

November 2019



**London Borough of Bromley
Education, Care and Health Services
Children's Social Care**



ANNUAL REPORT ON FOSTERING ACTIVITY 2018-2019

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KEY MESSAGES

The Bromley Fostering Service in 2018/19 continued on its improvement journey with the trajectory of the service focussing on our working relationship with Bromley's carers and maintaining consistency in our recruitment and support practices. At the beginning of 2018 our monitoring processes were in their infancy and these needed to be embedded to ensure that the progress we had made was sustained and that there was a clear managerial footprint on case files alongside key up to date recordings from the case worker. We needed to continue to implement actions around the strengthening and development of our service delivery including actions to increase support provided directly to our carers and building on the specialisms of Assessment and Support within the newly established teams in Fostering.

Working relationships and information that we provided to our carers needed to develop further to ensure that feedback on developments was constructive without losing the opportunity for foster carers to raise concerns about the Service. During 2018/19 the Fostering Service built on these areas in the lead up to our Ofsted inspection in November 2018.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards (NMS) require all Fostering services to provide a report of their activities and to review a written Statement of Purpose which sets out the aims and objectives of the service and the facilities they provide.
- 1.2 The Fostering Service provides a service for children looked after. The service is committed to identifying and supporting stable placements for children where foster care is the identified plan.
- 1.3 The Fostering Service contributes to the five key priorities:
 - Be Healthy
 - Stay Safe
 - Enjoy and Achieve
 - Make a Positive Contribution
 - Achieve Economic Wellbeing
- 1.4 Throughout 2018-19 the Fostering Service has continued towards its goal of providing high quality, local placements for all children that are equipped and supported to meet their diverse needs. This is a key strategic priority within the Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy which is continuing at pace into the 2019-20 working year.

1.5 Partners and stakeholders have agreed that as a priority, Foster Carers will be recruited, assessed, supervised, supported and approved on an annual basis to ensure that they:

- Provide a safe, secure and comfortable home for the children and young people they care for.
- Give children and young people time, attention and clear boundaries.
- Provide encouragement and motivation to help children and young people meet their potential.
- Work positively with birth parents and other family members where appropriate.
- Work in partnership with those who share responsibility for the child or young person’s care, welfare and development.
- Provide care that supports and promotes the child or young person’s culture, race, religion, language, disability and sexual orientation.

2. Bromley Children Looked After Data

Age	Number of Children as of 31 March 2019	31 March 2018
Under 12mths	13	15
1-4 Year	22	27
5-9 Years	54	54
10-12 Years	50	48
13-15 Years	94	85
16+ Years	109	81
Sum:	342	310

2.1 The cohort of children looked after has increased by 10% (342 children in total) with a noted increase in the number of young people in care over the age of 13 years. The 13-17 age range shows a marked increase of 22% when compared to the 2018 figures with the 16-17 age category alone increasing by 35%.

Figure 1

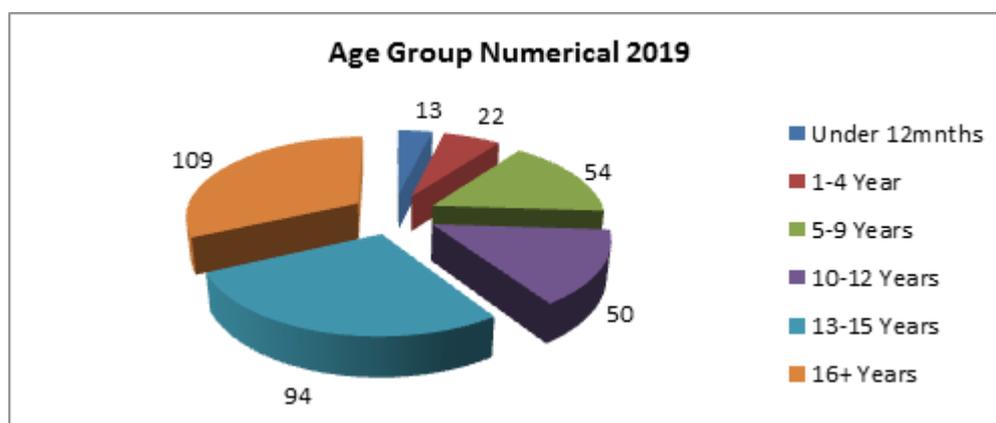
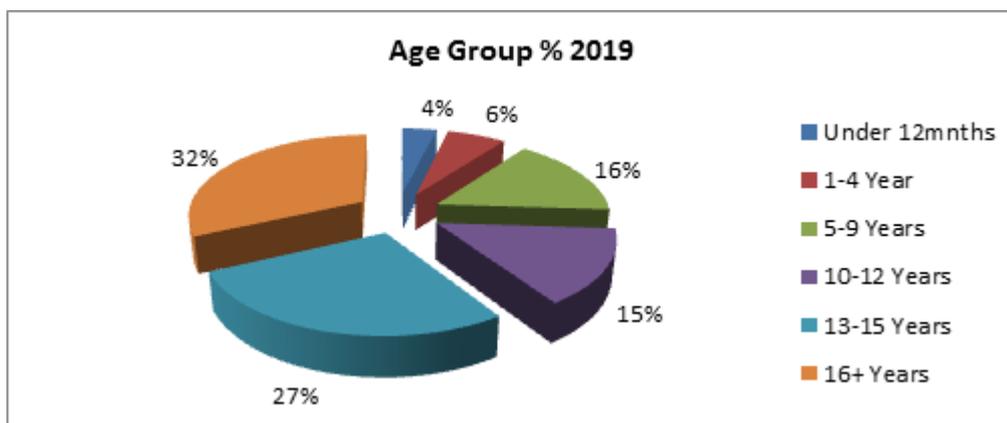


