

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report :**

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children Services
Date of Decision:	11 March 2010
Decision Title:	Statement of Purpose of the Hampshire Fostering Service
Decision Reference:	1277
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**1) Summary of Decision Area:**

- 1.1. National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services require that the registered provider (in the case of a local authority, the elected members) formally approves the Statement of Purpose of the Fostering Service, and reviews, updates and modifies it where necessary, at least annually.

2) Issues Covered in Report:

- 2.1. The aim of this report therefore is to present the updated Statement of Purpose of Hampshire's Fostering Service (see Appendix 1) for approval by the Executive Member, highlighting the key parts of the document that have been revised since it was last presented.
- 2.2. Provision of fostering services in Hampshire supports the Corporate Priorities and enables and encourages all children and young people who are looked after by Hampshire Children's Services to stay safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, provide a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being, in line with the Every Child Matters five outcomes (Children Act 2004).

3) Recommendation:

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Children Services and Families approves the updated Statement of Purpose of the Fostering Service.

MAIN REPORT

1) Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1. To agree the updated Statement of Purpose of the Fostering Service and highlight the key parts of the document that have been revised since it was last presented.

2) Contextual Information:

- 2.1. The Fostering Services Regulations (2002) state that “The fostering service provider (in this instance, Hampshire Children’s Services Department) shall compile, in relation to the fostering service, a written statement, referred to as The Statement of Purpose, which shall consist of:
 - i. A statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service; and
 - ii. A statement as to the services and facilities to be provided by the fostering service.
- 2.2. The fostering provider is responsible for providing a copy of the Statement of Purpose to Ofsted, the body which inspects the fostering services, and the following key stakeholders:
 - i. Any person working for the purposes of the fostering service;
 - ii. Any foster parent or prospective foster parent of the fostering service;
 - iii. Any child placed with a foster parent by the fostering service; and
 - iv. The parent of any such child.
- 2.3. A children’s version of the Statement of Purpose is also available in two age appropriate booklets provided to all the children who are looked after.
- 2.4. The proposals in this report are expected to support the County Council’s corporate priorities as follows:

“Making Hampshire safer and more secure for all” – by enabling as many of Hampshire’s children as possible, who are looked after, to remain in their local communities and to fully participate in and contribute to the life of those communities.

“Maximising well-being” – by ensuring that Hampshire’s children who are looked after are provided with good quality family based care placements that meet their needs and enable them to move successfully through their transition to independence.

“Enhancing our quality of place” – through provision of high quality services that target those children who are the most vulnerable.
- 2.5. Provision of fostering services, as described within the Statement of Purpose, supports all five outcomes of the Children Act 2004 by ensuring every child or young person who is looked after in Hampshire is securely attached to a carer who has the skills to

meet their needs and encourage each child to reach their full potential.

3) Key Issues:

- 3.1. Revisions to the Statement of Purpose are highlighted within section 4 below.

4) Revisions to the Statement of Purpose:

- 4.1. The development of the style of Statement of Purpose is to draw it in to line with a suite of documents which compliment and support each other. The documents new design and layout demonstrates the professionalism of the service and supports corporate branding. The Fostering Service benefits from having staff with a range of appropriate qualifications relevant to the work they are undertaking within the service. Staff also have considerable experience of working with children and families. This is now reflected in the Statement of Purpose.
- 4.2. The wording of the document has been revised in consideration of the intended audience of both professionals and stakeholders alike. The wording of the of the Statement of Purpose is presented in a manner to enable ease of understanding and comprehension whilst maintain the required information.
- 4.3. Quotes from foster carers have been included within the body of the document to enhance the 'live' feel of the service and clearly evidence the work undertaken to support the Statement of Purpose and Function.
- 4.4. There has been an increase in the number of foster carers approved over the last year, with 610 sets of carers now fostering for Hampshire. Of the current population of 610 carers, 32% are family and friend's carers who are registered to care for specific children known, or related, to them. In addition, there are currently 41 family link carers.
- 4.5. Since the last publication of the Statement of Purpose there has been a marked increase in the number of children and young people looked after by Hampshire's foster carers 620
- 4.6. Pictorial images such as graphs have been included in the Statement of Purpose to support the readers understanding and ease.
- 4.7. Since the production of the last Statement of Purpose and Function the training of foster carers has been commissioned through Hampshire County Council Children's Workforce Development team. This initiative enables the Fostering Service to develop in partnership a robust foster carers training pathway to support the stability of children and young peoples placements
- 4.8. A detailed and comprehensive 'Support Directory' has been developed to enable Family Placement workers and foster carers to

access a range of support services for them and the children and young people in placement.

5) Consultation:

- 5.1. The Fostering Service in Hampshire continues to have a working relationship with the Hampshire Fostering Network (HFN) for example, referred to in the Statement of Purpose, is regular and ongoing to ensure that any developments take foster carer's views into account.
- 5.2. General comments and compliments are always welcome from foster carers and are fed back through Household Reviews of carers, via Family Placement Social Workers, through Children's Social Workers or children themselves. All feedback assists the department in building on good practice and developing the service.
- 5.3. With the development of the post of Commissioning Officer for Children Living Away from Home who has a strategic role in the family Placement service there have been opportunities for wider consultation with foster carers on specific service development initiatives.

6) Outline of Options:

- 6.1. Not applicable

7) Option Analysis / Comparison:

- 7.1. Not applicable

8) Conclusions:

- 8.1. This report presents the updated Statement of Purpose of Hampshire's Fostering Service (see Appendix 1).
- 8.2. Ongoing work is taking place to develop Hampshire's Fostering Service and the Statement of Purpose will be revised at appropriate times in order to reflect these developments.

9) Recommendations:

Please see Executive Summary for recommendations

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

LINKS TO THE CORPORATE STRATEGY		
Hampshire safer and more secure for all		Yes X
Corporate Business plan link no (if appropriate)		No <input type="checkbox"/>
Maximising well-being		X
Corporate Business plan link no (if appropriate)		No <input type="checkbox"/>
Enhancing our quality of place		X
Corporate Business plan link no (if appropriate)		No <input type="checkbox"/>
OR		
This proposal does not link to the Corporate Strategy but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:		

OTHER SIGNIFICANT LINKS:		
Links to Previous member decisions:		
Title	Ref	Date
None		
Direct Links to Specific Legislation or Government Directives		
		Date
The Children Act		2004
The Fostering Services Regulations		2002

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
<p>The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None.	

COMPREHENSIVE RISK & IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

A race and equality impact assessment has been considered in the development of this report and no adverse impact has been identified.

Hampshire Fostering Service Statement of Purpose

See separate document.