

Member Briefing

Number: 1176

Title: Fostering collaboration across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington

Summary: Launch of Foster4 and plans for Foster Care Fortnight

Cheshire West and Chester Council is committed to providing our looked after children with the best start in life. High-quality foster care is one of the key ways to secure children a stable, loving home where they can prosper and achieve their potential.

To tackle the common challenge of recruiting and retaining in-house foster carers, a new collaboration, known as Foster4, launched at the beginning of April 2018. The four local authorities included in the collaboration include:

- Cheshire East Council
- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Halton Borough Council
- Warrington Borough Council

A hub, based at Warrington Borough Council, is operating a single front door for all four Council's fostering services marketing and recruitment activity. This includes all elements of enquiry handling.

Branding for the new service is being developed with an aim to launch the full brand and website in September 2018. Until this time each local authority's fostering website will remain live and any enquiries made through these will be picked up by the Foster4 hub team. Telephone enquiries have also been redirected to the Foster4 hub.

As we are approaching the annual Fostering Network's Foster Care Fortnight (14 – 27 May) we will be running a joint campaign to promote our fostering service using the regional You Can Foster campaign branding. We will feature stories about our foster carers on our social media channels, websites, through press releases and in local newspapers. Please support this campaign by liking and sharing our messages on social media.

By working together Foster4 aims to:

- increase the number of in-house Council foster carers across the four authorities
- increase the availability of placements to meet the needs of our look after children
- develop and support carers to enable the placement of sibling groups and older children
- increase the frequency of training, information events and panels by sharing resources
- reduce the time it takes new foster carers to reach assessment.

For further information contact: Emma Taylor

Telephone: (01244 9)73512

Email: emma.taylor@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Responsible Committee, Cabinet Member: Councillor Nicole Meardon

Date: 4 May 2018