Figure 2



- 2.2 On the 31st March 2019, there were 342 Bromley children looked after. 250 (73%) of all children who were looked after were placed with foster carers (224 or 72% for the year 17-18). Out of these 156 (45.6%) were placed with carers approved and supported by Bromley (146 or 47.5% for the year 17-18). There were 95 (27.7%) placed with Independent Fostering Agencies (78 or 25% for the year 17-18) and 69 (20%) children and young people were placed in residential units, residential schools, Staying Put placements, Supported Lodgings or in semi-independent accommodation (73 or 23.5% for the year 17-18). 23 children (6.7%) being placed for adoption (13 or 4% for the year 2017-18). (Please see table below).

Figure 3

Placements of Children looked after at 31st March 2019 (Sum 342)	Numerical	%
Children placed with In-House foster carers	101	30%
Children placed with IFAs	95	28%
Children placed with a relative/friend	54	16%
Other Placements incl. Residential	69	20%
Placed for Adoption	23	7%

Figure 4

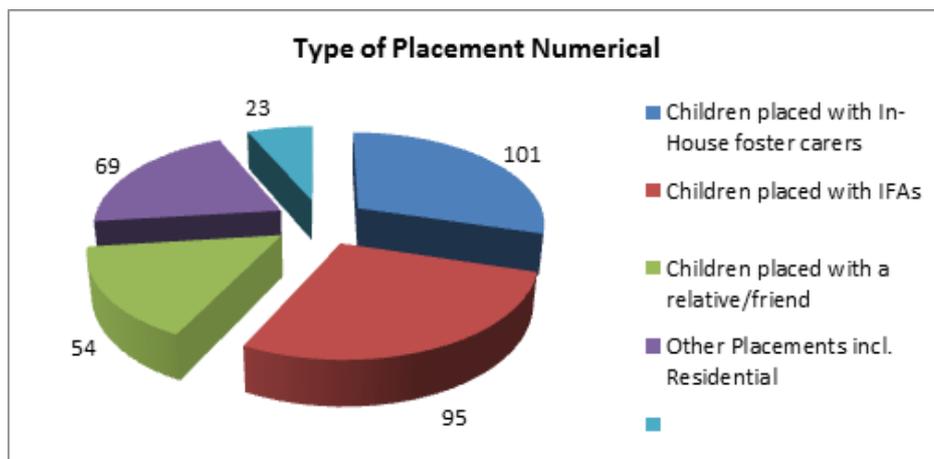
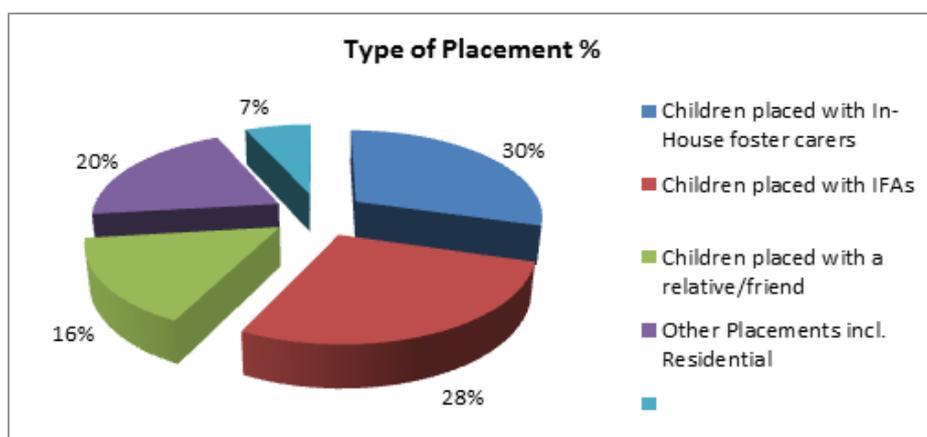


