

Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report

23/24



MIDDLESBROUGH
CHILDREN
MATTER



**Our mission is to show
Middlesbrough children
that they matter.**

Fostering Service 2023 – 2024 Data collated as of the 21.2.22

	Quarter 1 (April/June 23)	Quarter 2 (July/Sept 23)	Quarter 3 (Oct/Dec 23)	(Jan / Feb 2024)
Number of Enquiries	22	16	16	10
Number of Initial Visits	12	9	4	3
Number of fostering families	74	76	79	78
Number of children placed	178	180	176	169
Inhouse fostering	162	150	150	147
De – registrations (households)				
Mainstream	0	1	0	5
Connected	7	6	4	2
Foster to adopt	0	0	0	1
Panel activity(households)				
Newly approved;	5	3	2	1
Matches for children and their long-term fostering families with Middlesbrough	1	3	3	0
Reviews	7	11	2	1
Supported Lodgings	5	5	5	5
Enquiries	0	0	0	1

What is working well

- We continue to have the highest number of children placed with in-house fostering families.



June 2022 IFA 145 Inhouse 191 - 57 % Inhouse
June 2023 IFA 162 Inhouse 178 – 52% Inhouse
Sept 2023 IFA 150 Inhouse 180 – 55% Inhouse
December 2023 IFA 150 Inhouse 176 – 54% Inhouse
February 2024 IFA 147 inhouse 169 – 54% Inhouse

- Overall, we have seen a reduction of children in foster care over a 18 months period of 24 children this is for a number of reason however the largest number are children moving from connected care arrangement to family arrangements such as Special guardianship orders. In the previous 11 months there has been 17 connected carers deregistered due to this.
- In February 2023 Middlesbrough council increase the payments to foster carers and introduced level payments instead of banding this has meant that Middlesbrough council are now competitive with IFAs and over the last 12 months we have seen an increase in approved foster carers. In 2023 11 foster carers were approved compared to the previous 12 months where 1 was approved.
- Currently there are a further 7 foster carers in assessment which will increase the number of placements to Middlesbrough children by a further 12 placements.
- There has been a number of new foster carers who have transferred from other LA's and a number from IFA's to Middlesbrough council.
- Over the previous 13 months no connected carers assessments have gone out of the 24-week timescale
- We have timescales and practice guidance on connected assessments making them more robust and child-focused
- We have a stable service with no agency across the three teams.
- A Social Worker is DDP trained to lead and offer Dyadic Developmental Parenting to carers and social worker consultations
- The fostering service now receives the same training offer as both Residential and Resources giving our social workers and carers greater knowledge and support.
- Weekly stability discussion between Futures for Families and Fostering to prevent placement breakdowns for our teenagers within fostering arrangements. This is still early, and impact will be shown in future reports.
- The creation of a dashboard for Fostering in underway this will give managers greater oversight of the service and will enable data to be accessible quicker meaning managers will have more time with staff and the ability to complete observations.

What are we worried about

- The number of children that continue to be placed in unregulated connected care placements as a result of no, or negative assessments.
- There was a failed launch of Mockingbird in May 2023 due to no constations or a hub carer after stepping down.
- The recruitment of foster carers and marketing is handled regionally led by TFC under the umbrella of Foster with Northeast since the inception in September 2023 we have seen a reduction in enquiries leading to initial visits
- Available capacity with foster carers to care for teenagers in an emergency following placement or family breakdowns.

What makes things more complicated

- Having restriction on how we advertise for foster carers given we need to use foster with Northeast material and can't share the benefits of being a carer in Middlesbrough.
- Foster carers raising the instability in the wider social work workforce (Children and Young People having multiple social workers)
- Placements for larger sibling groups are difficult to find
- Some connected carers choosing not to take an SGO due to the financial support offered which is creating a larger number of looked after children.

Plan

- We continue to aim to be able to meet the needs of 70% of our looked-after children through in-house fostering provision by the end of 2025 and need to recruit a substantial number of fostering families to achieve this.
- A planned marketing campaign aligned with the terms of Foster with Northeast to target Middlesbrough residence over the coming 12 months.
- Trauma informed training for foster carers and support in understanding how to create a trauma informed environment with the support from service.
- All young people who are 12 plus to have access and support to the pathway to independence booklet which will offer support in developing skills as they reach adulthood.

Any Questions