

**Meeting:** Cabinet **Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> August 2024

**Wards affected:** All

**Report Title:** Fostering Annual Report

**When does the decision need to be implemented?** For Information

**Cabinet Member Contact Details:** Cllr Nick Bye, Lead Cabinet Member Childrens Services

**Director Contact Details:** Nancy Meehan, Director of Childrens Services

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## 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1 The Fostering Annual Report sets Torbay's vision for the Fostering Service, its core principles, its key aims, main priorities and actions, the role of the Fostering Service and its various functions, the Fostering Service organisational structure, recruitment performance information, an outline of the fostering recruitment and marketing strategy and campaign, improvements in terms of foster carer support and retention, information relating to number of initial enquires received in the period of the 1st April 2023 to the 31st March 2024 and the next steps for the service.

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

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- 2.1 It is a statutory requirement established by the National Minimum Standards for Fostering for each Local Authority to produce and publish an Annual Report. This Annual Report should be considered in conjunction with the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose, required under the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, which is available on Torbay's fostering microsite.
- 2.2 Torbay's vision is one whereby its people are able to thrive, and our fostering community is an integral part of the service provided to our cared for children. As outlined within Torbay's Corporate Parenting Strategy, we want our cared for and care experienced young people to be safe, happy and healthy, in order that they can reach their full potential, and as corporate parents, we wish to give our cared for and care experienced children and young people the access to all of the opportunities that good parents afford their children. The dedication and commitment of our fostering families plays a critical role in how we are able to achieve this vision.

## 3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision.

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1. That the Cabinet endorses the Fostering Annual Report 2022-23 as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report and that it is published in accordance with Council's requirements.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Fostering Services Annual Report 2023/24

### **Background Documents**

None

# Supporting Information

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## 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 The Fostering Annual Report provides an overview of the activity within the fostering assessment and support service in the period of the 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024.
- 1.2 It includes an executive summary, a profile of the cared for children being supported by Torbay, a review of the key priorities and actions of the service, the role of the fostering service, an overview of the organisational structure, information relating to the fostering recruitment priorities, an overview of events attended, an overview of developments in relation to fostering, an overview of Special Guardianship support, and key priorities and actions.

## 2. Options under consideration

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- 2.1 N/A – No other options have been considered.

## 3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

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- 3.1 N/A

## 4. Legal Implications

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- 4.1 It is a statutory requirement established by the National Minimum Standards for Fostering for each Local Authority to produce and publish an Annual Report. There are no legal implications as a result of the decision to endorse this Annual Report.

## 5. Engagement and Consultation

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- 5.1 A priority of the Fostering Service has been to enhance and develop the opportunities for participation, engagement and consultation with our fostering families.
- 5.2 Fostering families are encouraged to share their views regularly and in a variety of ways, from attendance at the quarterly Fostering Forums, through quarterly thematic surveys and through direct one to one conversations and communications with the fostering service and senior management.

## 6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

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- 6.1 N/A

## 7. Tackling Climate Change

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7.1 N/A

## 8. Associated Risks

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8.1 Should this report not be endorsed Torbay will not be compliant with the statutory requirements in line with the National Minimum Standards for Fostering. There will no change in terms of the fundamental function of the service however the report would not be published, and could not be transparently shared with our foster carers which would limit the ability of the service to share learning in respect of patterns and trends, and achieve clarity with our fostering families about the priorities for improvement.

## 9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

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	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	The Fostering Annual Report outlines the strengths, areas to strength and the priorities for the fostering service, in addition to the vision and strategy to enhance the local in house provision of high quality placements for our cared for children		
People with caring Responsibilities	The Fostering Annual Report outlines the strengths, areas to strength and the priorities for the fostering service, in addition to the vision and strategy to enhance the local in house provision of high quality placements for our cared for children		
People with a disability			No differential impact
Women or men			No differential impact

People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)			No differential impact
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No differential impact
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No differential impact
People who are transgendered			No differential impact
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No differential impact
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No differential impact
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	The ambition of the Fostering Annual report, particularly in respect of fostering recruitment, is to ensure that any child, no matter their level of need or their socioeconomic status, has access to the highest quality in-house fostering provision where possible.		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	The role of the fostering service is to ensure that all cared for children have access to the highest quality in-house fostering provision where possible; as such, the provision of this service can have a significant, positive impact on the longer term health outcomes for cared for children and care experienced young people. The provision of high quality support		

	to fostering families also impacts positively on their emotional health		
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## 10. Cumulative Council Impact

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10.1 None.

## 11. Cumulative Community Impacts

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11.1 None