Figure 5



3. Bromley Approved Carers (as at 31st March 2019)

- 3.1 Although we had changed many processes around the recruitment of foster carers last year, we knew that we had not yet gained a sufficient number of carers to place all our children coming into care with in house carers, especially for more difficult to place children such as older children and sibling groups. We were also aware that about a third of our in house carers were nearing retirement and we revised our strategy accordingly.
- 3.2 Our evaluation of foster carer assessments was that they were of good quality and the oversight and supervision was of a good standard. This was verified by our overall OFSTED judgement of Good. They saw that carers were regularly being visited and supported by their supervising social workers and were helped to complete the Training, Support and

Development Standards (TSDS). They were also able to see that the Fostering Panel monitors what the carers completed in regards to training and that their checks were up to date.

- 3.3 In order to improve commissioning and placement matching we have updated both our long term matching forms and our duty matching forms. We continue to have a dedicated SW for long term matches and we also meet with Commissioning when issues arise and when we need to look at our working practices which involves streamlining our forms to make them more child focussed.
- 3.4 A large percentage of our child looked after population are placed with independent providers and residential care. As a result we also started to look at identifying a wider range of resources to support our carers in looking after children who have complex needs.

4. Foster Carer Recruitment

- 4.1 Keeping Bromley children as close to their family origin where appropriate is a key measure of positive outcomes for children and young people. The aim was to further increase the number of locally available Bromley Foster Carers. To address this as well as placement sufficiency, we revised our foster carer offer and relaunched our recruitment drive. A target of 25 foster carers to be approved for 2018-19 was agreed for this financial year.
- 4.2 Our recruitment of foster carers is an improving picture. We have undertaken a reinvigorated fostering campaign which included redesigning our recruitment materials to target families who would be able to care for ethnic minority children, sibling groups, adolescents and disabled children. With these new materials we have contacted the local police station, fire stations, schools including specialist schools, health and the prison services.
- 4.3 We have undertaken Information Evenings once a month, placed our marketing on 50 buses which were booked from Orpington and Bromley garages once in the summer and once following the Christmas period. We advertised for 4 weeks on Petrol Nozzles in Crystal Palace and Sydenham petrol stations as well as setting up stalls at the Chislehurst and Biggin Hill Fayre and in the Glades shopping centre in Bromley. We have also advertised at the Bromley South train station and on the Gladiator website which can be seen when supporters of Bromley Football Club click on their team.
- 4.4 During 2018/2019 the service received a total of 146 initial enquiries from which 27 individual carers were approved which equated to 15 fostering households. On the 31st March there were still 9 prospective

fostering households in the process of being assessed (stage 1 and stage 2) with 5 assessments currently being completed and 3 families awaiting to go onto the next Skills to Foster Course.

- 4.5 We have improved the timeliness of responses and conversion rates of foster carer enquiries. Our fostering data indicates that our conversion rate from application to approval was also up to 33%. This is a positive improvement on 2017-18 (29%) and 2016-17 (21%).
- 4.6 The changes that we made in the previous year around the information that we provide to applicants, our revised timescales for the completion of assessments within Stage 2 and a designated telephone number to our recruitment team have been embedded and are having an impact. Within this year we have also updated our website and included sending out regular fostering tweets to raise awareness of the need for foster carers in our area. We have also set up our own Facebook page which is a way of advertising to a younger audience. We are also able to target particular groups through Facebook so that our adverts hit the right audience.
- 4.7 We now keep in touch with previous applicants who have made a fostering enquiry and then had to stop the recruitment process for a variety of reasons. We also send them seasonal fostering newsletters; send updated fostering information by letter or e-mail to keep potential foster carers in the loop and an e-mail is sent out to all open enquirers informing them of monthly information events.
- 4.8 Since separating the recruitment activity from the supervision and support role of the supervising social worker we have seen a marked improvement in the speed and timeliness of assessments which are being completed. Within this year 18-19, fifteen assessments have been completed and gone to Panel. Within these fifteen only one carer went outside the eight month timescale which was due to the medical being completed and issues within this needing to be addressed. However the average of all fifteen assessments being completed was 5.7 months. In comparison, when looking at the 17-18 year, we had four assessments out of timescales with an average of 7.3 months for assessments being completed.
- 4.9 Our conversion rates from Enquiry to Approval continue to be maintained and in line with the national average of 10% for the year ending March 2019. (Please see table below).

