
Meeting title: Fostering Liaison Advisory Group [FLAG]
Date and time: 7pm, Monday 26th April 2021
Location: Via Microsoft TEAMS

In attendance: Steve Edwards (Corporate Director), Sophie Eadsforth (temporary Chair for the meeting, Group Manager), Ty Yousaf (Fostering Service manager), Cllr Tracey Taylor, Jill McLaughlin (IRO), Prue Oakden (Fostering Support Officer & temporary minute taker)
Apologies received from Laura Webster (IRO)
15 fostering households were in attendance

1. Ty Yousaf asked for nominations from foster carers to become the next FLAG chair and vice chair as there currently isn't anyone in these posts. Please email him if you are interested in the role. As no one volunteered at the meeting, Sophie Eadsforth offered to chair the meeting and as it has been a year since the last one took place, the meeting structure was relaxed and after Ty's update there was an opportunity for carers to raise issues until the end of the meeting.
2. Ty thanked foster carers for their amazing efforts throughout lockdown.
3. Service update – Ty informed carers that there have been many staff changes recently. Ian Tabberer has retired and has not been replaced at present as the ratio of Team Managers to Supervising Social Workers is currently at a reasonable and manageable level. Fostering Futures carers and SSW's have been moved into locality teams as there is capacity within these teams. Marie Dean has taken the role of South Team manager following Kath Hughes' move within the Council to another department.
4. A discussion was had around contact from the service during the last year and whether it had been adequate. Steve Edwards felt we should have had a virtual FLAG meeting before now.
5. Hubs have been set up across the county but it seems that not all foster carers attend these and some have only been set up within the last 6 weeks. Ty agreed to raise the issue of the support hubs with the Team Managers as we need to ensure that all foster carers have access to a support hub so that they can ask for support, share ideas, give advice and get to know one another.
6. Carers discussed the Standards that must be completed every year and that they can be difficult and stressful to manage on top of caring responsibilities. Ty confirmed they are a mandatory requirement and something the service is asked to report on. Zelda Machin kindly offered to assist any carers who are struggling by giving some advice and suggestions.
7. Staying Put finances were briefly discussed and Ty advised any carers that are struggling to speak to their supervising social workers.
8. The next foster carer conference will be a half-day virtual event held and carers were asked to submit any ideas they had for themes of guest speakers to the recruitment and projects team fostering@nottsc.gov.uk . Steve Edwards also informed carers that he has been involved in a meeting with a care leaver called Terry Galloway who is potentially organising a drive-in movie event for carers and looked after children which would be in early July. Confirmation and details to follow.
9. Next meeting date will be Monday 12th July 2021 – further details will be sent out nearer the time