# Notes – in house fostering Feb 2020

**Meeting details:** Via MS teams July 21 1-2.30pm

Attendees: Carol Cammiss – Wokingham, Catherine Siederer, Clare Glennerster, Jackie Clark, Sali Downing, Liz Shields, Berni Farmer, Helen Field, Jackie Giles, Sivay Heer, Ian Tomlinson, Jo Conlon, John Donnelly, Keith Langley, Peter Hodges, Martin Smith, Hilary Sparling, Lynne Tripp

# Item 1: Practice sharing from Southampton and Slough

# Item 2: Presentation from Ian Tomlinson on South West Market position statement

Ian Tomlinson presented the regional work in the South West. They found the most important thing for retention is access to social workers, respite, access to psychologist, peer support and training. In South West they note that some IFAs pay double what LAs are paying. IT noted that UASC carers have been easier in some ways to recruit.

IT noted that Parent and child placements has been a very difficult thing. In the South West they went to tender for parent and baby placements on a regional basis and found 5 agencies, both for parents under 18 and over 18.

# Item 3: Peer to peer mystery shopping

Rebecca noted that Surrey had been due to complete the first wave of mystery shopping but this had not happened. The group agreed that mystery shopping is a key area they would like to pursue. Lynne from Hampshire agreed to undertake the first wave of mystery shopping for the next meeting in October. Rebecca to send materials to Lynne.

# Item 4: quick fire discussion questions

**How to recruit specialist respite foster carers for children with disabilities (Qu from Hampshire). Who has good practice/ideas/providers to share?**

Jackie Giles from Oxfordshire noted that they have a specialist disability worker and some properties available that can accommodate disabled children. Bucks noted that a lack of specialist recruitment and support team has lost the focus on foster carers who can support disabled children.

**Are other LAs including kinship when comparing their in-house against external placements. And what is ratio?**

The group noted that different methodologies were being used across the different LAs, but that kinship carers should be included within in-house care. 2/3 to 1/3 are placed with connected carers in Bucks.

**Do any authorities have specialist foster carers on a rota system for out of hours placements, and how does this operate?**

Helen in Southampton just starting a piece of work on this to create an in-house rota. There was an EDT list used for this purpose, but foster carers were not clear if they were on or off the list and what they had signed up to. Others noted that such a list need to works for the carers not just the social workers.

Another attendee notes that in the last 3 weekends we’ve placed 3 sibling groups of 3 via emergency duty service. Even when people aren’t on a list as being open to emergency care the EDT staff will contact people. Peter in Bracknell Forest noted their EDS is provided with a local IFA contact details if needed, in BF we have a shared service with Wokingham.

In Brighton and Hove there is a rota shared with East Sussex some carers only do EDS, some do both. In our model they get the standard fee, plus £150 a week retainer whether or not they have a child and the weeks they are not on the rota. The problems we have are moving from EDS placement to full time placement. Children staying with EDS placement may be good for child but we are losing the EDS carer, other issues are a lack of clear exit plan.

The group agreed that the majority of EDS placements are complex teens, it is rare to be a baby, or young sibling group. One attendee noted they are trying to have one supervising social worker to oversee all EDS placements, think about training needs, exit plans.

**What different approaches have been actually implemented re: finance, payment, reward for foster carers because of Covid-19?**

Jackie – special panel – to claim for additional costs, also looking at giving each carer £50.

# Item 5: future agenda items

October: Practice sharing Bucks. Hampshire – mystery shopping. Longer item black lives matter- anti-racism. Suggested agenda below

* Anti-racist fostering practice: how do we need to change our fostering practice as a consequence of the Black Lives Matter movement? (45 mins)
* Bucks - sharing practice (15 mins)
* Hampshire- key themes from mystery shopping (15 mins)
* Quick fire questions (will wait to gather any more - how much are LAs having to use unregulated placements/in what circumstances?)
* New standing item: issues for Carol to escalate to DCS colleagues

Future agenda items for January:

Specialist recruitment (mother and baby, emergency respite, disability)- workshop discussion - what works, what opportunities for us to work regionally on this?