regarding fostering applications on **16** connected carer cases.
- Although these assessments secured **5** appropriate placements for **7** children, it does not add to the fostering service's mainstream foster carer pool or give the duty team any further placement capacity.
- In 2020/21, the fostering service will be introducing an information leaflet to advise about the respective benefits of fostering and special guardianship orders, to reduce the number of cases the service is involved in at the early stages.



Transfer Approvals		
2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
1	2	3

Connected Approvals		
2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
0	1	5

Foster Carer Training

566 Foster carers accessed “in-house” training during 2019/20

Since April 2019, training has continued to be offered to foster carers, including a range from mandatory courses to more individualised bespoke training to support placement stability. There have been a number of new courses specific to mental health awareness and the promotion of emotional well-being, including courses for the foster carers themselves, particularly around mindfulness.

7 foster carers commenced their Level 3 Diploma in the children’s workforce qualifications.

566 foster carers accessed in-house training during 2019/20.

Training during the Covid-19 Period

Training has adapted during the current times and continues to offer carers a full range of courses through many different online mediums. All carers have the opportunity to download an eBook on Therapeutic parenting and can now access ‘Live’ training events. There are weekly resources sent out to foster carers, particularly on internet safety, in recognition of the increased usage and added risks.



New Courses offered during 2019/20

- Health matters
- Mindfulness and the art of meditation practice
- Anxiety & PTSD
- Mental health matters
- The risks and rewards of online and social media contact with birth families
- Safe practice on the internet, keeping yourself safe
- Lego therapy
- Inclusive play
- Fostering for all ages - 6 week course



Supported Lodgings:

Supported Lodgings:

Approvals

- There were **11** supported lodgings households approved during 19/20 offering **14** placements.
- **NET gain of +3 Supported Lodgings households.**

Placements

- **61** young people were placed with supported lodgings providers during 19/20.

Young people placed:

- **57** Looked After Children (LAC) **93.44%**
- **1** Homeless **1.64%**
- **3** Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC) **4.91%**

Placement Support Service

- **The placement support service delivered 143 packages of individual support during 2019/20.**

PSS support includes:

- PSS Foster carers - 75 child support packages
- Children In Care Council (CICC) - 10 child support packages
- Special Placement Scheme (SPS) - 6 child support packages
- Through Care Team - 50 young person's support packages
- Attachment Project (SWIFT) - 1 family supported
- Foster Care Agency - 1 child support package

Evaluations of PSS support packages are undertaken annually and 25% of all support packages noted that:

“I would not have continued this placement without Placement Support”

“95% of carers noted that the placement support service resulted in a positive impact on the placement”.

“60% of carers would prefer more hours of placement support.”

Children in Care Council (CICC)

- ❖ The CICC has continued to consult, listen and network with young people and the CICC has had an integral role in updating the “ESCC Pledge to Children in Care”.
- ❖ The CICC have been instrumental in the renaming of LAC reviews for young people to “My Voice Matters” The CICC are continuing to examine how legal processes and the language can be more young person centered.
- ❖ Using “Language that Cares” as the standard is viewed as very important for the CICC members” and they have liaised and worked in consultation about this with the Office of the Children’s Commissioner.
- ❖ The CICC rucksack project has received a grant from the East Sussex Foster Carer Association and support through Cllr Elkin and has helped many children.
- ❖ The CICC attends the Placement Support holiday activities program and through this the CICC took forward 58 issues raised by children in care and raised them to relevant professionals. Responses have been relayed back to the children.



**Retention of foster carers –
a key part of our strategy**

**Embed anti-racist and anti-
discriminatory practice
throughout the service.**

Priorities for 2020/21

**Recruitment of
foster carers including
encouraging foster carers to
transfer to East Sussex**

**Improve the flexibility of
Placement Support Service to
maintain placement stability and
continuity.**