

Sandwell Foster Carers Newsletter

5 JUNE 2020

Welcome to your weekly newsletter

A message from Rt Hon Jacqui Smith, Chair of Sandwell Children's Trust and Frances Craven, Chief Executive.

As the world reacts to the killing of George Floyd, we reflected on the impact that this could have on you and the children and young people you work with. We have spoken at length to the Trust Board, to the Directors and to our partners about the events that are unfolding across America and the recurring themes are around support, protection and the importance of talking.

We should remind people that the images on the news and social media can cause secondary trauma not just in ourselves but in our children:

1. Be conscious of exposure: It's important to remember that not all breaking news is appropriate for children.
2. Provide reassurance: Children need to know they are safe
3. Be Mindful: Be mindful of what you say in front of children. They are always listening.
4. Safe space: Provide a safe space for open and honest discussion.

There are many useful resources online that can help children and young people regarding racism, discrimination and prejudice, particularly on BBC Bitesize and ChildLine. If any of the children and young people need help or support from our [Participation Team](#) they are always there to help if anyone wants to get in touch.

Virtual Fostering Forum

I'm really pleased to let you know that for the first time, we will be holding a 'virtual fostering forum'. We plan to hold our first forum via telephone conference call on Friday 19 June 2020 from 10:00 until 12:00 and we would love you to get involved! Ideally, we would like a couple of mainstream carers and a couple of connected carers to be part of our exciting venture. Please [email](#) us if you would like to be involved.

Forums will take place monthly and all forum members will have the ability to put suggestions forward for agenda items.

We already have representatives from the Virtual School – Julie Goode, and LAC Health – Debbie Locke. We will also have members of staff from Fostering, Children in Care and Care Management joining us. I look forward to meeting some of you too!

The forums for the rest of the year will all take place on Friday's between 10:00 and 12:00, as follows:

17 July

14 August

18 September

16 October

20 November

18 December

Arts Connect West Midlands

Our Participation Team have teamed up with Arts Connect West Midlands and they are looking for children and young people to help them. They would like them to submit their fantastic artwork and to also provide feedback about their website. As a 'thank you', they will receive a free t-shirt! It's definitely worth a look, I think that you'll agree!

The website link is <https://www.artslinkwm.org.uk/connect-create>

Ask children and young people to comment on the below and [let us know](#) what size t-shirt they need and we'll do the rest:

It would be great to get feedback on:

- What is good about the site?
- What is missing from the site? What else would you like on it?
- Could you contribute something to the site e.g. recommendations of an arts activity you have done or watched and really enjoyed e.g. name of it, where it can be found e.g. website name/name of film etc
- Can you set a creative task for everyone?
- What other kind of artists would you like to see and hear from on the site? e.g. circus artists, singers, theatre lighting technician, game designer, graffiti artist etc

There are lots of interesting links and creative activities to keep children and young people busy!

Mind of My Own – user guide for parents and carers

As you know, we actively encourage all children and young people to be actively involved in the discussions and decisions that we make. We want to hear from them as much as possible. Therefore, this week, I thought it was a good time to ask you to encourage children and young people to get in touch with us via Mind of My Own.

We have uploaded the [user guide](#) to the external partners page on our website. This will help you set up accounts with children and young people if they haven't got one already. Thank you for your help.

Carer recording sheets

I'm attaching the latest version of your carer recording sheet template this week as I thought it would be helpful for you to have this electronically.

Don't forget that it's available in the Foster Carers Handbook and also on Tri-X.

Fostering Recruitment

As we said last week, we've got a really exciting digital marketing campaign starting with Clear Channel in June but before that, we've got our usual JC Decaux advertising commencing!

We will have brand new adverts displayed in 50 outdoor advertising sites across the whole of Sandwell from 18 June to 1 July 2020. Look out for them – we hope you like them!

Don't forget that we still want to hear your good news stories! Please [email](#) us and we will ensure that your story is featured.



I hope you have a good week and I look forward to updating you again next week. Take care and stay safe.

Shanti Eaves

Shanti Eaves
Head of Service, Children in Care, Care Leavers and Fostering

DON'T FORGET TO CONTACT US! IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER!

This is your newsletter, so do you know about any great fostering resources, or perhaps just an article or web link you want to share? Anything that could be useful to fellow foster carers – we'll help you let them know. Or if you have an idea, comment or request about fostering in general or what should be in your newsletter, contact your allocated Supervising Social Worker or email us at

Fostering_Info@sandwellchildrenstrust.org
