



Families for Children

Fostering and Adoption Service
Annual Report 2017-2018

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A collage of various LEGO minifigures and parts, including a Star Wars character, a dinosaur, and a skeleton, set against a background of a grey LEGO baseplate. The image is a close-up, angled shot of a collection of LEGO bricks and minifigures scattered on a grey baseplate. The minifigures include a Star Wars character with a green helmet, a green dinosaur, a skeleton, a red minifigure, a black minifigure with a yellow face, and a blue minifigure. The background is a grey LEGO baseplate with a pattern of circular studs. The image is a close-up, angled shot of a collection of LEGO bricks and minifigures scattered on a grey baseplate. The minifigures include a Star Wars character with a green helmet, a green dinosaur, a skeleton, a red minifigure, a black minifigure with a yellow face, and a blue minifigure. The background is a grey LEGO baseplate with a pattern of circular studs.

I am pleased to introduce the Annual Report of our fostering and adoption services 2017- 2018.

This year has been a busy one for Children's Services as a whole as we seek to enter into a transformational programme that scrutinises every aspect of our service shifting the balance of care to more family and community based support ensuring that we move to focus more of our spend on early prevention and intervention.

Families for Children is developing a strategy that will support this agenda. Its future recruitment will concentrate on attracting applicants from Glasgow and its close neighbours in an attempt to reduce any wider disruption in the children's lives. The service will link more closely with our residential services and the purchased sector to seek to move children timeously into the provided fostering sector where appropriate. Families for Children have historically attracted carers from a wide area in Scotland and we continue to have children placed with them. We acknowledge the service they continue to give to Glasgow's children and our staff continue to support them.

We wish children's futures to be determined as quickly as possible when it is identified that a return home is not possible and we continue to match children either with adoptive parents or permanently with foster carers.

Families for Children staff continue to offer a range of training and supports to all their carers both within the fostering and the adoption services and also include them in identifying areas for improvement. Future developments are highlighted at the end of the report.

Mike Burns
Assistant Chief Officer
Children's Services

INTRODUCTION

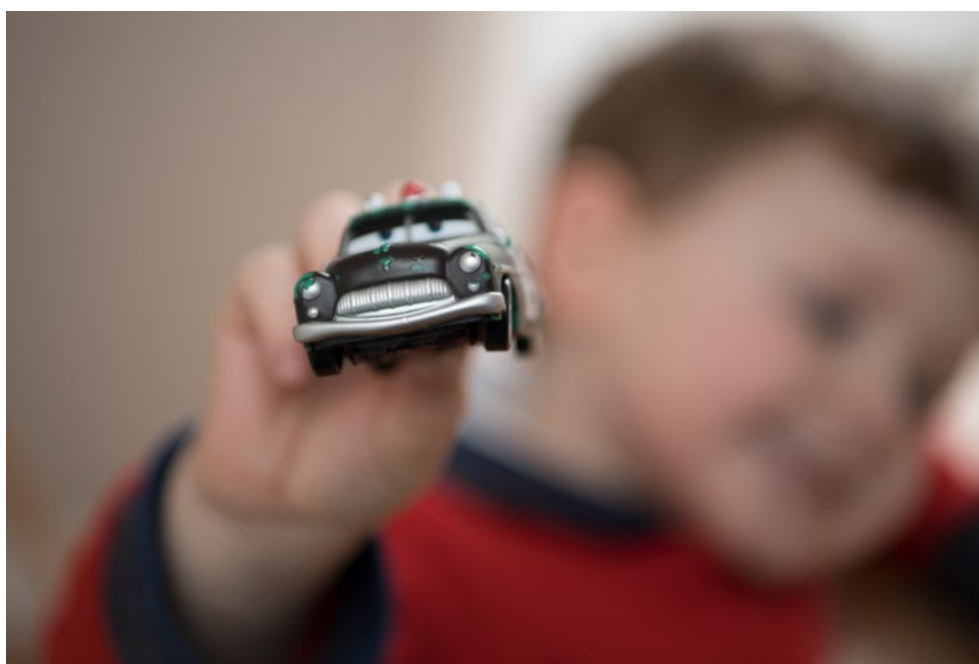


This Families for Children (FFC) Annual Report sets out the delivery of our Fostering and Adoption services throughout the year from April 2017 to March 2018. The report takes both a retrospective look at the previous year's developments within the service as well as those developments that are planned for the coming year.

Families for Children vision is:

“ To improve outcomes for vulnerable children in Glasgow by delivering and maintaining a high quality and effective fostering and adoption service. ”

Families for Children is a centralised family placement service for Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP) and the shape and delivery of service has been very much influenced by the transformational change agenda and improving outcomes for all of Glasgow's children.



