

# Annual Report of Lincolnshire Fostering Service April 2010 – March 2011



BRILLIANT LINCOLNSHIRE

## Introduction

The Fostering Service is a regulated service and subject to inspection under the Care Standards Act, 2000. The inspections are now conducted by Ofsted. Fostering has become an increasingly complex service in relation to children and young people who need to be looked after by the local authority. It is widely accepted that in the large majority of cases it is in a child's best interest, when coming into care, to be looked after within a family environment, as opposed to in residential care. In Lincolnshire, after discounting those children placed with parents under Placement with Parent Regulations 1991, and children placed for adoption, 396 children out of 441 are placed in foster care. This comprises 85% of the population with only 17 young people placed in an externally commissioned foster placement at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

The Fostering Service is managed by the Head of Regulated Services, through two Team Managers who manage dedicated fostering teams from bases in the north (Lincoln and Louth) and the south (Sleaford). The Team Managers are supported by three Principal Practitioners, who each have lead responsibility for an area of service development. These are currently Permanence, Parent and Child and the Family Link Short break scheme. The Service continues to benefit from stable and skilled staff that have successfully managed the transition period of the modernisation agenda and continue to strive for excellence.



## Numbers of Foster Carers

As of the end of March 2011 there are 299 carers currently registered with the Fostering Services (some with dual approval), these are broken down by type as follows:

Type	Number
Task Centred	108
Parent and Child/task centred	5
Task Centred/Respite	16
Respite	27
CWD Short Break Carers	5
Placement Plus	24
Permanence	41
Permanence/Respite	4
Permanence/Task Centred	18
Permanence/CWD respite	4
Family/Friend	31
Emergency	5
Staying Put	11

## Number of Fostering Households Approved

In the period between April 2010 and March 2011 there were forty eight new fostering households approved (not including changes of existing approval). Of these:

Approval	Number of Households
1 child	30
2 children	15
3 children	3

The average length of time from application to approval at the Fostering Panel has reduced over recent years. In the period 2010-11, 29 of the new households were approved within 7 months of the application; the remaining 24 were completed within 8.9 months. On average 60% of approvals were completed within the local target of 7 months. The new National Minimum Standards set a national target of approvals within 8 months, which demonstrates that Lincolnshire is clearly on target to meet this timescale. There are a number of reasons for the delays; mainly being statutory checks and changing circumstances of carers during the process.

During the period April 2010 to March 2011, 45 carers including kinship carers ceased fostering. The reasons recorded for deregistration were as follows:

Reason	Number
Health reasons	1
At carer's request not health	20
Family circumstances changed	11
Child reached 18 years of age	1
Retired	1
Carers no longer considered suitable	5
Carers moved out of the area	2
Child has residence/adoption/SGO agreed	6
Transferred to independent Fostering Agency	0
Carers withdrew due to dissatisfaction	0

### **Role of Fostering Service**

Foster carers fulfil a number of roles, from providing a weekend's respite for birth parents or carers, bridging the transition from removal from the birth family to adoption, or providing a longer term placement that will see a child through to independence. These carers are categorised as respite, task centred or permanent. In addition to these groups, there are a growing number of family members who come forward to look after children in their extended family. These friends and family or kinship carers will become an increasingly critical group in our future recruitment strategy and are afforded the same remuneration, training and support as agency foster carers.

The service also provides parent and child assessment placements for parents who themselves are still young enough to be in foster care, as well as for older parents, where risks have been identified which require assessing, prior to them caring for their child independently or otherwise. In addition, a specialist group of carers (Placement Plus) provide placements for those harder to place young people, emergency placements and remand placements.

