

Sandwell Foster Carers

26 JUNE 2020

Welcome to your newsletter!

The past week has seen further easing of lockdown and things seem to be returning to something a little bit like 'normal'. With that in mind, I've made the decision to change the newsletter from weekly to monthly. I hope that you agree that this is a positive step and the newsletter is something that I'm committed to undertaking for the foreseeable future, not just throughout the current pandemic.

A step closer to normality...

We are working hard in the background to move towards more physical visits. I'm sure that you will appreciate that there is a lot for us to consider including government advice and risk assessments to ensure the safety of yourselves, staff, and children and young people.

Thank you for your patience. As soon as we can start working in a different way, we will let you know.

Children and young people who go missing

We've received a letter from Mark Nevitt, Team Manager for 'Locate intervention and prevention' at West Midlands Police this week. I've asked for the letter to be shared with you all as there is some really good information contained within it. If you haven't received a copy for any reason, please [let us know](#).

Virtual Fostering Forum

On Friday 19 June 2020 we held our very first 'virtual' fostering forum. I was really excited as I have been wanting to establish a fostering forum since I took up the role of Responsible Person for the fostering service. It was great to have Tanya Evans join us as our foster carer representative and she provided us with lots of feedback and ideas for how we can improve our service. We also had reps from the virtual school – Julie Goode, who is also a foster carer and Debbie Lock, our named nurse for children in care. In addition, there were also members of the fostering service management team.

Issues we discussed included how we move forward with consultation with carers on a range of issues, how we find out what issues are important to foster carers and how we support carers with issues.

We were interested in feedback from carers about our contract with foster talk and whether this was a benefit to you, and what other things we could do to support you and your children (which includes your own children as well as any children you foster). We talked about how we can develop our family of carers, right from the start by involving carers in the recruitment process and thinking about what sort of family activities we could develop for carers.

We are aware that there have been many changes in the service, so we really do want to help you to get to know us. We will be producing a 'family tree' of managers in the service as well as members of the fostering forum to include in our next foster carers newsletter and we continue to encourage as many of you to participate in the forum with us.

If you are interested, please [contact us](#) and we will provide you with all of the details. Our next meeting is taking place on Friday 17 July from 10:00 until 12:00.

A message from Balwant Bains, Executive Head of the Virtual School for LAC

This week the government will give further details of how schools will be open for all children in September 2020; there is an expectation that this will be compulsory. In the last newsletter I announced the offer of free access to the Encyclopedia Britannica resources, where there is a wealth of information that young people can use to complete homework and research without having to trawl through volumes of books. To access Britannica go to:
https://register.britannica.co.uk/Sandwell_Virtual_School/ (ID number: Sandwell1).

To help you navigate and get the most out of this excellent resource, Britannica are offering a one-hour training session on either of the following days via Zoom:

10:00 on 8 July - <https://britannica.zoom.us/j/93320041379>

14:00 on 9 July - <https://britannica.zoom.us/j/94089805851> (this session will be recorded for anyone who missed both.)



I'll be in touch with your next newsletter during the few weeks. In the meantime, please take care and stay safe.



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
