

Updates on current and future development in Fostering

Areas of discussion

- Recruitment and Retention
- D2N2
- Service Structure
- Step out of residential care.

Recruitment and Retention

- **2023-24-** Derbyshire County Council- 9 fostering Households recruited (Nottinhamshire-9, Deby City-10 Nottingham City-8)
- **2023-24-** 30 fostering households retired/ left the service.
- **2024- Present** 13 fostering households approved.

Key Recruitment Objectives

1. Increasing the number of in-house foster carers.
2. Boosting the supply of Contract Carers, with a specific emphasis on experienced carers capable of meeting the needs of complex young individuals.
3. Growing the pool of foster carers for disabled children, siblings, and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).
4. Expanding placements for hard-to-place children and young people through targeted recruitment campaigns, specialized training, and support packages.

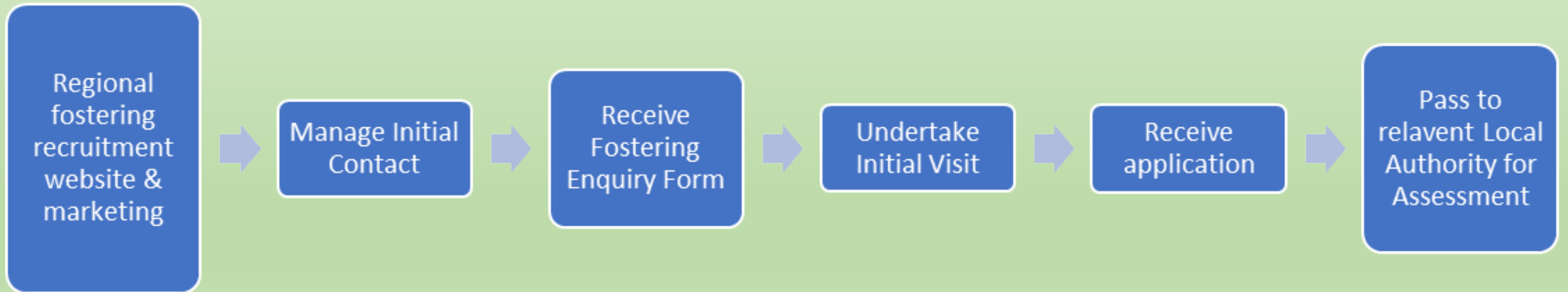
Challenges

- Nationally more carers are leaving the profession than joining.
- Mixed market, competing against Independent Fostering Agencies.
- Retention- Aging profile of foster carers, large proportion of DCC carers who have been fostering for 10 year plus, typical career of a foster carer is 5 years.

D2N2 Project

The D2N2 project, a £1.6 million Department for Education (DfE) funded initiative, spans 18 months and aims to innovate foster carer recruitment and retention through: Implementation is the 1st of April 2024.

- Implementing a Regional Front Door for initial discussions with prospective foster carers. This will be from enquires to initial visits and responsible for all the fostering marketing. If the initial visit is successful, it is then passed on to the individual Local Authorities.



- Establishing Mockingbird Regional Hubs to nurture relationships, build resilient communities, and improve foster carer retention.



Fostering Service Structure

- Realignment of key personal and staffing resources. This is to reflect the changing landscape of fostering.
- New key positions from existing staffing budget
 - Fostering Recruitment and retention manager
 - fostering IRO officer
 - Placement Support Team
 - Lead Family Finding/ Duty officer
 - Single Head of service.

Step-Out of Residential Care :

- Transitioning young people out of residential care involves a multi-faceted approach:
- 1. Establishing strong connections with Neurodiverse hubs for comprehensive support to foster carers, young people, and residential care providers.
- 2. Strengthen collaboration with Stronger Families to facilitate smooth transitions for young people and provide post-placement support for both carers and young individuals.
- 3. Strengthening the education links to eliminate barriers for children with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs by facilitating seamless transitions in educational provisions.
- 4. Streamline the care planning process by providing comprehensive support from external residential care to internal residential care and preparation for fostering.

Achievements:

- Since October 2023, we have successfully facilitated 9 step-outs, with an additional 3 planned for February-March.
- Additionally, we've identified 9 children for internal residential care, with 4 slated for a fostering care plan.
- A typical child in residential is costing between £6,000-£9,000 per week (£250K- £400K per year.)