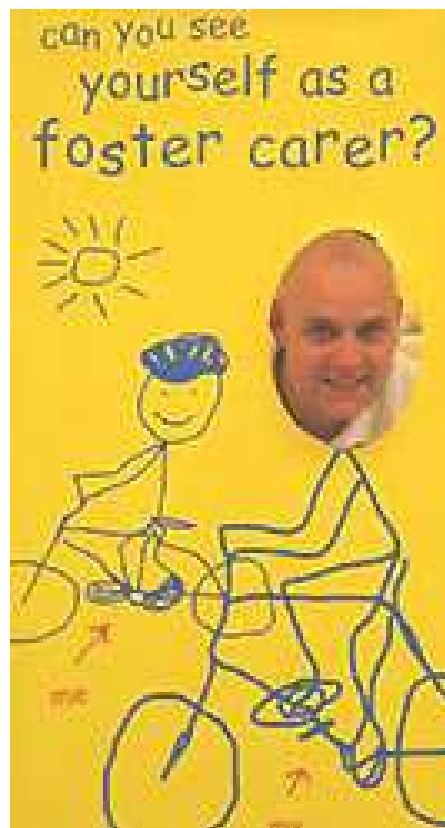
The Short Breaks Strategy – Aiming Higher for Disabled Children initiated the development of the Family Links Short Breaks Service for Children and Young People with Disabilities. This scheme was launched in April 2008. The purpose of the service is to provide short term planned sessions of respite care in a family based setting. There are currently six carer households recruited to the scheme and it is the intention of the Fostering Service to develop this service with the recruitment of one further carer household.

The Council is committed to maintaining children within their own families and recognises that those children coming into foster care will have increasingly complex needs. In the year covered by this report we have reviewed whether carers are able to cope with these more complex needs and have modified approvals where appropriate to do so. In 2010/11, no carers were lost to independent fostering agencies. At the same time the service has had continuing success in attracting carers who no longer wish to work for these agencies. In 2009/10 the services has recruited an additional 3 IFA carers and in 2010/11 a further 3 carer

households were recruited from independent providers. In 2010/11 This has reduced expenditure in the out of county budget by some £330,000.

The Fostering Service is committed to reducing reliance on externally commissioned placements, and developing local placements for children who have complex and challenging needs. This has been a continuing objective and has seen a reduction in children placed in commissioned placements from 86 in 2005 to 28 in 2011. This achievement has released monies to further bolster the preventative strategy. In doing so Lincolnshire has shifted it's combined unit cost (independent and in-house) for foster and residential care provision from being £50 above the national average to £142 below the national average (source: CIPFA benchmarking club).

The fostering service has an annual recruitment plan based on the profiled needs of children requiring placements, and we have ensured that the Recruitment Strategy is designed to target those carers able to meet these defined needs.



## Achievements 2010-11

### Permanence

In 2009-10 the Service Plan identified the need to increase the numbers of permanent placement for older children, for children with complex medical needs and sibling groups. Since then 23 children have been placed for permanence, this includes foster carers converting to permanence for children already in their care. At the end of March 2011, there are a further 31 children on referral for permanent fostering and of these, there are possible placements for 23. The recruitment strategy concentrates on the area of permanence and there are 7 sets of carers currently undergoing assessment. The service recognises that these children are often harder to place by virtue of their poor attachment behaviour and has run two training courses for carers focussing on Therapeutic Parenting. In 2011, 2 additional courses are planned, and we are undertaking a review of the content. In addition, individual packages of support have been designed for specific and have enabled children with challenging behaviours to be sustained in their foster placements.

There is a central reference group called Family-finders which looks at the children needing permanence and their role is to identify potential links. It is recognised that there are several children not yet referred to this group who will need permanent fostering and it is hoped to work towards a situation where there is a pool of permanent carers waiting for children rather than the other way round.

### Recruitment

In 2009 the service level agreement between the Customer service centre (CSC) and the Fostering Service was reviewed, in order to minimise the number of inappropriate initial enquiries being passed through to the Fostering Service and to speed up the response to prospective applicants. The CSC continues to be the first point of call for customers with a fostering enquiry. The customer is sent information using their requested contact method. If the customer wishes to complete an initial registration of interest, then this request is passed to the fostering duty desk to complete the enquiry. From April 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 until the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011, a total of six preparation courses for prospective foster carers took place across the County.