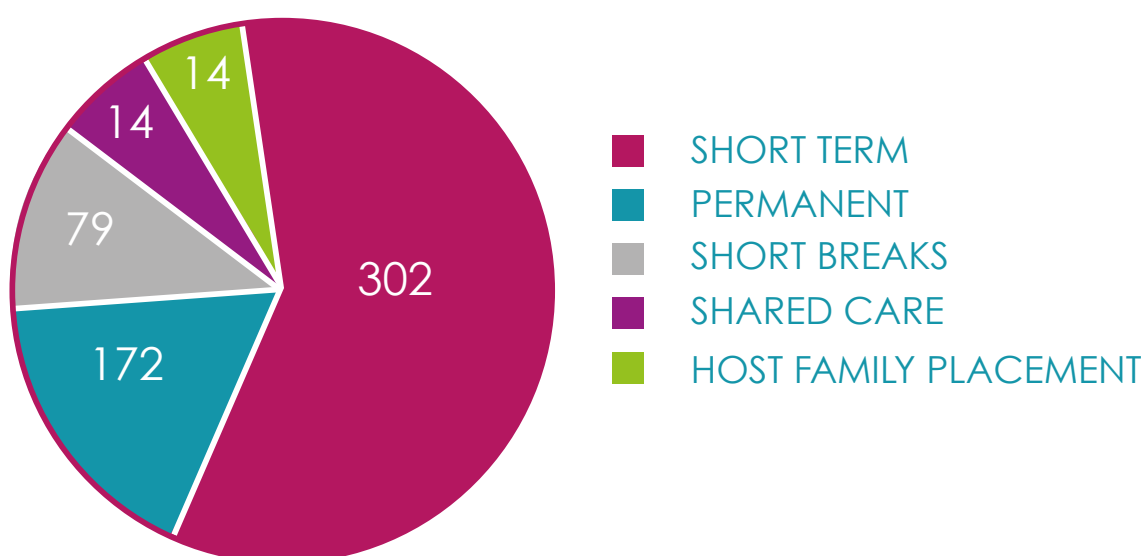
CONTEXT



Within Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP) as of 31st March 2018 there are 1213 children/young people who are looked after and accommodated and 683 children/young people are in provided fostering placements.

The service has 581 fostering households which offer a range of different care placements and services and this is summarised below:

FFC - PLACEMENTS



The range of resources provided reflects the changes in placement limits and placement descriptors as detailed in the National Review of Foster Care (2013). This has been implemented across our service.

The service continues to diversify in accordance with the wide range of differing needs that Glasgow's children have and to ensure we are in the best position possible to meet them.



FAMILIES FOR
CHILDREN
RECRUITMENT AND
MARKETING

Families for Children have a full time dedicated Marketing and Communication Senior Officer to profile our fostering and adoption service utilising a range of different marketing strategies. Recent marketing activities have included TV, radio and billboard advertising, Facebook and Twitter, social media platforms, linking with partner agencies in education and health and attending city events, such as Pride and local festivals.

The recruitment of foster carers and adopters is a key priority for Families for Children. The service implemented a dedicated recruitment team to ensure that there is a streamlined approach to initial enquiries made to the service via the different communication methods often used by prospective applicants (telephone, e-mail, online or Facebook). The development of the information recording system used in Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP) has enabled the service to gather and record data more efficiently, analyse trends and timescales for responding to enquiries and to adhere to recruitment and best practice standards.

We have run several high profile campaigns over the years through events, engagement with different groups and publicity around key events both nationally and locally. A phased approach, spreading our resources over a longer time period, creates an on-going presence and a consistent local profile as opposed to one short burst of activity.

Our recent integrated campaign #opentofostering was innovative and showed compelling stories from our foster carers. We produced a 30 second TV commercial, three 2 - 3 minute films of our carers, and a series of shorter cutdown films (approx. 10 secs each). The cutdowns have worked very well for us in terms of their ability to be shared on social media.