Figure 6

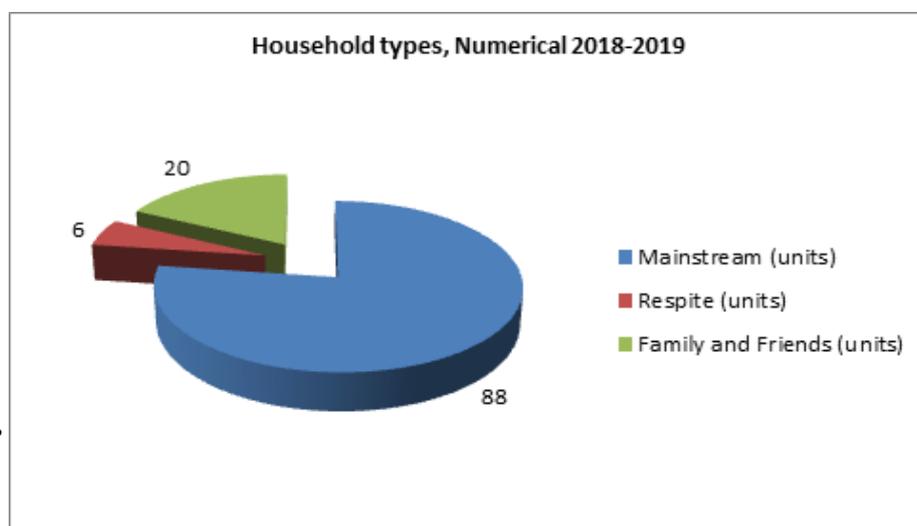
Recruitment Data Conversion Rates	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Enquiry to application (stage 1)	24%	33%	24%	37%	32%
Application to IHV	57%	83%	89%	84%	85%
Enquiry to Form F allocation	10%	9%	12%	15%	10%
Enquiry to approval	5%	2%	5%	11%	10%
Application to approval	21%	6%	21%	29%	33%

4.10 At the 31st March 2019 the **total** number of approved fostering households was 114 of which there were 88 Mainstream Foster Carers and 6 Respite Foster Carers and 20 Family and Friends Connected Person Foster Carers.

Figure 7

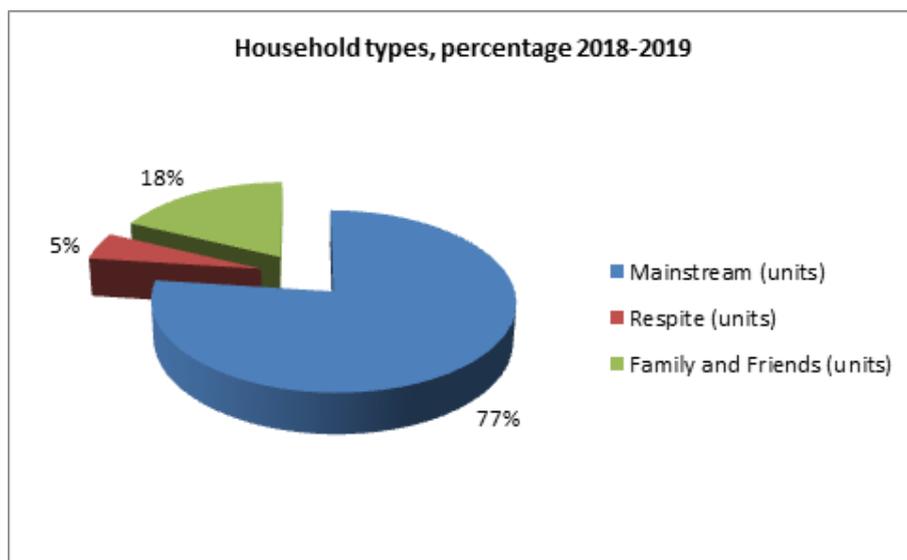
Fostering Household types (sum 116)	Numerical	%
Mainstream (units)	88	77%
Respite (units)	6	5%
Family and Friends (units)	20	18%

Figure 8



Figure

Figure 9



5 Training

- 5.1 The Fostering Service is required, through Fostering Regulations and NMS 2011, to provide training, support and development for Foster Carers.
- 5.2 Following concerns about previous training for foster carers not being comprehensive in covering all aspects of the fostering role and also carers wanting some recognition of the training that they have undertaken, we established a new training package which has been set up in collaboration with the Bromley College. This allowed us to cover the topic areas originally missing within the last training calendar which included CSE, Missing and PREVENT.
- 5.3 It also gave the opportunity for carers to attend eight courses which, if they complete additional work, would provide them with an Award qualification. This would give them a recognised qualification which as we move forward can be developed upon when looking at specialist areas of fostering in the future. There are 6 foster carers who are hoping to complete the Award by the end of July 2019 with arrangements in place for additional carers to be able to complete the Award requirements in 2019-20.
- 5.4 The new training began with the first course being held on the 27th April 2018. Within this first year the Bromley College carried out 36 courses on 18 different subjects. As this was the first year of a pilot with the College we understood that there would be some difficulties in the beginning that would need to be addressed. Feedback from carers was therefore vital in getting this right and the initial delivery of training

raised a number of concerns from them. These included confusion about access to the Campus as the training sessions were originally held at the Orpington Campus, which room was available when carers got there and the support that the College offered when issues like these arose and how they were being resolved.