As part of our strategy to increase placement capacity for older children, all carers have been encouraged to extend their approval age ranges where it is appropriate to do so. The Fostering Service in 2011-12 will continue to identify carers who could expand their resource with the provision of a capital grant for people carriers or extensions/adaptations to their homes. Grants have concentrated on carers able to take children in areas of greatest need: adolescents, sibling groups and to sustain placements for children with special requirements. For example, one young person was discharged from an externally commissioned residential placement to in-house foster carers, reducing the weekly cost of his placement from £3,796.40 to £850.

In 2010/11 we purchased 10 people carriers for carers to safely transport children and undertook 11 extension/adaptations to foster carers property to increase capacity for sibling groups, prevent a young person going into residential placement, and secure care plans of permanence. The total budget spent was £275,000

With the emphasis on preventative services and on maintaining children safely within their extended families, there has been a steady increase in the number of kinship care assessments. In 2010 Lincolnshire has continued to pilot the assessment tool designed by

the Family Rights Group, to ensure that assessments of kinship carers focus upon the complexities of these arrangements and the service will now adopt the recent BAAF connected person assessment format in keeping with care planning regulations.

## **Placement Stability**

Critical to ensuring placement stability and good outcomes for children is robust and effective matching of children to placements. In 2010/11, we have sought to further improve practice in this area by developing the matching proforma used by the duty desk and planned referrals only being accepted with a core assessment. A matching policy has been updated and is available on the Children's services policy and procedure manual. Electronic Carer profiles have been introduced to further enhance the matching process. Where permanent placements do breakdown a disruption meeting is convened to explore the factors which led to the breakdown, to facilitate future matching and ensure continuous learning from all involved in the provision of Fostering Services. Performance and quality assurance arrangements have been further strengthened through the joint QA meetings with the IRO's.

In order to increase placement capacity and to maximise placement stability, the Fostering Service has devised a wrap around package. This includes access to placement support workers, educational support workers and additional Family Support Services along with enhanced payments for hard to place children. Two dedicated nurse specialists employed by CAMHS are also available to work alongside carers to offer therapeutic support. Support provided by Placement Support Workers has been crucial. It is given according to a child's identified needs on a time limited basis and is subject to a written contract and review process. Such support could include Life Story work, anger management, building self-esteem, working with sibling groups to develop empathy and understanding, drug and alcohol awareness, sexual health matters, healthy eating and managing life on a budget or undertaking activities with the child to develop confidence and opportunities to socialise. In 2010/11 some placement support workers have completed Triple P accreditation.

In 2010/11, foster carers have completed Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires for children between the ages of four and sixteen years of age who were in care at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. The SDQ's provides information on the emotional and behavioural health of children looked after and will help local authorities to assess the mental health needs of all children looked after and to identify individual needs. The results of the SDQ's continue to be monitored by a dedicated multi agency group comprising of CAMHS, Education Psychology services, Virtual School and Social Care who are able to target psychological support as required.



## Fostering Panel

The Fostering Panel meets every month of the year; there is scope for an extraordinary panel as and when required.

As at 31st March, 2011 the Fostering Panel Membership was as follows:

Panel Chair Independent  
Team Co-ordinator CAMHS (Vice Chair)  
Social Worker Team Manager, FAST Team Lincolnshire County Council  
Social Worker Team Manager Fostering Service Lincolnshire County Council  
Social Worker Adoption Team Lincolnshire County Council  
Independent Foster Carer – (Nottinghamshire County Council)  
Independent Member – (Lincolnshire County Councillor)  
Independent Member – (formerly Looked After Child)

In attendance at each panel meeting but non voting members were:

Professional Adviser  
Panel Administrator

In line with the National Minimum Standards issued in 2011, Lincolnshire County Council have introduced a “central list” of panel members to enable each panel to be quorate and maintain a core of experience in the issues around in fostering and with the assessment and preparation of foster carers

A Medical Adviser to the Panel has been appointed and gives advice in writing in advance of Panel meetings, but may attend in person if requested and legal advice is available if required.