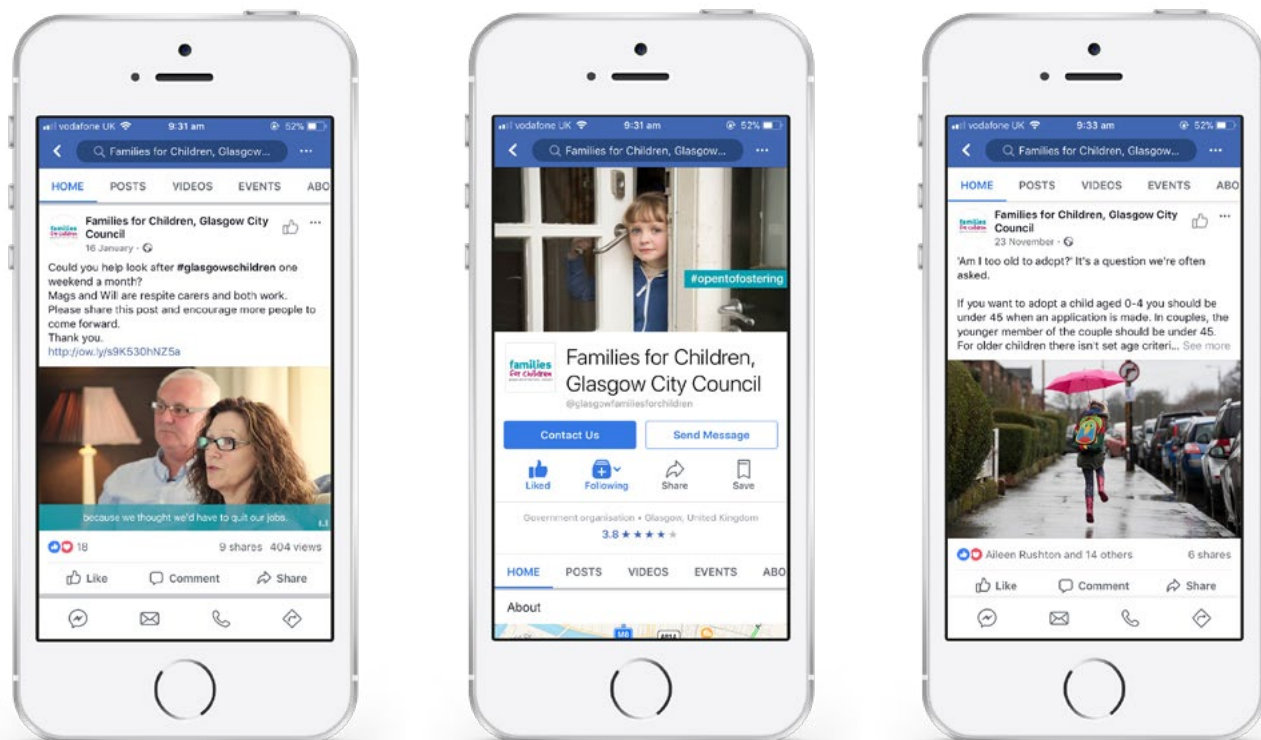
We have been approached by other local authorities, including Sheffield and Manchester, Falkirk and Liverpool City Councils to share our expertise and are pleased that our learning is benefitting the wider sector.

We overhauled our website to refresh our brand and also to make it easier for future enquirers to find out more. We increased our spend on digital activity which encompassed display advertising, Google search, Youtube, promoted Facebook and Twitter posts, programmatic advertising, interstitial ads and remarketing.

We also ran our first live Twitter Q & A information evening as part of LGBT adoption and fostering week. It was a great success and we summarised the Q & A in a blog post. This way people who couldn't participate on Twitter during the time could still read through the content.

As part of the campaign we launched a roadshow to give the city's people the opportunity to engage with our team. We held drop-in information events in each of Glasgow's three main locality areas, with a continuing programme across the year. We have also run information stalls at major city events such as Pride Glasgow and the Blue Lights Festival. Across the city, 13,000 leaflets were distributed to community events such as gyms and libraries, as well as train stations and cafes.

We will continue to build on this campaign through local events and ongoing digital activity particularly. We are keen to do a rolling programme of digital activity to keep awareness high and to drive traffic to our website and also to information events.



Social Media

We now have the collateral in terms of videos, created with STV, to be able to frequently post to social media and to run future bespoke campaigns, e.g. short breaks, using material already created.

We built evaluation into this campaign from the outset and so we have a substantial amount of analysis that we can use in developing future recruitment activity to ensure that it is best-value.



FAMILIES FOR
CHILDREN –
PANELS

The service has five panels per calendar month. Three of these are for fostering and two are for adoption and permanence and all have lay panel members in attendance.