- 5.5 As a result of this we changed the venue of the training so that it then took place at the Civic Centre. This allowed the team to be onsite and available should any support be required or clarification on any issue of practice or policy be needed. The College also provided a consistent tutor who was able to adapt better to the learning needs of the carers attending the course and who was more able to gain knowledge about the specific role and requirements foster carers have.
- 5.6 Alongside this we have commissioned training for some of our supervising social workers in using Video Intervention to Promote Positive Parenting and Sensitive Discipline (VIPP-SD), Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP). These approaches will enhance the level of support our supervising social workers will be able to give to our carers by enabling a wider understanding and different approaches to behaviours that carers can then use to help support the children they care for. These techniques will be slowly embedded during next year especially with the development of the schemes we are looking to establish.
- 5.7 In addition, the Service has continued to provide monthly information events and pre-approval training (Skills to Foster) on a regular basis, for new applicants.
- 5.8 Additional workshops are provided, e.g around allegations, where a need is identified either by Foster Carers and/or the department.

6. Support for Foster Carers

- 6.1 Over the last year we have established a process and developed a tracker to ensure that we have management oversight on all of our fostering files. This makes sure that foster carers are receiving regular supervision and that their annual reviews remain on time. The Service also continued to have their files audited throughout the year and where we found that statutory paperwork and recordings were not up to date we were able to manage this on all cases.
- 6.2 We have clarified the process for the supervision frequency and put this into practice. This is now done every four weeks however if there are situations where the placement is stable and approved as a long term arrangement, then this can be increased to 6 weekly following confirmation and agreement within supervision. This has provided

flexibility depending on the needs of the child in placement as well as the support provided to their foster carer.

- 6.3 The clear expectation of supervising social workers is that all paperwork within supervision is currently written up and returned to their foster carer before the next visit. This continued to be embedded throughout the year and supervisory visits are being monitored by managers and tracked through supervision and case audits. It is also expected that the supervisor for both social workers and foster carers are able to provide constructive criticism for their supervisees and address areas, for example on contextual safeguarding, within this process.
- 6.4 Following on from the previous year we aimed to build on our coffee mornings and throughout 2018-19 we had regular support groups for all carers taking place within the community throughout the Borough of Bromley. These took place within our Children's Centres which have appropriate facilities and which are situated in all of our areas to ensure that there is a support group local to every carer approved with us.
- 6.5 We identified earlier in the year that there was a gap in knowledge and lack of understanding both from practitioners and foster carers around skills, roles and responsibilities. Events to build on practice and resolution of issues were introduced with our first joint team meetings between staff and foster carers taking place on the 15th March 2018 with an additional morning taking place on the 31st October. This was very positive as it gave us the opportunity to let foster carers know what we were doing in regards to service developments and to provide information about the new training and the IRO service. Views were obtained from the foster carers on these developments which continued to help share the delivery of our improvement programme.
- 6.6 To also ensure that foster carers are familiar with the roles and responsibilities of the team as well as being a foster carer, we have set up 'Induction Training' for all new carers who are approved. The first session was held on the 8th May 2018 and this was received very positively by the carers. As a result we extended this to all our carers who felt that this would be good for everyone to attend and we again delivered this training on the 4th February 2019 which once more had positive feedback. By providing this, carers and social workers are clearer about expectations in both areas in regards to what foster carers and social workers should be undertaking.
- 6.7 Previously foster carers felt that they were not being recognised for the work that they undertake for children and in some response to this we held our first award ceremony on the 11th July 2018. Nominations were received from workers across Bromley social care which recognised exceptional work that foster carers had undertaken to meet the needs

of the children in their care. The most outstanding of these were then celebrated on the day. Foster carers are part of a team and events like this will not only help recognise the work that they do but highlight to other service areas the unique position they are in and some of the issues that they are dealing with. This will also allow a better understanding when looking at ways to support placement stability during meetings.