In 2010/11 the Fostering Panel met 12 times and recommended that 48 households should be approved as foster carers.

Type of approval	Number of carers approved
Task Centred	11
Family and Friend/Kinship care	23
Respite care	5
Task centred and respite	2
Emergency	3
1 <sup>st</sup> year reviews	36

In the same period 3 carers have been deregistered

## Training and Development

There is a good level of training, appraisal and induction offered to Panel Members.



In October 2010 a joint training event took place with the Lincolnshire County Council Fostering Services Social Work team and panel members, this training was facilitated by BAAF and considered the issues regarding diversity in assessments

Informal 'bite-size' training is also provided during which we have looked at the New Minimum Standards, all Panel members have been given copies of the New Minimum Standards. Other training has looked at the role of panel members, and has considered issues such as sibling placements. This 'bite-size' training occurs on a regular basis on panel days.

The Panel have all been briefed by the Adviser on the National Minimum Standards and a half day training event is planned for August/September 2011 where these standards will be further considered alongside the quality assurance role for panel.

Any new panel members are required to undertake an Induction which is undertaken by the Panel Adviser, the induction is as follows:

Week 1	Meeting with Panel adviser and Panel chair to discuss roles and responsibility
Week 2	Policy and procedure information
Week 3	Meeting with Panel adviser to discuss regulations/policy's and Procedure
Week 4	Receive Panel papers and have opportunity to discuss issues with adviser
Week 5	Attend panel as observer
Week 6	Feed back to Panel adviser any issues
Week 7	Additional reading time BAAF publications meeting with Foster carer/Supervising Social worker
Week 8	Receive Panel papers and have opportunity to discuss issues with adviser
Week 9	Attend Panel
Week 10	Feedback to adviser

Panel members are encouraged to consider each case on its own merits, applying the principle that first consideration is to be given to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child throughout his childhood.

The Independent Chair's Appraisal is conducted by the Agency Decision Maker.

### **Quality assurance**

The panel is developing a quality assurance role for the work that is undertaken within the fostering service. The Panel feeds back to the team any current trends that have been picked up by panel.

The quality of assessment is considered along with the regulatory standards, the Panel Adviser has worked with the Principal Practitioners in the service to look at the quality standards, at evidence based practice and analysis to ensure a robust assessment of carers' strengths and vulnerabilities. Panel is part of continuous improvement in all aspects of the services and ensures that we comply with both internal and external minimum standards. Panel acts as a source of information, advice, support and evaluation to staff at all levels across the service.

## **Report from the Independent Chair of Fostering Panel**

The Fostering Panel has the responsibility for approving:

- Applications to become foster carers;
- Applications from family members to become foster carers to children in the extended family who are looked after by Lincolnshire County Council;
- The first annual review of all foster carers;
- Reviews of carers where there have been serious issues such as child protection investigations; or
- Reviews of carers where there are concerns regarding their fostering practice.

The Fostering Panel has the responsibility to monitor the range and type of foster carers available and to work with the Agency to consider sufficiency issues

The Foster Panel has a role to oversee and advise on the conduct of assessments and make recommendations to Children's Services about performance standards and quality issues.

During the last year the Fostering Panel has seen some changes in membership. A further Social Work representative whose background is fostering has joined panel and the new County Council representative has been a regular attendee and his contribution has been excellent. All new panel members have had the opportunity to observe panel and an induction plan has been developed to assist new members in their learning. Other panel members have remained in role which has ensured a level of consistency and continuing expertise in terms of the panel business.