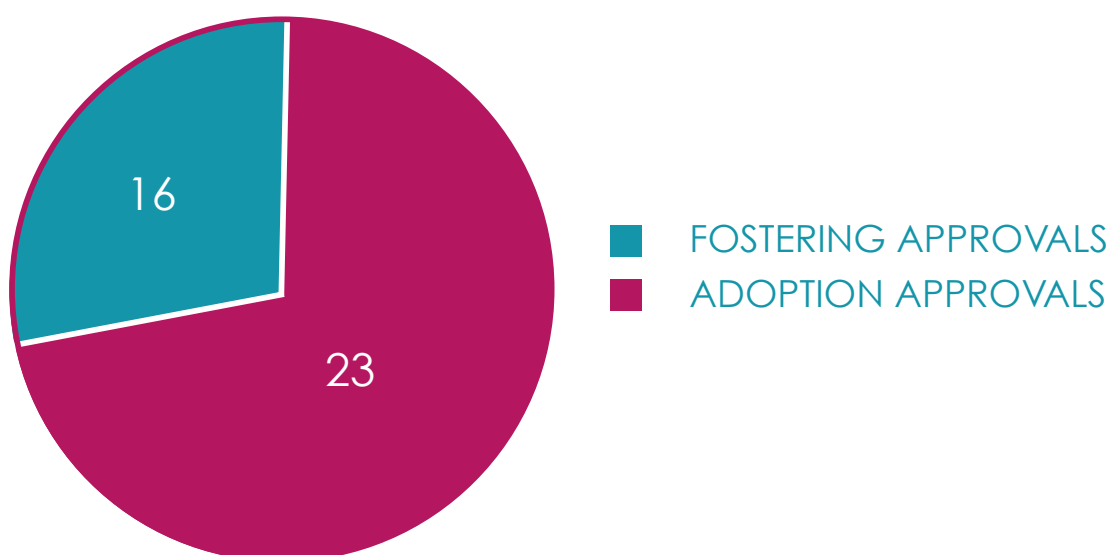
Our medical and legal advisors continue to offer a valuable service and support to all our panels in respect of the provision of information in relation to the children and adults being presented to panel.

Panel members are supported by the service in the following areas:

- Panel business meetings at the end of each panel.
- Panel development forums.
- Panel member training.
- Panel member appraisal.

Within Families for Children we have a designated recruitment team and marketing/ communication officer to ensure we grow our carer population to be able to continue to meet the diverse needs of Glasgow's children.

APPROVALS

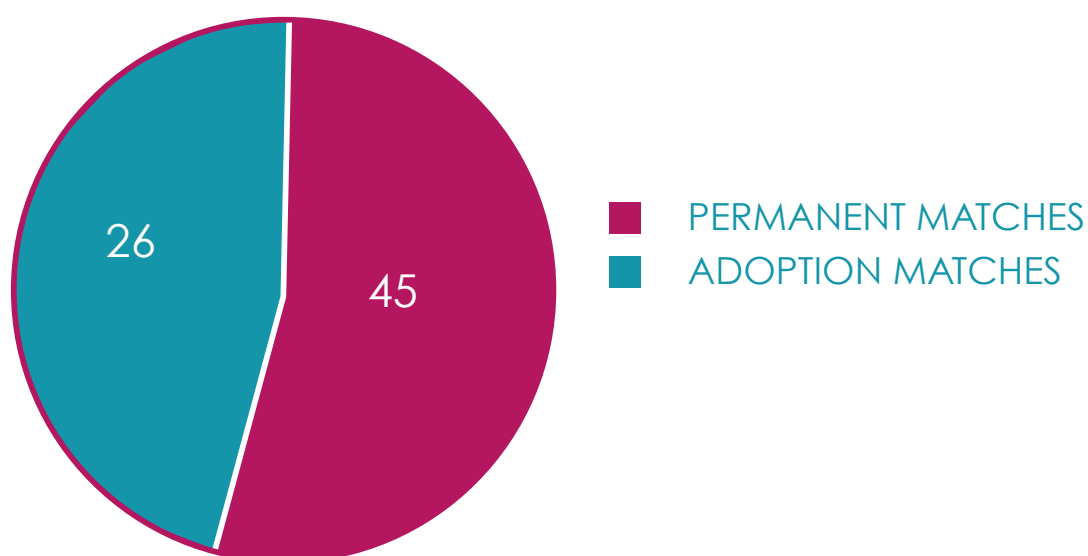


“ Visiting the panel was made easier and less stressful by courteous and friendly staff. All visits/ phone calls have been in a similar vein. A great team. Thank you. ”

Feedback from a prospective adopter attending panel

We have been successful in securing permanence for a number of children affording them security and stability throughout their childhood, either via adoption or permanent foster care. Children were matched with adoptive carers including 1 sibling group of two. 45 children were permanently matched with foster carers. This included 2 x sibling groups of two and 2 x sibling groups of three.

APPROVALS





FOSTERING



Within the fostering service our priority has been to look at the preparation of carers for the fostering task, ensuring through regular review that quality placements are provided and that we have an increasing choice of placements for Glasgow's looked after children. Retention and support to all our carers remains a service priority.

Over the last year there have been a number of developments within the fostering service:-

- Revised training pathway for all carers
- Regular preparation groups are held and 12 groups have run over the course of April 2017-March 2018.
- Unannounced visits – we are meeting the national care standard as a minimum.
- Our Host Family placement service was developed in response to a humanitarian request for all local authorities to offer accommodation, care and support to refugee children/ young people. Glasgow HSCP wanted to offer these vulnerable and traumatised young people family placements if appropriate. We devised recruitment, preparation, assessment, approval and post placement support/ review processes to take this service forward. We currently have 12 Host families approved, 2 Host respite families approved and young people in placement.
- The chairing arrangements for Foster Carer Reviews has been updated to ensure robust quality assurance and compliance with National Care Standards.



