



**East Sussex**  
County Council

**East Sussex Fostering Services**  
**Annual Progress Report**  
**2020/21**

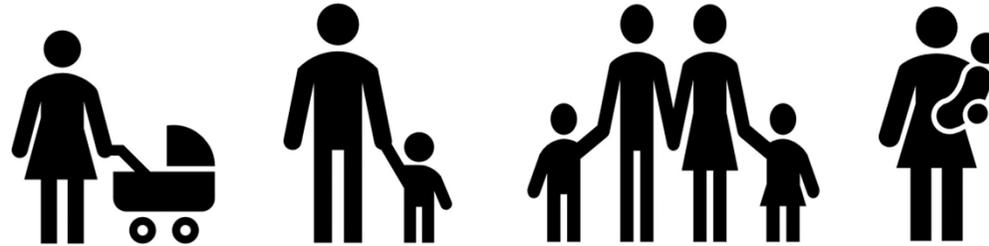
Adrian Sewell, Operations Manager

# Fostering Duty

**351** placements were made during 2020/21!  
**79%** of these placements were in house

The data provided is a snapshot as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

Within the past year, the Fostering Duty Service has continued to place children with our foster carers, despite the pandemic and the associated risks of Covid 19.



**Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children** were placed with Foster Carers and Semi Independent Providers who had the experience and skills to meet the diverse needs of these children.

Given that the majority of respite placements were “on hold” during the pandemic, the **351** placements made included a unprecedented amount of short term and emergency placements.

- ❖ **51 Bridging placements**
- ❖ **461 Placement matches**  
(110 ultimately not required)
- ❖ **358 Completed referrals**

Statistics	2019-20	2020-2021
Matching referrals completed	553	461
Agency placements	77	74
In-house placements	381	277
Not required	95	110

## High Intensive Supported Accommodation

Supported accommodation for older young people has been coordinated since March 2020 by the Fostering Service. Access to the service has been via Placement Duty.

**45** Young people have been placed and matched in supported accommodation since the process has been coordinated by the Fostering Duty Service.

# Fostering Recruitment and Retention

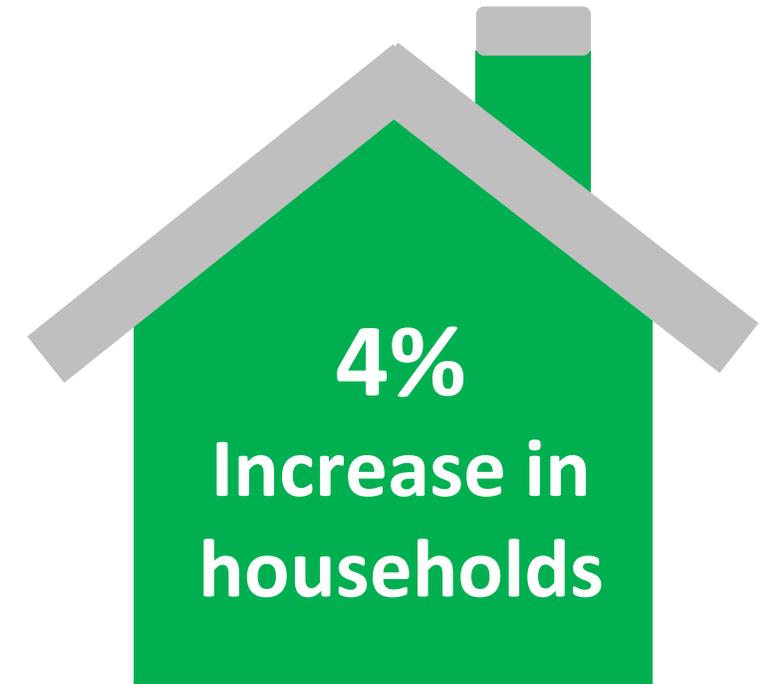
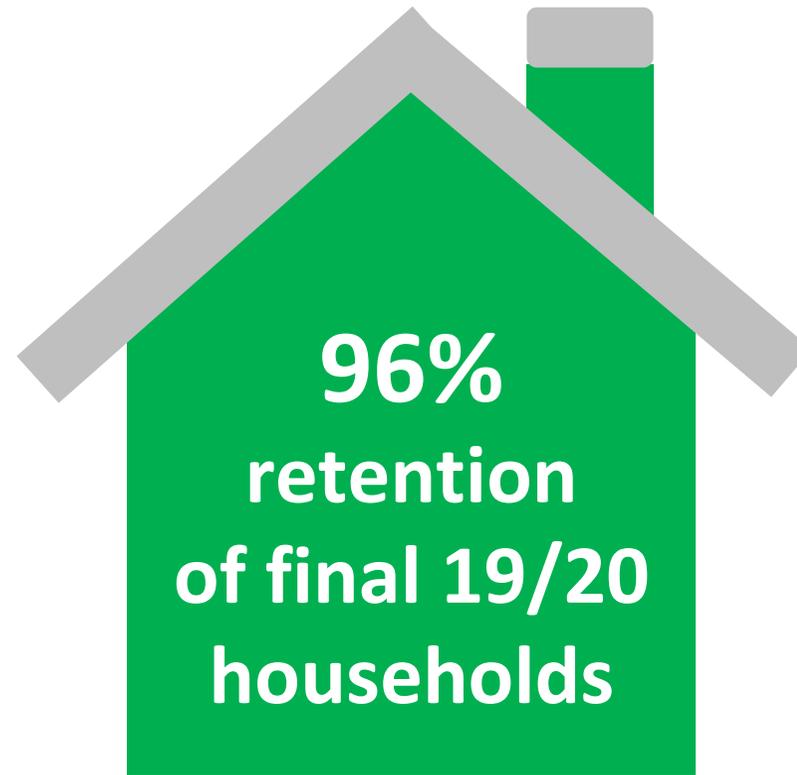
The data provided is a final snapshot as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