- 6.8 As well as focussing on the training and information provided to foster carers we also looked at how we could work better together. This looked at attending future meetings for the Bromley Foster Carers Association (BFCA) and looking at how we could work with them in moving the Service forward. To support with this a workshop was arranged with the Fostering Network for carers to attend to look at the structure and role of having a Foster Carer Association and this was held on the 1st May 2018. Following on from this the feedback on the information provided was very positive and a series of meetings took place to discuss how a new BFCA could look moving forward. However after further meetings together it was felt by Bromley carers that they would not look to set up another BFCA this year.
- 6.9 In the meantime the Fostering Service looked at how we could work more closely together on a regular basis to meet to discuss ongoing issues which were coming up each month. As a result a Fostering Advisory Partnership was established with the first meeting to commence on the 30th April 2019. Three foster carers sit on the panel which consists of the Head of the Permanency Service, a Fostering Group Manager and a Team Manager, the LAC nurse, the fostering IRO, the Learning and Development fostering lead, the Virtual School Bromley and a manager from the Children in Care Team. Information and issues highlighted within the support groups will be fed into the FAP for discussion and the identification of any actions to resolve those concerns agreed. These will then be fed back into the support groups and reviewed to monitor progress.
- 6.10 The FAP will also be a means by which events can be planned and arranged by both foster carers and the Fostering Service. Late last year foster carers fed back that an event to celebrate Christmas, which had in previous years been arranged by the BFCA, was no longer in place. As a result we arranged for a Christmas party to be held for all children looked after by Bromley to ensure that this important celebration could still take place.
- 6.11 A new duty system has been put in place which encourages accurate recording and reduces complexity and confusion when handovers between supervising social workers need to take place. Supervising social workers are now on duty for a week at a time, along with a duty

manager which has given consistency and continuity on duty. The vacancy list has been simplified which has also assisted workers within the Emergency Duty Team to identify appropriate carers when looking to place children out of hours.

- 6.12 In addition to this carers highlighted earlier in the year that the out of hours support provided by the Emergency Duty Team was too restricted and that they would benefit greatly from Fostering having their own out of hours service. Therefore to help support carers further we looked at the possibility of having this for foster carers which was agreed. The implementation for this Out of Hours service started on the 1st July 2018.
- 6.13 The pathway to achieving permanence has been strengthened by the introduction of a new tracking system to track all children with Long Term Plans. Profiles are now being put onto Link Maker to look country wide for potential long term matches. The co-ordination between the CLA team and Fostering continues to be improved. The Head of Fostering & Adoption continues to hold Permanency Placement Meetings (PPMs) each week and has overseen over 100 care plans with actions from these are being taken forward. Review PPM's are also being held following these. Prospective carers are being approached about possible long term matches with them and the new information to applicants includes being a long term carer which is again delivered during the new Induction course.
- 6.14 The dedicated senior practitioner responsible for the family finding of all these long term placements also attend these meetings together with senior management to ensure that both monitoring and decision making is made regularly for all children. This has led to 22 children being matched with carers on a long term permanent basis evidencing that this management oversight is ensuring that progress of children's care plans are timely.
- 6.15 To support with placement stability we needed to implement the Disruption Policy on a consistent basis and we now have an identified fostering manager to chair all disruptions which have taken place. Learning from these is shared with the fostering service and with the other area teams. Placement Stability meetings are being held more often which are chaired by the children's team managers. This continues to be embedded within practice and the work undertaken with the teams and during meetings is highlighting and addressing the issue that placement difficulties need to be identified at an earlier stage following supervisory visits. This will continue to be a key area of focus next year as we work towards improving placement stability for our children.

- 6.16 We have continued to focus on management oversight and now all cases have this on the file. Development of reflective supervision continues, however this needs to be further embedded to encourage professional curiosity and to be clearly evidenced within supervision notes.

7. Independent Reviewing Mechanism

- 7.1 The Independent Reviewing Mechanism (IRM) is an independent panel managed through Coram BAAF (British Association for Adoption and Fostering). Foster Carers have the right to take their case to the IRM in specific circumstances, namely if they disagree with any changes made by the Agency Decision Maker in regards to their terms of approval.
- 7.2 If there are any queries with regards to this or the process, foster carers are able to request this information from their supervising social worker. In the last financial year, there were three fostering cases presented to the IRM service.

8. Deregistrations

- 8.1 During this year we lost 15 mainstream foster carer households. These were mainly due to changes in circumstances and retirement however there were two who resigned following young people remaining with them on a Staying Put arrangement and one having taken out an SGO on the children they were caring for. Both sets providing Permanence and ongoing support and commitment to Bromley's children in care. We also had two carers leave following standards of care reports going to panel and we lost one foster carer who left to join an Independent Fostering Agency.