Within Families for Children, our carers are fully committed to the care of Glasgow's children and some of our carers have vast experience of offering nurturing care to our most vulnerable children. The average length of service from our carers is 10 years, 4 months and 26 days.

“ I was made to feel at ease and I was given plenty of opportunity to speak as I was so nervous at the beginning. I felt respected in the job I do. ”

Feedback from a foster carer in relation to their Foster Care Review



THE ADOPTION SERVICE

Within the Adoption service our priority has been to look at the preparation of prospective adopters for the task of becoming adoptive parents and then to look at how we support adoptive families. Our recruitment strategy has continued to focus on the need for diverse applicants to come forward to adopt, to enable Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP) to meet the needs of Glasgow's looked after children.

Over the last year there have been a number of developments within the adoption service:-

- Regular preparation groups have been held for adoption and inter country adoption. 11 groups have run over the course of April 2017-March 2018 specifically for adoption and inter country adoption. These have included input from Educational Psychology, Legal advisors and Health input from our LAAC Health advisors.
- Within Families for Children we continue to maximise family finding opportunities for children whose needs have been identified as best met through adoption.
- The adoption service has participated in both adoption activity days and exchange days since their inception and remain committed to maximising family finding opportunities for Glasgow's children and adopters who we have been unable to match locally.
- We are committed to using the national adoption register and this has been particularly successful in matching both Glasgow's adopters and children.
- To support applicants who wish to pursue intercountry adoption, the preparation groups have been revised and an updated charging policy has been implemented.

A close-up photograph of a hand reaching over a collection of colorful toy cars. The hand, wearing a dark blue and grey patterned sweater, is positioned over a silver and green Formula 1 car. To the left is a red Lightning McQueen toy car with 'Piston Cup' and 'Lightning McQueen' text. Below it is an orange car. To the right is another orange car with green and red flame patterns. The background shows other colorful toy cars, including a blue one with the number 3. A white diagonal line runs from the top left to the bottom right, separating the text from the image.

PERMANENCE
& PARTNERSHIP
WORKING WITH THE
LOCALITIES

Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP) is committed to robust permanence planning for Glasgow's children who are looked after away from home and this work is overseen by a permanence steering group that includes members from social care, health, third sector and academia.

Glasgow's permanence strategy has led to service developments city wide:

- Health and social work currently offer two services for children who enter foster care and are aged 0-60 months. These are the Family Assessment and Contact Service (FACS) and Glasgow Infant Family Team (GIFT). Both services aim to make recommendations to social work and the legal system about whether a child can return home safely to their birth family, or whether permanent care away from home is indicated. Their assessments help professionals make timely decisions about whether a young child should stay with their birth family or whether a permanent substitute family should be sought. In contrast to the FACS team that provides a comprehensive assessment solely, GIFT also provides a range of interventions that support foster carers to develop and stabilise the children's mental health. Both services are part of a research trial which will inform future service delivery once this has been concluded and the findings are known.
- A family group decision making team (FGDM) was established in the North East of the city with a plan to roll it out across all the localities. Their remit is to ensure all family placement options have robustly and timeously been considered for children to determine the viability of a placement for children within their extended family or if alternative interim or permanent care is to be sourced.
- A revised Report to Permanence Review template with associated guidance has been implemented city wide.
- The permanence workshops run by Families for Children continue to support locality social workers in the progression of permanence work.



- Families for Children has also been instrumental in the creation of the Child's Matching profile, which replaces the BAAF Form E and is imbedded in practice now. All reports are enshrined in the GIRFEC model.
- A number of interim/ short-term carers have asked to be re-assessed to care permanently for children in their care for whom a permanence decision has been reached. The service developed a re-assessment framework to ensure this is progressed in a timely manner whilst ensuring all issues are robustly explored. This has been embedded into practice over the last year.
- To prepare interim/ short term carers for the change in role to become permanent carers the service has developed and implemented a two-day Permanence training course which is a prerequisite to the re-assessment being taken forward.
- Legal briefings have been provided to all social work staff and managers in both the localities and in Families for Children to ensure practice is current and recent legal judgements have been duly considered.
- A re-write of Glasgow's looked after and accommodated child (LAAC) 5 day training course has been implemented city wide and now has a two day focus on permanence. A one day managers' briefing has also been rolled out.



- To inform the care planning for children and young people and the decisions that workers need to reach about siblings living together or apart, the service has implemented a revised sibling assessment framework to better inform and evidence care planning decisions in respect of keeping siblings together or apart.
- Team Leaders within the service have designated locality links with the focus being partnership working regarding permanence. They attend on a monthly basis the Permanence forum, of which there are three in the city, to discuss the children/young people in their area who are being tracked for permanence. The forum's aim is to reduce drift in children and young people's care plans.