On par with 18/19, 19/20, **20** new fostering household approvals.

**41** additional placements were created by approvals, exemptions and variations.

In recognition to the challenges Foster Carers faced during the Covid lockdown a one-off payment was paid to all of our Fostering and Supported Lodgings households.

Retention	Households	
	2020-2021	2019-2020
Approvals ended - Retirement	0	1
Approvals deregistered by Fostering Service	0	1
Approvals ended – change in circumstances	5	8
Approvals ended – other reasons	5	10
<b>Total approvals ended</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>



# Fostering Assessment, Recruitment, and Retention

## Fostering Assessment, Recruitment and Retention During Covid-19

The Fostering Service continues to recognise the needs of our Looked After Children and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children from different ethnic and diverse backgrounds. Going forward, 2021-22 will see a re-focus of the recruitment of foster carers and providers who can reflect and support the diverse needs of these children.

**At all times during the COVID-19 pandemic, the team has continued working with applicants, adjusting practices as guidance changed, whilst maintaining high standards. The team remained positive, proactive and creative to ensure assessments continued.**

- The team met with applicants via video calls, in their gardens and in offices when home visits were not possible. However, every applicant received at least **1** face to face visit in their home during the Covid period.
- Promotion of ESCC Fostering Service's Recruitment continued with use of radio, roundabout and social media (Facebook, twitter and google advertising). Vinnie the van was moved around Eastbourne to be used for advertising.

# Fostering Assessment, Recruitment & Retention

The data provided is a final snapshot as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

The **20** new approvals do not reflect that a further **10** approval's due for completion have been rescheduled to 2021/22 due to Covid.

## 3 Connected (Family and Friends) Foster Carer Approvals

(all outside East Sussex)

Work continued with potential applicants caring for connected children. The team also offered consultation to a further **19** carer households on the appropriateness of becoming Special Guardians or approved Local Authority Foster Carers for their children.

## 2 Fostering households transferred to East Sussex

The team consulted to a further **21** households considering transferring to ESCC: **3** closed (due to safeguarding information), **1** application is currently progressing and a handful are still considering the advantage of transferring to East Sussex Fostering Service.

The **2** completed transfers created **1** additional placement and a saving of **£40,000 per year** respectively (an East Sussex young person was already in placement).

Recruitment	Households		
	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019
Enquiries	227	268	266
Screening calls	92	114	118
Initial visits	42	71	70
Skills to foster training (STF)	37	21	29
Applications for assessment	53	35	35
Closed	7	7	3
Withdrew	13	6	11
Total allocated but did not progress	20	13	14
Approvals	20	22	21
Placements	30	39	36
Conversion rate Enquiry to approval	9%	8.2%	7.9%
Conversion rate Screening call to approval	22%	19.2%	17.8%
Conversion rate Initial visit to approval	48%	31%	30%

# Foster Carer Training 2020/21

- **796 Foster Carers accessed virtual training courses (June 2020 to March 21). An increase on 19/20's figure of 566.**
- **Regulated qualifications framework Level 3 Diploma and all mandatory foundation courses were maintained. This included an online Paediatric First Aid Course.**
- **The training offer was adapted to reflect challenges for Foster Carers during the pandemic. New courses were introduced: The Resilient Foster Carer; Introduction to Meditation; Fostering All Ages; Managing Your Child's Anxiety**
- **New webinars were introduced: Parenting the traumatised child; De-Escalation; Hungry Heart; A-Z Therapeutic Parenting and Strategies on Managing Adolescent Behaviour**



# Virtual Support Groups

Monthly Adolescent Support Groups

Quarterly “Men Who Foster” and  
“Ladies Who Foster” Support Groups

Virtual “Coffee and Catch up” Support Group  
(monthly)

Young People Who Foster Council - Monthly  
Meetings, Newsletters, Online Activities and  
Competitions.