9. Connected Persons and Special Guardianship Team

- 9.1 This year the Connected Persons and Special Guardianship Team (CPSGT) have continued on its improvement journey in line with the overall Bromley vision of achieving excellence.
- 9.2 As stated earlier in this report, at the 31st March 2019, there were 342 Bromley children looked after. From the overall number, 250 (73%) of all children who were looked after were placed with foster carers and from those placed with foster carers, 101 (30%) were placed with In-House foster carers and 54 children (16%) were placed with Family and Friends carers, or Connected Persons Foster carers.
- 9.3 During the 2018 – 2019 financial years, CPSGT has seen an increase in number of households temporarily or fully approved as Connected Carers. At the end of March 2019, there were 16 household that were

temporary approved under Regulation 24 and Regulation 25 extensions and 20 families that were fully approved following Joint Fostering and Adoption Panel. Comparing with the previous year, when at the end of the financial year 2017-2018 there were 12 fully approved Connected Persons Fostering families, this year we have registered a 40% increase to 20 Connected Persons Fostering families.

- 9.4 Whereas in the past the Connected Persons Foster Carers caseload was held in the Fostering Team and was spread across the team to various workers, this year it was recognized that it would benefit the families being supervised by the same social worker who can have a focused and consistent approach to this type of placement. As a result, from April 2018, all Connected Persons Foster Carers have been transferred from Fostering Team to the CPSGT and initially were held by one worker and later, shared by two workers.
- 9.5 The social work practice around Connected Persons (CP) cases continued to improve and regular case audits were completed. A tracker tool was created to allow the Supervisor and Team Manager to monitor performance and compliance in terms of statutory requirements for all Connected Persons Foster Carers.
- 9.6 With regards to the support offered to Special Guardians and Connected Person's Carer, the CPSGT supports Special Guardians for up to three years post order as required by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the respective Statutory Guidance and support plans are reviewed annually as part of post SGO support service.
- 9.7 This year CPSGT has seen significant increase in the therapeutic support offered to our Special Guardians through the use of the Adoption Support Fund (ASF). Whereas last financial year (2017-2018) there have been only 5 applications attracting £14,143 in funding from DfE, this financial year we were able to access £54,604.84 in ASF funding, through a number of 24 applications. This 79% increase in the funds allocated for therapeutic input for our Special Guardian families was made possible by a sharpened focus within the team on this type of support and active and sustained efforts from the team, to link the families' needs with the right resource.
- 9.8 During this year more effort was made to ensure that we continuously work in partnership with our Connected Persons Foster Carers and Special Guardians and that they contribute to the service development. Similarly to the Fostering Advisory Partnership (FAP) it was recognized that Connected Carer's have specific issues that they need to raise or troubleshoot with the Local Authority and Senior Management. Plans have been put in place to roll out a regular Carers' Forum. It is hoped that the carers' perspectives will inform support services for Special Guardians and Connected Foster Carers which in turn will contribute to stability of all kinship type of placements.

- 9.9 Special Guardians and CP Foster Carers are encouraged to access training and support groups in order to enhance and consolidate their learning and development. The CPSGT has continued to provide, via a third party (Grandparents Plus) and funded by an ASF grant, monthly support groups and monthly coffee mornings at various locations across the borough (Children's Centres) to enable more carers to attend. The team has created a series of training programs that are rolled out on a rota system by staff in the CPSGT. These subjects include: Life Story, Family Dynamics, Contact, 'Why does my child behave like this?', 'Attachment' and Online Safety.
- 9.10 A significant training opportunity was offered to SG and CP carers this year in the form of 'Great Behaviour Breakdown' parenting program. This program is funded via ASF grant and implemented by providers sourced by the CPSGT via the ASF pool of providers.
- 9.11 In addition to the workshops, the CPSGT has also expanded the opportunities for training for Connected Persons Foster Carers by tapping into the Fostering resource, in that CP carers have been included in the overall 'Fostering Induction training' available to mainstream foster carers. Temporary approved foster carers and prospective CP carers who are subject to an assessment have also been included in monthly preparation groups. The preparation Groups which were led by Bromley CPSGT, were organized in partnership with London Borough of Croydon, who helped facilitate every other group. Another resource that CP Foster carers can access is the Fostering Service 'Out of Hours' Service.
- 9.12 The CPSG team's performance at Joint Fostering and Adoption Panel was commended in December 2018 as a result of practice improvements in the Connected Persons area of work since April 2018.
- 9.13 Activity days and Special Events: Summer Fun day 9th August 2018 (well attended and positive feed-back), 22nd October 2018 Bowling day, Christmas Party for SG and CP carers. This gave the carers opportunities to network and make friendships but also to meet the team and see them in a more informal capacity. The Fun Day was also a successful collaboration with two other Local Authorities from the South London Consortium (Southwark and Croydon). Another successful activity was the day trip at the London Science Museum in spring 2018 under the umbrella of Grandparents Plus charity. The feed-back from the children and the carers was very positive and had opportunities to socialize with carers and children from other London Boroughs. In October 2018 a 'Thank you Afternoon Tea' was organized for our CP and SG carers to show our appreciation for the work they do with our children.
- 9.14 The CPSGT has continued to keep in touch with our carers by feeding into the quarterly Permanence Service Newsletter. The summer

Newsletter was lead on by the CPSGT and it was very well received by carers and colleagues.