“ I found it reassuring that there were several people/ professionals involved in the process. I am certain we are a good match for our children and it is helpful to know how thorough the process is. ”

Foster carer's feedback in relation to their re-assessment to become permanent carers for the children currently in their care



PLACEMENT
ENDINGS –
ADOPTION AND
FOSTERING

Families for Children has secured permanence for Glasgow's children via adoption and permanent fostering. Many of the children who have been placed for permanence have complex needs after experiencing significant early years' adversity. Despite the service making placement supports available to permanent carers and adopters, for some children and young people their placement could no longer be sustained. Between April 2017 and March 2018 there were 3 unplanned adoption placement endings and 8 unplanned placement endings in permanent fostering.

Within the service we have implemented a practice guidance for all staff that affords all concerned an opportunity to reflect on the unplanned placement endings through a disruption meeting being held. This meeting helps identify any areas for future learning, service improvement and support to all concerned. A review of all the disruption meeting minutes has been held in 2018 and the learning has been shared within the service, across the localities and with our panel members.



A close-up photograph of a man and a woman smiling warmly at the camera. The man, on the left, has short brown hair and blue eyes, wearing a grey t-shirt. The woman, on the right, has dark hair pulled back, wears black-rimmed glasses and a blue and white striped off-the-shoulder top. She is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. The man's hands are resting on the woman's shoulders. The background is dark and textured. A large white diagonal shape cuts across the bottom left of the image, containing the text.

LEARNING &
DEVELOPMENT –
FOSTERING AND
ADOPTION

Within Families for Children we have invested in and established a designated learning and development team that consists of two Learning & Development workers who are both qualified Social Workers.

The training team are responsible for providing training to the 581 fostering households and this training is available to and regularly attended by adopters, locality workers and FFC staff. The training pathway is reviewed annually and new courses are regularly developed. Over 2017/2018 we have implemented a new mandatory course for all carers on attachment, resilience and communication (ARC) and this has been well received to date.

In addition to the core training pathway we have established links with Education, Health and the Children's Hearing system to provide stand-alone courses such as Autism Awareness (two-level course) and Talk 2 Sexual Health.

“ I have enjoyed the course, it was very detailed and delivered very well. The course has answered all the questions I had. I'm amazed at all the opportunity for extra training and would be interested in that. ”

Feedback from a prospective foster carer who attend preparation groups



PLACEMENT SUPPORT

Placement stability is a service wide priority and as such we continue to invest in different approaches and programmes to enable staff to more effectively support carers to meet the diverse needs of Glasgow's looked after children. We have recently invested in Family Functional therapy and VERP (video enhanced reflective practice) which is an application of Video Interaction Guidance.

We provide monthly support groups for our carers in Glasgow. These take place during the day as well as in the evening. In the past twelve months an additional support group has been established in the Ayrshire area to take account of the geographical spread of our carers in this area, this group meets quarterly. There are future plans to expand carer support groups to the Lanarkshire area.

In recognition of the wide diverse cultural needs of Glasgow's children, young people and their carers, a BME (Black Minority Ethnic) support group has been running for a number of years. This is a well-established and attended group that meets quarterly.

Families for Children commission a number of services to complement and build on the support provided by our own staff to our own carers. We commission the Includem support service, which has a specific remit to support looked after children placed with Glasgow carers. This support service can provide individually tailored, direct 1:1 support for the child/young person and their foster family.

In addition to Includem support we can access support via our LAAC Health teams, LAAC Mental Health, CAMHS and Educational Psychology.

Families for Children pay for all foster carers to be members of The Fostering Network (TFN) that offers a wide range support to their members.

Post Adoption support

Post Adoption Support is a growing area of investment and development within the service due to the successful number of children for whom we have been able to secure adoption. This is in recognition of the complex profiles of some of our children who are placed for adoption for whom ongoing support is essential. The service has implemented an adoption support plan format that assists workers in taking forward an assessment/ reassessment and review of a person who is in need of post adoption support.

The service has a dedicated social worker whose role it is to coordinate and develop the letterbox service for children who have been adopted, where there is an agreement or court order that there is to be post adoption contact with their birth families. In the year April 2017 – March 2018, the service facilitated letterbox exchange for 126 families.