# Supported Lodgings

## Supported Lodgings

Supported Lodgings remains an integral part of the Fostering Service, with Supported Lodgings Providers providing accommodation for our Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Homeless young people aged 16-21.

**8** “Hybrid” providers (approved as Supported Lodgings and registered Foster Carers) providing stability and continuing care from the age of 14.

- **7** new households approved offering **8** placements.
- **55** approved providers currently offer **82** beds.
- **1** household resigned

**36** young people were placed in Supported Lodgings during 2020/21:

- **13** homeless (from locality teams)
- **2** Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children
- **21** Looked After Children.

# Placement Support Service

**During the Covid 19 pandemic the team adjusted regularly to ensure that the most vulnerable children and placements continued to receive direct face to face placement support.**

## Placement Support Service during Covid-19

- “Face to face” support packages were maintained throughout the pandemic on a risk assessed basis.
- Partnership working allowed PSS to utilise a wider range of ESCC buildings so that safe premises could be used and enjoyed by children.
- The service maintained / continue to support young people in children’s homes and on the “edge of care”.
- Support to “Shielding” households was maintained virtually. Cards, letters, and pictures to colour, were posted / delivered to the doorstep of households.

# Placement Support Service

Despite all the challenges and difficulties during the Pandemic, the commitment and sensitivity of the placement support workers has been outstanding'

131  
support  
packages  
delivered

- Placement Support - 84 support packages
- Special Placement Scheme - 5 support packages
- Mother & Baby – 2 support packages
- Through Care Team - 35 support packages
- Attachment - 1 support package
- Edge of care - 3 support packages
- Agency - 1 support package

Placement support has always been a lifeline and the level of support they gave to me and D was truly exceptional, I couldn't have continued without it'.

'Our PSW's are very caring people when P was in hospital, they called many times to offer their help and have a chat, thank you'

# Children In Care Council (CICC)

**The CICC operated creatively during the pandemic ensuring young people's voices have continued to be heard.**

- The CICC has ensured that the voice of the looked after child is heard in projects being delivered through schools, youth service and agencies working with young people.
- A CICC young person led a project inspecting the mental health provision provided to students in schools in East Sussex.
- Members of the CICC remained in touch with younger children in care during lockdown, to help them feel less isolated - this small project will be developed into an official buddy scheme.
- Continued attendance at Placement Support holiday activities. 13 issues raised by children in care were taken forward by the CICC with relevant professionals.
- Zoom call with Anne Longfield the Children's Commissioner for England, with discussion around the impact of lockdown on their mental health, education and what support they were receiving.
- Input into training for professionals working with young people. Themes include: the role of the CICC and the work they are doing, the impact of loss and separation, and the impact of the use of inappropriate language can have on children in care.



**the children in care council**

# Priorities for 2021/22

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

Targeted and  
general  
recruitment of  
Foster Carers

Continued  
retention of  
Foster Carers

Maintain and  
continue to quality  
assure provision for  
semi independent  
and supported  
accommodation

# Glossary (ESCC Fostering Service) - Part 1 of 2

**Fostering Duty** - Team who oversee placement finding for looked after children and young people.

**Assessment, Recruitment and Retention Team (ART)** – Responsible team for advertising and recruitment of ESCC Foster Carers (enquiries to approval) and retention.

**Assessing Social Worker (ASW)** -

**Children In Care Council (CICC)** – A group of East Sussex looked after young people aged between 13 and 18. They meet up regularly to have their say on issues that matter to young people in care.

**Connected Foster Carer** – Carers approved for specific child, often a family member.

**Edge of Care** – Proactive work with vulnerable families to prevent children and young people becoming looked after.

**High Intensive Supported Accommodation (HI)** - Supported accommodation for older young people (16+).

# Glossary (ESCC Fostering Service) - Part 1 of 2

**Placement Support Service (PSS)** – Service that provide packages of support to placements through a combination of both individual and group work to encourage young people to develop positive trusting relationships/attachments.

**Special Guardianship Order (SGO)** - Permanence option. Foster Carers can apply to be Special Guardians of their Foster Children after 1 year.

**Special Placement Scheme (SPS)** – Service that offer long-term Foster placements to particularly hard to place, troubled Young people who can benefit from a therapeutic parenting style.

**Supported Lodgings** – Placements for young people aged 16 and above who are homeless or living in care.

**Through Care Team (TCT)** -responsible for supporting young people across the county while they prepare to leave care and after they leave.

**UASC** – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

**Young People Who Foster Council (YPWF)** – Birth children of Foster Carers.