A permanent full time Panel Advisor has been in post since October 2010 and has been involved in panel training events; this has been a positive and welcome development for panel. The Panel Advisor has assisted panel enormously in understanding the changes to regulations and National Minimum Standards implemented in 2011, this has been particularly useful when considering the approval of family and friends carers which is always a complex area. The change to a full time panel advisor, has enabled any potential issues to be pursued prior to panel leading to a reduction in cases being deferred.

Panel members have taken part in a training session on "Diversity" in October 2010 presented by BAAF one independent panel member has taken up the opportunity to attend the Family Court Justice Groups training event looking at family court work. She reported to having found the training outstanding and has assisted her further with her panel role. A positive outcome from this was that while she attending the training she was also able to describe the role of panel to others on the course. Panel Adviser has been able to present some "bite size" training to Panel on the New Minimum Standards and it is planned that in the autumn a training event will take place with Kinship care as the theme.

Panel members are able to take advantage of in-house Children's Services training opportunities and one independent panel member is to "shadow" a supervising social worker

during their visits to a mainstream foster carer and a family and friends carer to underpin the experience he is gaining through his panel role.

Annual appraisals of panel members and the panel chair have taken place within the last year, which has enabled them to reflect upon their role within Fostering Panel, the skills which they bring and to highlight further training which would be of benefit.

I consider that all Panel members have been fully involved in the process of panel, taking the time to prepare for panel and taking responsibility for asking relevant questions of applicants and supervising social workers. Each panel member has been able to share their views and make a recommendation, even in the most difficult cases. All panel members are respectful of applicants and Supervising Social Workers and each panel member is committed to working in an anti-discriminatory way.

During the last year, the fostering panel have been asked to consider the approval of a small number of prospective adopters as foster carers which then allows them to take a direct placement of very young babies, thus allowing the attachment process to start much earlier. This has been very successful for those relinquished babies needing early placements and prospective adopters but has also been very rewarding for panel members.

The panel advisor and panel chair have agreed a revised recommendations and decision making form which demonstrates the identified skills of the applicant or any issues, including their ability to consider the child's views, this enables a very clear record of the evidence of how recommendations and decisions are reached

The panel process has remained unchanged, applicants are introduced to the chairperson before they join the meeting and then to other panel members in the meeting. Although this process may take longer it is hoped it will reduce the levels of anxiety for applicants and help to put them at ease during what can be a daunting process. Applicants are seen again in private following the meeting, to inform them of the recommendation. Applicants also receive an information booklet prior to panel identifying panel membership and the process. Again this is intended to reduce the levels of anxiety.

Applicants and supervising social workers are asked to complete an evaluation form of their experiences at panel; the majority of those returning the forms have been very complimentary of the panel process. Improvements have been made to the waiting time of applicants and panel now runs largely on time except for unavoidable delays and the occasional exceptionally complex matter.

A feedback form is used by the Panel Advisor to note any general social work practice issues in order to continually improve upon the quality of information brought to panel. Supervising social workers are congratulated verbally at Fostering Panel for particularly good assessments and information.

The panel operates professionally at all times with all members exercising independence from the local authority and reaching recommendations which place the children at the centre of the process. These recommendations are ratified or otherwise by the Agency Decision Maker.

## **Participation**

As part of our continuing commitment to improving the educational achievement of Children Looked After, the Virtual School model has continued. Three teachers have been appointed to work directly with foster carers to maximise their abilities to promote education for children within their care and the established buddy scheme "JUMP" has been continued in conjunction with the University of Lincoln and SOVA. In March 2011, a celebration event of academic achievement was held at Riseholme Campus.

In March 2011 Voices for Choices Awards V4C took place to celebrate the achievements of children and young people looked after. V4C was a great example of colleagues, external partners and children and carers working together to create a showcase, celebrating the achievements and potential of children and young people in Lincolnshire. This year saw the biggest number of nominations ever, 180 (against 113 last year) with higher numbers of children, young people and carers in attendance.