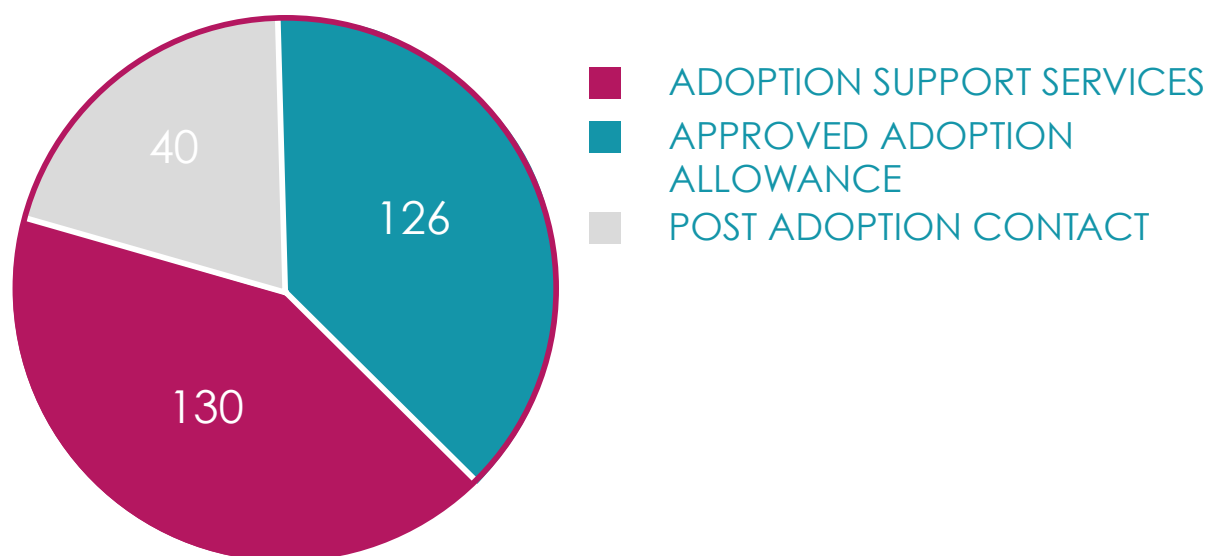
Scottish Adoption Advisory Service (SAAS) which is run by Barnardo's is commissioned to provide support to young people, birth parents and adopters requiring origins support. In recognition of this growing area of support Glasgow City HSCP has doubled its investment of funding into this service.

Adoption UK membership is paid for all adoptive parents for the first year post approval. In addition to this Adoption UK are commissioned to run a programme of post adoption support and social events for Glasgow's adopters which complements the support provided directly by the service.

Some of the post adoption and post approval training provided directly by FFC includes:

- The adoption family – the role of Social Work Services and other agencies.
- Attachment and how to grow relationships with children.
- Adoption and the legal context
- The impact of drugs and alcohol on a child's development and behaviour.
- Contact with birth family in adoption.
- The role of the wider family network in supporting adoption.
- Life story work with children.

FFC directly provide the following post adoption support:





CONSULTATION AND
PARTICIPATION

The service consults with carers on a range of issues and at different stages of their involvement or contact with Families for Children. Carers are invited to support the service at information evenings, preparation groups and supporting the Learning & Development team with co-facilitating training courses.

The service works with the Children's Rights Service in relation to engagement and consultation with young people in foster care as well as young people whose parents are foster carers. The service along with Children's Rights Service has consulted with young people age 8+ in foster placements in relation to their interest in getting involved/communication and attendance at events or activities. The response is being considered and will be progressed in due course.

Feedback from those attending the Fostering/ Adoption and Permanence panels is sought via questionnaires that are reviewed on a regular basis to inform service development and analysis is provided to all panel members during their development sessions.

The service regularly consults with and involves the staff group in service and practice developments and examples of some of our activity in this area is highlighted below:

- Peer self-evaluation audit tool for the fostering and adoption services has been created and has been used in partnership with the Performance Audit team. The findings of the peer audit exercise assisted to highlight areas of good practice as well as aspects of the service we wish to develop.
- Through team development sessions it was identified that a dedicated recruitment team would be beneficial to the service to streamline the enquiry/recruitment processes. The recruitment team was developed and established in November 2015. A full review of the team was completed in November 2017 and its outcomes and next steps are being considered.

- Consistency of staff supervision and personal development plans is a key priority for the service to ensure our workforce is supported and well trained to carry out their roles. Staff supervision across the service was audited in September 2017 and personal development plans (PDPs) will be audited in November 2018.

“It's the best thing I've ever done. It's a humbling experience but also a privilege; being a carer inspires me to be more mindful of others and has given me a completely new perspective on life!”

Jackie, respite carer

CELEBRATING
SUCCESS



The #opentofostering campaign has been successful in winning two Scottish Creative Awards for the best online campaign; creative strategy and advertising strategy – Integrated strategy. We were also finalists for the Marketing Society Awards and the Nod Awards. Against stiff competition we are proud that the impact of our #opentofostering campaign has been recognised.