- 9.15 Our Special Guardians have contributed to the Lobbying campaign at the Parliament to raise awareness about the SG carers' issues and help develop policies to further support the carers in their role. This is an ongoing issue that will be reflected in the next year's report.
- 9.16 A number of 7 children who were in foster placements, have moved on to permanency through SGO and to acknowledge and mark these special life events, the CPSG Team decided to award the children with 'Permanency Certificates'.
- 9.17 Future plans for the next year in the CPST include:
- a. A launch of Therapeutic Service for our Kinship carers in the new financial year
 - b. 'Fostering to Permanency' approach where, children in long term foster care (in-house, IFA and CP carers) who have established relationship with their carers and where appropriate, are given the opportunity to be cared for by adults who will provide permanency for them outside of Local Authority care
 - c. To continue and expand the positive and open dialogue with Connected Persons Foster Carers and SG carers through regular Carer's Forums which will then feed into the Permanency Service Quarterly Meetings so that the carers' perspective could inform support services for SG and CP Foster Carers.
 - d. Closer and more focused collaboration with the Bromley Virtual School for CLA so that pathways are open to virtual school support services for children in SGO placements (including Pupils' Premium Plus) similar to those available to adopted children who were previously looked after by the Local Authority.
 - e. Further training development for prospective connected foster carers, similar to Skills to Foster for mainstream carers
 - f. Further development of Training for Staff in the CPSG Team; The aim is for practitioners in CPSGT and across the permanency service to have access to and undertake training to enhance their skill set in the use of therapeutic intervention including therapy and therapeutic life story work
 - g. The CPSG Team also hope to enhance the partnership work with internal and external agencies/teams. The aim is to ensure that we are working closely with partner agencies across the division and external agencies to raise awareness about our services including policies and procedures and our Pre and Post SG order

services. This includes closer liaison with Bromley CAMHS, including attendance at each other's team meetings.

10. Private Fostering

Please see separate Private Fostering Report 2018-19

11. Future Plans for the Fostering Service in 2019/20

- 11.1 A key area of development within the fostering service has been identified around the provision of specialist placements in particular those children who can come back into a foster family following a period of time within a residential unit and those children and young people who are remanded or who come into local authority care at short notice. In order to address this we need to look at the training required with the Bromley College and identify, not only within our existing cohort of carers but also from new applicants, those who could be approved as specialist carers for these young people.
- 11.2 Work with the Disabled Children's Team needs to continue to identify children who are able to be cared for within the community on a full time and short breaks basis. Assessments and training will also need to be developed to ensure that carers looking after disabled children receive the specific support they need to care for these very vulnerable children.
- 11.3 In support of this and to recognise the skills and increase risk management around ongoing safety planning for these foster carers the service will look at developing enhanced payments linked to these schemes.
- 11.4 Whilst all new foster carers develop a profile through the Stage 2 process, existing carers through their supervision and annual reviews will need to ensure that they have a profile that can be used in matching and sharing with children and young people when they are placed. This still needs to be driven forward to ensure that children are consulted on potential matches and given an opportunity to share their wishes and feelings before being placed.
- 11.5 The Fostering Service needs to work towards there being reflective discussions recorded on all cases to clearly evidence that the impact of a child being in care for everyone involved is recognised and actions to mitigate difficulties and drive stability take these issues into account.

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- 11.6 Recognition and identification of placement difficulties which are likely to cause placement breakdown requires focus to ensure that those children who are experiencing two or more placement moves are being monitored and that issues around placement support are being addressed at the earliest stage.
- 11.7 To implement the online DBS service to reduce the paperwork involved, reduce the staff working hours in managing this and reduce the length of time checks are taking to be completed.
- 11.8 We need to look at our Standard of Care assessments in regards to the learning from these and also the support we offer to carers in relation to finances and speed in which these assessments are completed and presented to Panel.
- 11.9 To continue with our events with foster carers and for this to include fun days and well as a Permanency Service Conference which is booked for September 2019.
- 11.10 We need to continue to look at the development of our website to include the ability to upload documents and information which will be helpful to foster carers in carrying out their role.

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