### **VOICES FOR CHOICES**

V4C is the Looked-After Children and Young People's Council in Lincolnshire and has been in operation since September 2009. Its current membership is made up of children in both residential and foster care, and care leavers.

This Council has expanded its work programmes in 2010/11 by creating three further area-based subgroups. These are supported by foster carers, supervising social workers and the participation team.

These groups are held in Spalding/Boston, Lincoln/West Lindsey and East Lindsey and run at least 3 times per year. They feed into the V4C group who in turn ensure a dialogue with the Corporate parenting panel. Effective communication between the groups has been considered and minutes are shared and the Corporate Parenting Panel's chair has recently agreed to a young – people friendly version of their minutes being posted in the V4C area of the C4YP website in future

V4C was instrumental in co-creating and running this year's awards event for Looked After Children, described above.

## **Developments**

In 2010/11, the Fostering service has aimed to keep carers informed of up to date developments within Children's services and continued to produce a quarterly foster carer newsletter. We further developed a social media networking site called "Fostering Friends" Carers have access to an on line community that they can get up to date information on and have the opportunity to connect with other carers across Lincolnshire. The site shares useful contacts and allows carers to have instant access to notifications and relevant resources. The new site contains discussion topics, improved layout and navigation and a completely private password protected website. The restricted member's site for foster parents includes message boards, interactive feedback tools, newsletters and all the latest events. The structure of the site allows for expansion and extension of it's functionality and content in a more exciting way. This will be further enhanced in 2011/12.

In 2010/11, the Staying Put pilot concluded and was considered to be so successful that it was mainstreamed. The Staying Put scheme enables young people who have been fostered, up to the age of 18, to remain with their carers up to age 21 or to complete their education in

that academic year. At the end of March 2011, there were 25 'Staying Putters' and planning for future placements was fully embedded with a Supervising Social Worker ensuring a response to all referrals. Of those in place, 5 young people attend University. A retainer is given to the carer to continue to support them and to ensure they can provide a home base for those living away.

The National pilot has been evaluated by The Child and Family Research Unit at Loughborough University. Two of Lincolnshire's 'Staying Putters' have been actively involved with the qualitative element, assimilating a questionnaire, then analysing the taped transcripts of interviews that they had undertaken. These were some of the recorded comments;

"If people are in a place where they are happy and feel safe, it seems dreadfully unfair to be told they have to live independently," (at 18)

"People who are not in care can stay with their parents for as long as they like. Staying Put just allows you to feel like you're part of a normal family."

The Policy's and Procedures for Staying Put can be found on Trix. The steering group has been a good example of partnership working between Councillors, officers, carers and young people.

The Family Links Scheme is now entering it's third year. The purpose of the scheme is to enable Children's Services to provide family based short breaks as part of a range of services to children with disabilities and their families. An evaluation of the service was undertaken and presented to the Head of Service and Assistant Director.

Twenty eight children accessed the scheme in 2010/11. Of these 5 were new starters. The service was unable to match 3 due to carers being on holiday for the preferred dates and parent preferred residential short break provision. The total numbers of units used by the carers totalled 1,061.84, this is slightly down on last years figure due to one set of carers being suspended pending the outcome of an allegation. A further 4 carers are currently at various stages of the approval process following a targeted recruitment drive in the specific areas, Lincoln and East Lindsey. The Scheme has a steering group responsible for performance and development issues. The steering group in 2010, revised the short break procedure, and updated the promotional leaflet for families of children with disabilities. This has been distributed across the county, features in the Family Services Directory and the 4 all magazine. The Kids E.Learning module has been launched, with access being granted to all 5 family link carers, Team Manager Fostering and Supervising social worker.

In 2010/11 a defined approach to Parent and child foster placements was agreed. All carers have been trained and an agreed assessment format has been put in place. There are up to 8 carers able to offer these placements either prior to or as a result of court proceedings.