Adoption Celebration Event

In September 2017 we held our second Adoption Celebration Event at Partick Burgh Hall, allowing new adopters the chance to come together and share experiences whilst their children enjoyed games, activities and face-painting. This was a great opportunity for adopters to meet each other and perhaps make new contacts so that they can meet in future.

The appearance of Bonnie the Seal, the mascot for the 2018 European Sports Championships, certainly brightened up the afternoon too and allowed everyone to take the opportunity to grab a sealie with her!

Royal Garden Party

Several of our carers had a right Royal time this summer, when they were invited to attend the Royal Garden Party in Edinburgh. Darren and Amanda Cleary, who feature in our #opentofostering campaign, and Linda and Tam Craig who have been carers with Families for Children for many years, enjoyed a sunny July afternoon in the grounds of Holyrood Palace.



Young People's Achievements

Our young people achieve incredible things. Across Families for Children we hear amazing stories of our young people doing so well every day.

Wali Hall, aged 16, who is in permanent foster care, was appointed as a member of the new National Youth Arts Advisory Group. This Group, all of whom are aged 14-23, are ambassadors for youth art at a local, national and regional level and will be helping to shape the future of culture and arts in Scotland.

Wali is a talented artist, currently working towards his National 5 in Art and has recently had his work exhibited at the Citizens Theatre.





FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS
APRIL 2018 – MARCH 2019

Next year we will focus on:

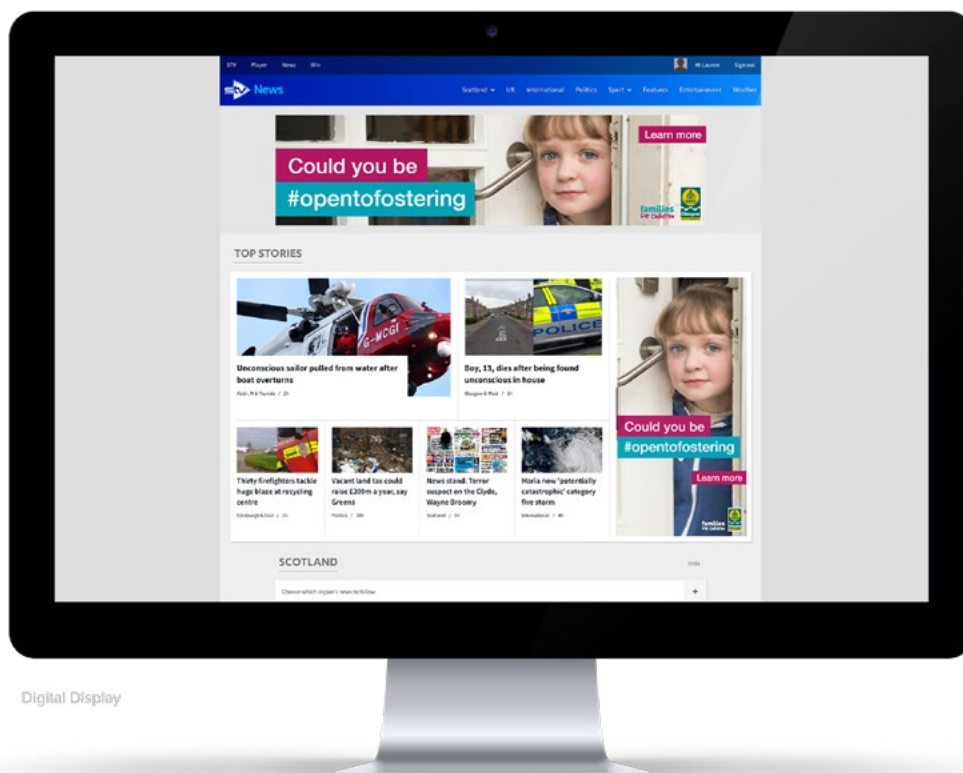
- Continued monitoring and evaluation of the fostering and adoption service to ensure best performance outcomes.
- Maintenance of placement stability and increased choice of placements.
- Further development of placement support
- Ensuring the recruitment strategy is effective to provide a range of placement services to Glasgow's children.
- Targeted recruitment for short-break and emergency carers to provide flexible support to vulnerable children and their families at home in the community.
- Embedding the transformational change strategy in keeping with the strategic vision for transforming Children's Services across the city and ensuring wherever possible that children are best placed within their immediate or extended families. We seek to implement a strategy of innovative, flexible and robust family support services.
- Carer Support groups: The service will develop a

“ Being a respite carer has allowed our family to have opportunities to help children in crisis and make a difference in their lives. It is incredibly rewarding and we're so glad we decided to apply. ”

Debbie, respite carer

Lanarkshire support group for foster carers in this geographical area.

- Reviewing and consulting with adopters about post adoption support to ensure this is proportionate, accessible, targeted and effective.
- Further audit activity to be undertaken.







families
for children

