

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Lead Member Children and Families
<b>Date:</b>	7 December 2011
<b>Title:</b>	Foster Carers' Charter
<b>Reference:</b>	3337
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Children's Services

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### 1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to:

- Inform the Executive Lead Member about the Foster Carers' Charter
- Evidence how Hampshire's Foster Carers' Charter has been developed
- Seek Executive Lead Member agreement and sign up to the Foster Carers' Charter

1.2. The spirit of the Foster Carers' Charter is to recognise in practice the importance of the child's relationship with his or her foster family as one that can make the biggest difference in the child's life and which can endure into adulthood. The Foster Carers' Charter has been endorsed by Government as a way of strengthening the role of the foster carers in partnership with local authorities.

Both the Government and the Fostering Network developed Foster Carers' Charters. Both Charters have been considered by Hampshire's Fostering Service and the foster carers' consultation group and together a Hampshire Foster Carers' Charter has been developed. (Appendix A)

1.3. The Charter has been shared with the social work teams, the Workforce Development Team and with the Independent Reviewing Officers for consideration and agreement.

### 2. Contextual information

2.1. Tim Loughton MP, Children's Minister, supports the development of a Foster Carers' Charter by all local authorities. The development of a Foster Carers' Charter sets out the expectations of both the foster carer and the local

authority to enable a shared understanding about each other's role and how this is managed to support quality placements for children and young people.

- 2.2. The Hampshire Foster Carers' Charter will provide clarity of the relationship between carers and Hampshire County Council and the expectations of each other within the relationship and the placement of children and young people.

### **3. Finance**

- 3.1. There are no direct financial implications.

### **4. Performance**

- 4.1. It is anticipated that signing up to the Foster Carers' Charter between local authorities and foster carers will support good practice in the following areas:

- involving foster carers and their foster children in decision-making and planning, and providing foster carers and their foster children with full information about each other;
- being clear about the continuing care or support there will be to meet the needs of the foster carer and the child when making or ending placements and having a contingency plan in place should the placement not work;
- strengthening the shared understanding of the collective role of corporate parenting between Hampshire County Council, the foster carer, child and parent;
- treating foster carers with openness, fairness and respect as a core member of the team around the child and supporting them in making reasonable and appropriate decisions on behalf of their foster child;
- ensuring that foster carers have the support services and the development opportunities they need in order to provide their foster child with the best possible care;
- making sure foster carers are recompensed on time and are given clear information about any support, allowances, fees, and holidays that they will receive, including in cases of dispute with the service or during gaps in placements;
- providing positive adult role models, treating the foster child as they would their own child, and being a "pushy parent" in advocating for all aspects of the child's development, including educational attainment and physical and emotional health and wellbeing and co-operating fully as part of a team with other key professionals in the child's life;
- supporting their foster child and doing all they can to make the placement work. Taking part in learning and development, using skills and approaches that make a positive impact and enable the child to reach his or her potential. Supporting their foster child to help them to counter possible bullying and discrimination as a result of their care status.

- 4.2. In signing this Charter Hampshire County Council and the foster carers agree to reflect the spirit and intentions of the Charter in their actions.

**5. Recommendation**

5.1. To agree and sign up to Hampshire's Foster Carers' Charter.

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Corporate Strategy**

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	yes
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	yes
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	yes

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

1.1. No negative impact

### **2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

2.1. None

### **3. Climate Change:**

No impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption.

The recommendations in this report have no direct link with adaptations to climate change.