## **Children's Workforce Development Council**

The Children's Workforce Development Council Standards have been applied to all carers regardless of their specific role, approval status and function. Foster carers have access to wide range of learning and development provision including direct training; targeted learning resources; e-learning academy; and general social care-appropriated provision. Through a wide range of appropriate, planned and managed learning opportunities, the standards of skills development amongst carers has improved, and hence the standards of child care amongst foster carers in placement.

The number of foster carers attending mandatory, optional training and other learning opportunities has continued to increase over the past year. This is due to a combination of factors – more consistent and planned opportunities to attend training events; more effective communication between the Services, managers, staff and practitioners; improved direct links with foster carers and their support groups; and improved strategic planning and collaboration between fostering and learning and development. The Fostering Service has the ability to map the requirements of the standards with preparation and post approval training and has introduced a variety of learning opportunities to meet individual carers' identified requirements. 2010/11 has seen an increase in the use of e-learning for foster carers vital in ensuring learning and development opportunities across the County. There is a structured training plan in place and a learning and development strategy for foster carers has been developed.

### **Complaints, Appeals and Representations**

Foster Carers have access to the County Council Complaints Procedure. During the period April 2010 to March 2011 there were 3 complaints from foster carers, two were partially substantiated at stage 1 and the third remains ongoing and has progressed to stage 3. There were 2 complaints to the fostering service from children and young people both were resolved at stage 1. There was 1 complaint from a member of the public and this was also resolved at stage 1. There have been no representations made to the IRM in 2010/2011.

In 2010, a Quality Assurance meeting led by IRO's has been introduced. Its remit is to identify both good practice areas and areas for improvement as well as obstructions to achieving care plans for children.

### **Forward Plan 2010/11**

In April 2011, the Care Planning Placement and Review Regulations, Fostering Services Regulations, associated guidance and the New National Minimum standards for fostering came into force. The fostering services will need to ensure that the service is compliant with all of the changes and that all staff and carers are supported to understand the implications for them and the children that they care for. Procedural amendments required by these changes will be introduced throughout 2011.

The Government launched the Foster Carers' Charter in March 2011. The Charter has been jointly produced by Government, fostering organisations, charities and children. It is part of the Government's wider programme of reform to improve the entire care system – including reducing barriers and delays to adoption and improving the quality of children's homes. The overall aim is to make sure that all children in care have greater stability, less upheaval and a better chance at a stable family life. Lincolnshire County Council has agreed to adopt the Charter and this will be further developed through the corporate parenting panel. Details of the charter will be launched later in the year.

In March 2011, Lincolnshire was successful with an expression of interest to pilot Multi Dimensional Treatment Foster care for children with challenging and complex needs. Lincolnshire will attend for final interview 4<sup>th</sup> July 2011 and are awaiting the outcome of the bid. If successful will aim to go live with a date of March 2012. The DFE will grant up to 200K per year for the 4 year programme and new partnerships will be supported by the National Implementation Team.

In 2011/12, the emphasis on kinship placements will continue and a decision has been made to use the BAAF connected person assessment framework.

A review of both pre and post approval training is underway. The intention is to enhance post approval induction and ensure that all training is linked between the pre and post approval phases. There will be an improved menu of courses and modes of training offered with an emphasis on ensuring that training in positive parenting is available to as many carers as possible.

There will be an evaluation of the service to determine whether the present structure is the most effective in continuing to deliver a quality fostering service.



## **Summary**

The Fostering Service remains committed to providing high quality, safe and secure placements to vulnerable children and young people, whilst promoting placement stability and emotional attachments with appropriately skilled and qualified carers. We have recognised the need to provide enhanced placement support given the increasingly complex children who require a family based placement.

We are confident that the success achieved will continue to be built upon in the forthcoming year and that the dedication and commitment of staff will be instrumental in sustaining this success.

**Janice Spencer**  
**Head of Regulated Services**

**Tara Jones**  
**Team Manager, Fostering South**

**John Harris**  
**Team Manager, Fostering North**