

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Corporate Parenting Board

<h3>Middlesbrough Family Placement Panel Activity Report for January 2011 to December 2011</h3>

Executive Member for Children, Families & Learning: Cllr Mike Carr

Director of Children, Families & Learning: Gill Rollings

2 February 2012

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Parenting Board with an overview of the activity of Middlesbrough's Family Placement Panel during the period 1st January 2011 to 31st December 2011.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive to note the information relating to the Family Placement Panel.

IF THIS IS A KEY DECISION, WHICH KEY DECISION TEST APPLIES?

3. It is over the financial threshold (£75,000)
It has a significant impact on 2 or more wards
Non Key

DECISION IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE

4. For the purposes of the scrutiny call in procedure this report is

Non-urgent
Urgent report

If urgent, please give full reasons.

BACKGROUND

5. Each Local Authority which provides a fostering service and/or acts as an adoption agency is required to establish a panel consisting of social work practitioners experienced in adoption and family placement matters, and independent persons. The composition of the panel is prescribed by the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 and the Fostering Services Regulations 2011.
6. Middlesbrough Council has established a Family Placement Panel which meets the legal requirements in relation to fostering and adoption and therefore can consider cases from both aspects of family placement work. The Panel plays a key role in promoting the welfare of vulnerable children in public care.
7. The Panel is constituted from a central list and is serviced by officers from the Legal Department, Members Office and the Family Placement Service. It used to meet fortnightly for half a day, however in recent months the volume of work has been such that weekly meetings have been scheduled and this pattern is likely to continue for the rest of the year.
8. The role of the Family Placement Panel is to consider:
 - (a) applications from prospective adopters
 - (b) plans for children to be placed for adoption
 - (c) proposals to place a specific child or children for adoption by particular prospective adopters
 - (d) reviews of the approval of prospective adopters
 - (e) applications from prospective foster carers
 - (f) proposals to place a specific child or children in a long-term foster placement with particular foster carers.
 - (g) termination of the approval of foster carers.

ACTIVITY FROM 1ST January 2011 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2011

9. The Family Placement Panel met on 30 occasions during this period. The matters considered by the panel are often complex and at times meetings can be lengthy and demanding. Panel members receive the papers in advance of each meeting and need to read them thoroughly prior to the meeting in order to participate effectively in the discussion.
10. The number of items considered in each category during this 12-month period were as follows:

Number of adopters approved	4
Number of children whose adoption plans were approved	12
Number of children whose placements with adoptive parents were approved	12
Number of foster carers approved	20
Number of foster carers approved for a change of registration	13
Number of foster carers who were de-registered	7
Number of children whose long-term fostering plans were approved	12
Number of children whose placements with long-term foster carers were approved	12
Number of foster carer reviews that were considered	43
Number of reports presented for approval of a change of plan for a child	1
Number of reports presented for consultation or update on a specific issue	3
Number of reports which were deferred due to concerns over the quality of the reports	2
Number of supported lodgings approved	0
Total numbers of items considered	141

11. We had 7 deregistrations related to retirement.
12. There were 19 foster carer reviews considered by Scrutiny Panel.
13. For comparison purposes, the table overleaf shows items considered by the Panel over a 27-month period:

	October 2009 to March 2010	April 2010 to December 2010	Jan 2011 to December 2011
Number of panel meetings held	17	29	30
Number of adopters approved	4	5	4
Number of children whose adoption plans were approved	8	16	12
Number of children whose placements with adoptive parents were approved	8	19	12
Number of foster carers approved	2	9	20
Number of foster carers approved for a change of registration	1	3	13
Number of foster carers who were de-registered	1	11	7
Number of children whose long- term fostering plans were approved	5	6	12
Number of children whose placements with long-term foster carers were approved	11	12	12
Number of foster carer reviews that were considered	11	7	43
Number of reports presented for approval of a change of plan for a child	0	1	1
Number of reports presented for consultation or update on a specific issue	1	4	3
Number of reports which were deferred due to concerns over the quality of the reports	7	8	2
Number of supported lodgings approved	3	1	0
Total numbers of items considered	62	102	141

14. It will be noted that the number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months has increased. The recruitment of foster carers is a national problem however there are specific issues relating to recruitment and retention of foster carers in Middlesbrough. On a positive note there are currently 18 assessments in progress.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

15. All social care services are delivered within a framework of anti-discriminatory practice and there are no specific issues arising from the information presented within this report.

OPTION APPRAISAL

16. Not applicable to this piece of work.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

17. There are no immediate financial or legal implications arising from this report. This report is of interest to all Members.

RECOMMENDATION

18. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive to note the information relating to the Family Placement Panel.

REASONS

19. This recommendation is supported by the following reasons:
- (a) Standard 17.3 of the National Minimum Standards for Local Authority Adoption Services in England requires the executive side of the Council to receive written reports on the management and outcomes of the adoption service every 6 months.
 - (b) It is important that elected members are aware of the work of the Family Placement Panel in order that they can effectively fulfil their responsibilities as Corporate Parents to children looked after.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

20. The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: 2011
- (a) National Minimum Standards for Local Authority Adoption Services in England
 - (b) The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005
 - (c) The Fostering Services Regulations 2011
 - (d) the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services

Author: Lynn Woodhouse Family Placement Manager
Tel No: 01642 - 201960

Address: *Middlesbrough Teaching & Learning Centre, Cargo Fleet Lane, Middlesbrough, TS3 8PB*
Website: <http://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk>