

I am pleased to be able to report that we have been successful in our bid to the Department for Education to run the KEEP programme for carers in Kent. The KEEP Safe programme is aimed at carers of young people aged 12 plus and is based on the work of the Oregon Social Learning Centre (OSLC) where we have already developed close links as part of the TFC scheme in Kent. Each group will run over 20 weeks and we plan to run the first group early in the New Year. Each group will be run by a lead and co-facilitator and we are currently recruiting to these posts. Further details of the programme will be available shortly.

The transport for LAC to school or contact was raised at the Advisory Board on 23rd November.

There were several issues of concern highlighted by foster carer representatives at the meeting and it was agreed that if foster carers are worried or have a concern about any transport issues regarding either the taxi or the escort please contact Nick Smythe on 01622 605088.

You should have received a 2012 diary which is to be used to record details of meetings, appointments, contact arrangements, PEPs, annual reviews, supervision visits and support groups.

If you haven't received a diary, please speak to your fostering worker.

I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and look forward to working with you again in 2012.

Happy New Year
Teresa Vickers
County Manager - Fostering

Contents	Page
Teresa Vickers Reports	1
Christmas Card Competition Results	2
KFCA	3
Policy & Performance	4
New Carers	5
MK Reports	6
Therapeutic Reparenting	7
EK1 Canterbury with Swale Reports	8 & 9
EK2 Thanet with Dover Reports	10 & 11
West Kent Reports	12 & 13
Long Term Placements needed	14 & 15
Short Breaks for Disabled Children	16, 17 & 18
Multi-Dimensional Treatment Fostering	19, 20 & 21
Training & Development	22 & 23
Recruitment & Retention	24
Book Review	25
FosterTalk F	26 & 27
Notice Board	28

Christmas Card Competition



Overall Winner

Congratulations to

**Brydie
aged 14**

Fostering Service Christmas Card Competition

Congratulations to Brydie whose entry has been chosen as the Overall Winner and will be used for the Fostering Service 2011 Christmas Card.

The judging panel commented that all the entries were creative which made choosing the overall winner difficult. Details of the other entry winners are on Page 2.



Age 8—11 Category Winner

**Congratulation to
Joanna
aged 10**



Age 5—7 Category Winner

**Congratulation
to Victoria
aged 6**

Kent Foster Care Association



At the time of preparing this note, the KFCA Committee is busy preparing for the KFCA Christmas Extravaganza on 26 November 2011. There have been dire warning of impending weather conditions but we remain optimistic that the weather will allow us all to enjoy the event. Your feedback would be welcomed.

Project 2011 – Transition to Independence

Update your diaries now! **Wednesday 18 January 2012** is the date of the Transition to Independence Project to be held at Lenham from 9:30 to 14:30. Invites have been issued to all foster carers but if you have lost yours then email the KFCA Treasurer (Maria Dobner) on treasurer@kfca.org.uk to book your place providing your name, area (MK, EK1, EK2, WK) and the number of places required.

The conference will look at the issues around LAC moving to independence; what help is available and how to access it; and how foster carers can prepare the children for independence. There will be information on foster carers providing supported lodgings and related issues such as taxation and benefits. An enormous amount of work has gone into investigating the issues and preparing for this conference – please come along;

Foster Carers Conference and AGM

This event will be held on 07 March 2012 at Lenham Community Centre. Invitations will be issued in the New Year.

Other News

The KFCA Committee continues to work hard to support KCC foster carers. We would always welcome any assistance you can offer. Why not contact a committee member and come along to one of the meetings – you never know you just might enjoy yourself!

As a refresher to all those we have met at the KCC New Carer Induction sessions we would like to remind you about our website and forum:- www.kfca.org.uk for the latest KFCA news, contact information, projects and helpful links. You can also send us your comments, views or to 'get involved' via the contacts page.

Your support is important to us.

Together we can make a difference.

www.kfca.org.uk



Cathy Goodwin

Policy & Performance

Pop up house

A model house, which has been developed by a care leaver, has been made available to foster carers, via fostering teams.

When a child or young person arrives in a new fostering placement, carers will now be able to explain about themselves and their family in a creative way.

The paper model comes with instructions on how to put together, and can be coloured in and glued together either by the carer or the child (with adult assistance). The base on which the house sits can be personalised by having photos of pets etc added.

Carers can ask for additional packs if the child wishes to keep the model.

This will be in addition to the foster carer profile, which is emailed to the social worker so they can prepare the child for the placement.

You can view the Pop Up House via this link

http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/children/carers_events.cfm

**Please keep your profile information up to date
and let your fostering social worker
have new photos and information as necessary.**

The Fostering Service Welcomes New Carers

Darren and Carol Allport - EK2

Melisa Bowd - EK2

Margaret Burden & Dave Gibson - EK2

Alison & Colin Burgess - WK

Dyah & Carlton Chislett - MK

Katrina & Michael Farley - Short Breaks

Lynne & Dylan Gillett - Short Breaks

Jane & Cliff Horn - EK2

Lee Griffiths & Sharon Parker - EK2

Vanda & Colin Lewis - EK1

Rebecca & Glenn Missons - EK1

Robin & Anthea Nutbeam - MK

Denise Simpson & Jaime Giddings - Short Breaks

Valerie & Mark Sired - Treatment

Peggie Wheeler - EK1

**Please look out for them at support groups
and be available to answer all those initial questions
when they take their first children into placement.
If you would like to become a mentor for new foster carers,
please discuss this with your supervising worker.**

Mid Kent Area - 01233 898635
Foster Carer Payments 01622 772212

It's been an exciting time in the Mid Kent Team with more new staff joining us. Lyn Chapman has joined the team as a Social Worker Assistant and will be working closely with Social Worker Ruth Hills to support her foster carers. Louisa Bryant has also joined the team as a Social Worker Assistant and will be working with Chipu Mukoki to support her foster carers. Both Lyn and Louisa will also be working alongside the social worker on duty and helping with support groups. In November Roger Drake will be joining the team as a Fostering Social Worker, with previous experience of fostering and we are looking forward to him joining the team. The team are also having a second year social work student Andrea Farrington starting in November for a six month placement. Andrea will be working mainly undertaking assessments and supporting a small number of foster carers.

We said goodbye to Helen Causer at the end of the summer. Helen will be sadly missed by both the team and the foster carers she supported.

Recruitment of foster carers

The Maidstone Mela in September 2011 at Mote Park, was not as well attended as it has been in past years with less interest in the fostering stand, which could have been due to the poor weather they had on the day. Thank you to all staff and foster carers that helped out with the stand. Mid Kent also held an information evening in Maidstone in October which was well attended from people coming from across Kent.

CWDC

Mid Kent held the first workshop for connected persons (kinship/family friend) foster carers in September. There was only a small take up for the workshop but those carers attending worked hard to start putting together their folder of evidence.

Mentoring

Mid Kent aim to link every new foster carer approved at panel with an experienced foster carer to support them in their first year. We hold a list of foster carers who have volunteered to be mentors and aim to link people with someone within their local area. If you are an experienced foster carer who could undertake this task please inform your fostering Social Worker. This can be used as evidence within foster carers annual reviews of undertaking additional fostering tasks. Written guidance is now available on the role of the mentor and what is expected.

On a final note.....

Thank you for all your hard work in 2011 – our foster carers continue to inspire us as a team, with the care, commitment and dedication they show to our Looked After Children. Your hard work is greatly valued by us all. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas with your families and a Happy New year.

Mark Vening
Team Leader

Caroline Smith
Principal Social Workers

Robert Attwell
Principal Social Worker

Therapeutic Reparenting Fostering (TRP)

Providing specialised foster care for 4 -13 year olds

We continue to need carers to work with in the TRP. They will be working closely with others in the children's network to learn about the child, understand what has gone wrong and try to put it right by providing the experiences the child has missed or have been unable to take on board because of the traumatic events in their lives.

We also continue to need carers who are interested in offering long term commitment to children who, whilst still requiring a high level of care and thought, are ready to move on to permanence. The TRP team continue to work with the long term families to support the transition.

We recently decided to work with TRP carers to hold some workshops, offering an opportunity for the carers and staff to spend time sharing skills and looking at common issues that we find ourselves working with.

Chris Cheese and Deborah Cumber worked hard to facilitate the first workshop that was to focus on MESSEY PLAY, held on 23rd November. Unfortunately due to a number of reasons there were very few people there, but I really did want to say a

BIG THANK YOU

to them both for the effort they put in and I hope that we can set another date for the workshop to take place when others are more able to attend.

I know that those who did attend found the workshop interactive, fun and informative.

**Once again the Christmas celebrations are taking shape
and we have a New Year ahead of us !**

**Christmas is not always an easy time for the children we care for,
and we know that has a knock on effect for you and your families.**

**We would like to say a huge thank you to all our TRP carers and your families.
We could not do any of this with out your energy, commitment and care.**

Thank you

**We hope you enjoy the festivities and wish you a very happy
New Year.**

**We are always very happy to talk to those who are interested
in learning more about the TRP.**

The TRP leads in the fostering teams are:

Mid-Kent	Sonja Van-Rooyen	01233 898634
West Kent	Deborah Cumber	01732 525324
East Kent One	Bobby Thomas	01227 598573
East Kent Two	Michelle Dennis	01843 570003
TRP Supervisor	Amanda Byatt	01732 525342

Amanda Byatt - Principal Social Worker Therapeutic Reparenting

East Kent 1 - Canterbury with Swale 01227 598500 Foster Carer Payments 01622 772238

Hi, from all at East Kent 1 Fostering team. Well, here we go again, Christmas nearly upon us, children and young people getting excited and no doubt some more mature people as well. The Social Committee have again been busy preparing for this special time of year in relation to the following events:

A Cake Sale is being held at Brook House, Whitstable, on the 25th November 2011 between 11.30 am and 2.00 pm. Please support this event as the funds raised will go towards the annual Christmas party, an event not to be missed. The party is being held on the 11th December 2011 at Boughton Village Hall, 3.00 to 6.00 pm, with entertainment, games and food being supplied by the Social Committee. As with all the other years, your support is needed and for those new carers who may wish to be involved in the work of the Social Committee, speak to your Fostering Social Worker who will gladly forward your details to the relevant foster carers.

Many of you will know by now that Fostering Social Worker, Ian King, has retired from the team and his expertise, knowledge and friendly personality will surely be missed by everyone involved in fostering and KCC as a whole. Ian has been with the team for 13 years and has provided support to many foster carers along the way, as well as being involved in the delivery of the Skills to Foster course for new applicants. I am sure each and every one of you would like to wish Ian well for the future. Ian is hoping to come along to the Swale Support Group on the 16th December 2011, weather permitting of course, to say a fond farewell to many of the carers he has worked with over the years.

On the subject of support groups, you may recall the last newsletter talking about the smaller groups in each area. We have received some positive feedback from these smaller groups and would like to thank all the foster carers who have hosted them. If you wish to attend one in your area or to find out where they are, speak to your Fostering Social Worker.

The team are pleased to welcome the arrival of a new Social Worker to the team at the beginning of December 2011. Joyce is looking forward to meeting all the carers at some point and along with the team here at Brook House, I know that you would wish her well on her impending new post.

We also have new carers joining East Kent 1 and would ask if you come across them please give them a big hello and welcome to the East Kent 1 area. The new carers are as follows:

Peggy Wheeler

Vanda and Colin Lewis

Finally, all that is left to do is remind everyone to keep themselves safe and warm over the coming winter months and although a little early, have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year from all at Brook House.

Nicola Anthony - Team Leader

Glynis Statham - Principal Social Worker

EK1 Fostering Canterbury & Swale District

Christmas Party

2011

AT

**BOUGHTON VILLAGE HALL
BULL LANE, BOUGHTON-UNDER-BLEAN,
FAVERSHAM, KENT, ME13 9AH**

ON

SUNDAY 11 DECEMBER

15:00 – 17:30

FOR ALL AGES

DISCO & PARTY GAMES

SPECIAL GUEST (RED SUIT, WHITE BEARD!)

FOOD & SOFT DRINKS

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

TO PREPARE AND DONATE PARTY FOOD

TO HELP SET UP & CLEAR UP

TO VOLUNTEER OR BOOK YOUR PLACE

**You need to pay £1 per child either to your fostering officer
or a member of the**

Social Committee Email:

donna.dawson4@btinternet.com - 01227-375597

annaotto01@hotmail.co.uk - 01227-457537

shellymassey@btconnect.com - 01795-422951

PLEASE BOOK BY 2ND DECEMBER LATEST!

**East Kent 2 - Thanet with Dover Area 01843 570003
Foster Carer Payments 01622 772238**

The EK2 Children's Christmas Party is to be held on 11th December at Pfizer Social Club from 3 - 5 pm.

We hope to see many of you there enjoying the festivities.

Sons and Daughters Fun Day

The event was another successful Sons and Daughters Fun Day on 23rd October and we were pleased to welcome some new faces.

A fun time was had by all and watch this space for information regarding future dates.

Many congratulations

to Emma and Mark on the birth of their delightful twin boys.



Ethan on the left and Elliot on the right

Congratulations

to Murphy and Juncy on the birth of their son Gabriel.

Welcome

to our new part time admin worker Vanessa Thomas, I'm sure many of you will be meeting her or speaking to her over the phone soon.

We would like to thank all our foster carers for their hard work over the last year and for their continued commitment to fostering.

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Maggie Nash
Team Leader

Stephanie Jones
Team Leader/Principal Social Worker

Morag Robinson
Principal Social Worker

EK2 Foster Care Children's Christmas Party

Sunday 11th December 2011

3-5pm

Pfizer Social Club

Foster Carer, Sue Skinner is once again organising this year's Christmas Party. This is for East Kent 2 looked after children and carer's own children.

Included: Entertainment, disco & a visit from Father Christmas

This is a free event, but you are asked to bring 2 plates of 'Party Food' - one savoury and one sweet.

Disability access

Spaces are limited, so please contact the fostering office with your name and number(s) of children attending.

**Remember, "This is your Party",
so please let's have your support
and make it a good one**

Maggie Nash
Team Leader

Stephanie Jones
Team Leader/Principal Social Worker

Morag Robinson
Principal Social Worker

West Kent Area - 01732 525324
Foster Carer Payments - 01622 605152

Cakes! Cakes! Cakes!!!!



As you can see from the photos we had a very successful cake sale on Wednesday 8th November 2011.

It was Jackey Lorimer who suggested the idea of a cake sale to raise funds for the 3 Christmas Parties being arranged across West Kent. I know Jackey and myself were overwhelmed by the generosity of the West Kent Fostering Team and other workers in Gibson Drive in providing cakes to sell and as you can see there was some beautiful cakes.


However we were even more surprised at 10.00am to have such a long queue of customers all eager to buy!! We had to call for reinforcements to sell.

I am pleased to announce that **£289.05** was raised from the sale which I am sure you will all agree is a good result as this will be shared between the 3 parties.

I must say a big Thank You to Jackey for her organisation and to the Team for their support.



West Kent Area - 01732 525324
Foster Carer Payments - 01622 605152



Christmas Party

I know I have already given out the Christmas Party dates before but wanted to make sure that everyone had the date of the last one taking place

Friday 16 December
at St Aidens Community Centre, Gravesend
6.30pm- 9pm - Contact Carol Freed 01474 745444

Good Bye to **Yvonne White** who has been a foster carer with West Kent for 3 years.
We wish her well.

I know in the last newsletter we did say goodbye to **Jean and John Brian**.
However I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work they have undertaken with children over the last 16 years particularly providing Emergency Bed for so many young people. So we do wish them well and Good Luck in their retirement

I find it hard to believe that another year has gone but need to take this opportunity to say big **Thank You** all of you for your hard work and co-operation in being able to provide so many placements for all the children you are looking after.

It only leaves me to say Have a Very GOOD Christmas and a Happy New Year

Long Term Placements Needed

Jane needs a long term placement (Permanency)

Jane turned seven years old in June 2011 and is currently subject of a Care Order. Jane is white British, of average height and weight with fair skin and auburn hair. Jane is an amiable, placid child who enjoys playing with her dolls, dance, drama, singing and learning to swim. Jane also enjoys most child focused activities, peer group activities and days out. Jane enjoys school and there are minimal concerns regarding her educational development but she does need extra support with reading and writing and is receiving extra tuition to assist her. Jane for the most part is a placid, polite child.

Jane has been in foster care since July 2009 and was placed with her older brother, however their relationship and lack of attachment to each other has led to the decision that the children should be placed in separate placements. Since her brother's move there have been no such difficulties with Jane's behaviour. Jane requires a committed foster carer who has the potential to become a long term placement for Jane.

Jane requires carers who are able to demonstrate an understanding of her past and support her to form attachments to others. Jane would benefit from a placement where she is the only child or youngest child in the placement, but this is not imperative. Ideally Jane requires two carers or an experienced single carer.

Jane has five brothers and sisters in separate placements, carers will need to be creative with maintaining contact arrangements between siblings. Any interested carer would need to be a Kent Carer or be prepared to transfer to Kent County Council.

**For further information regarding Jane, please contact Deepinder Kaur Gill
Social Worker for the Dartford Children and families Team on 01474-328664**

Permanent Foster Carers needed for Samuel, Toby & Michael

My name is **Samuel** and I am 14 years old. I have two brothers, **Toby** (11 yrs) and **Michael** (10yrs). We are all white British. We are looking for permanent foster carers, preferably a couple. We cannot live with our mum as she has hasn't cared for us properly and has neglected us. We have been in foster care for about one year and get on well with out foster carers.

I have been diagnosed with Aspergers syndrome which means that I am quite a concrete thinker and sometimes I have difficulties getting on with children of my own age as I can misinterpret their actions. I have a really good humour and am really smart. My favourite subjects at school are IT, Maths and Cooking and I like swimming.

Both my brothers go to school. **Toby** has a special educational statement which means he needs some more help with literature and maths. But since in foster care, he has made quite a bit of progress and teachers have been really impressed with him. Toby has been participating at magic workshops and also likes bike riding. He is good at arts and always enjoys drawing or making things. He can sometimes get frustrated but responds well when helped.

Michael is our 'footballer'. He has joined the school's football team and is happy as long as he can kick the ball around. Apart from showing off his football skills he also enjoys anything to do with sports. He is doing really well at school and is a 'deeper thinker'.

We can wind each other up a bit and compete for attention but have responded well to boundaries with our foster carers. All the people we know have said about us that we are really polite and well-mannered boys and we love animals.

**For further information regarding Samuel, Toby & Michael, please contact
Anne Kohler - Social Worker - Swanley / Sevenoaks Children and Families on 01322 611000**

Long Term Placements Needed

Tom needs a long term placement (Permanency)

My name is Tom and I am almost 12 years old. I am white British and am looking for permanent foster carers. I cannot live with my parents as they are unable to provide me with the special care that I require. I have been with my current foster carers for 2 ½ years and have a close bond with them.

I was diagnosed with severe autism at the age of 2 and this impacts on my ability to form and maintain relationships with others and my learning. I have no verbal communication, but people who know me well are often able to anticipate my needs and wants and interpreting my actions further helps them to realise what I need.

My current foster carer describes me as very loving and cheerful. I enjoy sitting on her lap and will seek out physical contact often. I love to be tickled and listening to music. I am an outdoor person, as I like to be active. I also thoroughly enjoy swimming and whilst I require supervision in the pool, I move around in the water and pool area independently.

I am due to change to an independent special needs school for children with Autism that adopts and ABA (Applied Behaviour Analysis) approach. It is important that my new carers are happy to learn about this approach in order to be able to support my development further and work with the school to support my learning. My new carers should have prior experience of caring for a child with a disability, ideally autism.

Although I need some routine in my life, my current foster carer also finds me fairly adaptable, for example when going on holiday. However, although I am fairly compliant, it is hard to persuade me to do things I do not want to do.

I have regular contact with members of my birth family, including my mother, father and 3 siblings."

For further information regarding Tom, please contact

**Jane Price - Allocated Social Worker (and Acting Principle Social Worker)
01732 225001**

Pam Howard - Administration Officer 01732 225102

Disabled Children's Team Croft House East Street Tonbridge Kent TN9 1HP

Short Breaks for Disabled Children Foster Carer Payments 01622 605159

Staffing News!

Fiona gave birth to Jacob on Thursday 3 November, and all went well. Our warmest congratulations go out to Fiona, Martin and baby Jacob! Further update to follow in the next newsletter.

With Fiona having left and no replacement secured for Gwen's post yet it will be down to me and Veronica to administer the Short Break Service and we have divided the county up into two parts. Veronica will concentrate on mainly East Kent and I will cover our carers in West and North Kent. That way we can continue to offer support to all of Fiona's foster carers, but we ask for your continued patience and understanding during this period. Fiona hopes to be back next May 2012!

Adverts are out for Gwen's part time post and I hope we can appoint another social worker soon.

New Carers

Just one new foster carer this time around, Michelle Huggins who was approved by panel in September. Michelle lives in Chartham, near Canterbury and has a great deal of experience in the field of disability. Veronica is already discussing with her potential referrals!

We also have three sets of carers being presented to the Mid Kent Panel on the 10 November, so I can update you about their progress next time.

The Short Break Service remains busy, with a number of other applicants awaiting assessment having completed their Skills To Foster training and other's due to commence their training in December.

At the time of writing we have received 24 applications since the 1 April, with a significant proportion progressing on to assessment.

Overnight Stays

I mentioned last time that I believed we would top the 1000 overnight stay mark soon – well you have surpassed yourselves with a whopping 1274 overnight stays between the 1 April and the 31 October 2011. That is tremendous, and on behalf of the Short Break Service I thank each and every one of you for reaching this unbelievable achievement. Who knows what the end of year figure will be but I expect it to be over 2000 overnight stays.

Payments

I know some of you still experience difficulties, but I know Charlie Faulkner and particularly Minnie Love are very good at responding to the issues we raise with them. I am reassured that we have designated staff processing our Short Break payments.

Some of you still forward me your day care invoices. Unfortunately I cannot process these yet, and they need to go via the child's district team.

Robert Attwell - Principal Social Worker

**Short Breaks for Disabled Children
Foster Carer Payments 01622 605159**



**The Kent Deaf Children's Society
Parent / Carer of the Year**

Mary and Bob Howse

Recognising a parent / carer or couple who have shown unstinting devotion to the care and development of their young deaf child, children. Despite many setbacks and problems that have arisen over the years. Continuing to nurture the child/ren and support them to the best of their ability.

<http://kentdcs.blogspot.com/>

Robert Attwell - Principal Social Worker

Short Breaks for Disabled Children Foster Carer Payments 01622 605159

Training News

Fiona and I recently presented two Disability Awareness workshops, one at Lenham on the 27 September and one at Seasalter on the 16 September. Both were well attended, and brought together a number of mainstream and short break foster carers, enabling us all to share knowledge and our experiences around issues of disability. I thank all of you for attending and for your feedback.

Any of you can access our online training courses, and can continue to attend any relevant training you identify for yourselves on the training calendar. It is a requirement that all foster carers attend training, and I would encourage you all to do so.

Most of our existing carers have completed their CWDC Portfolio's, and new carers are reminded that they have twelve months from the date of their approval to complete and submit their portfolio.

Other News

May I personally thank Phillipa and Claire (Broadstairs) for all their hard work and dedication to the Short Break Service, as they are moving on to other projects. They have been extremely hard working and busy carers, and their loss will be felt by the Short Break Service. We wish them well.

Dawn and Shane Jones (Deal) are also leaving the Short Break Service, and will be concentrating on their full time caring commitments. They have been associated with the Short Break Service for many years, and have provided an excellent service for many disabled children and their families. My thanks go to them, and wish them continued success with their other caring duties!

In the New Year I would have completed two years with the Short Break Service, and with any service it continually evolves. We have said farewell to many established and experienced foster carers, and welcomed several others to us. That is why we are continually recruiting, in order that we can meet the demands placed upon us. The children's needs are changing too, with much more challenging behaviour to manage and complex health needs to meet. However we have a diverse range of carers and between you these challenges can be met!

Website 4us2.org is a new parent lead charity supporting disabled children and their families across East Kent.

This will probably be the last Newsletter before the Christmas period, so on behalf of everyone involved in delivering the Short Break Service may I wish you and your family's a very Happy Christmas and warmest wishes for 2012.

As always if you have anything you wish to share, a child's poem, picture, success story or comments about how we can do things better then please drop me an e mail at robert.attwell@kent.gov.uk.

Happy Christmas!!!!
Robert Attwell

Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care Kent (TFC)

Over the last four months we have had three young people aged between eleven and thirteen placed on the programme and all are settling in well. The summer months have been busy with supporting the young people towards the end of school term and the Skills Trainers have been busy finding out about local activities/events taking place. One of the events that they organised was a trip to Go Ape and was a really enjoyable day for everyone involved.

Christmas is almost upon us and it has been another busy few months for the team with two young people joining the programme. That means we currently have seven young people in placement and are busy looking at referrals for other young people. In order to support the young people it's really important that we recruit foster carers and I am very pleased to give a warm welcome to Valerie and Mark who recently joined the team as respite carers. We have also had a carer return to TFC, so a warm welcome to John. Our TFC Information Evening at the end of September 2011 was well attended and we hope to begin some further assessments in the New Year. If you are thinking about becoming a TFC carer fulltime or as a TFC respite carer please feel free to ask for more information.

We are arranging to meet with all the fostering teams over the next two months to share information about the programme and will also be arranging to meet with the newly established Looked After Children's teams.

We are also applying for re-certification and the Programme Supervisor, Annie Bousfield, is busy preparing all the evidence needed including the filming of weekly carer and clinical team meetings. We will know the outcome early in the New Year.

Over half term some of the young people and our Skills Trainers had a wonderful day at Bewl Water. They are now busy planning a Christmas Party which sounds like great fun and the team are busy polishing up their acting and singing skills.

As you will have read on page one as part of the development of evidence based interventions Kent will be running the **KEEP Safe** programme for carers of young people aged 12 plus. The programme will initially be managed within TFC so we are busy working closely with the National Team to implement the training.

Welcome back to MFTC foster carer John Widdowson who has been a foster carer with the East Kent 1 Fostering Team

Move On Placements

We regularly require Move On placements for the young people who are ready to move on from the programme. If you are interested in offering a Move On placement please contact your Fostering Social Worker

Annie Bousfield Programme Supervisor Pritpal Sodhi Programme Manager
01233 660987

Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care Kent (TFC)

No two days are the same, this can be said in many a job; it is certainly true in fostering.

A Treatment Foster Care though is different again. From the first day that I was introduced to the team, I was told how I was a professional and that I needed to view my role of a carer as professional. This was good advice, as the role of a Treatment Foster Carer requires you to be professional in all your practices.

Although no two days are the same the structure and procedures for daily routines, for carer and young person in placement, do follow a standard pattern. This pattern can quite easily be changed by behaviours and incidents that are not planned for.

A typical school day:

The young person will normally be going to school by taxi unless they are lucky to be in a school close by. I normally get up at six thirty and I call for my young person fifteen minutes later. If my young person is up on time they will earn 10 points towards their daily total. A visit to the bathroom for a morning clean, then tidying the bedroom before coming downstairs will boost the points and the final points are earned by the young person going to school.

During this time I will get their school card ready, encourage them to have a good day at school and remind them to make sure that their school card is filled in for every lesson.

Parent Daily Report

When my young person has left for school I can get on with completing the Parent Daily Report (PDR). I do this by going over the points that the young person has earned for the previous day, hopefully they have earned more than a hundred points which means they stay on level 2. If they haven't they will have to go on to level 1 for the day, this means that they will have some of their privileges removed. The main privilege lost will be that they can not buy time out on their own; they will have to remain with me and do what I wish to do. Although if the young person returns from school and has had a good day I am sure I can find an activity that we both like to do together, swimming or walking somewhere.

Having completed the previous days PDR, I will contact the office after nine o'clock and pass on the information, which is then added to the rest of the information gathered from previous PDRs and analysed to see how the young person is responding to the programme. Recommendations to deal with any negative behaviour can be found from the analysis.

At about ten o'clock my Supervising Social Worker arrives. The regular three weekly supervision is good to pass on any concerns that I may have with regards to the young person's behaviours, and how they are affecting me and my partner. We also have good discussions on how the placement is going in general. These meetings are different to the weekly meetings that I attend with the rest of the team as it is about my placement as opposed to discussing all the placements on the Treatment Foster Care Programme.

I can book a weekends respite in this meeting if I need it (can be taken monthly if the placement needs it) or discuss any other business that may require action by my supervising Social Worker.

Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care Kent (TFC)

Weekly meetings

Weekly meetings are good for gaining knowledge on how to deal with certain behaviours that some of the young people in placements are showing. Most team members attend this informal meeting, chaired by the Treatment Foster Care Programme Supervisor.

We all deal with behaviours differently, but trying some of the ways other carers and team members deal with them may help you cope with a behaviour that you struggle to deal with. You may have advice to pass on as well. The team works well from these meetings. Also information is passed to me about how my young person is coping with the weekly skills session that they attend, and also any recommendations that the team Individual Therapist wants to implement from the weekly therapy session that the young person also must attend.

Back to my day and so far so good, no telephone calls from school to tell me there is an issue and I need to collect my young person as they are being excluded for the day. I have managed to check my young person's bedroom and it is tidy for a change. This is good as I can give 10 bonus points as the bedroom tidy up is normally a big problem for my young person to get right. I take the opportunity during the bedroom check to look in the young person's hiding place for any unallowed things (cigarettes, lighters, aerosols). Today is a good day no points need to be taken as there is no defiance, everything is in order.

Back from school

Three thirty comes around quickly and in comes my young person brandishing a scruffy scrunched up school card. A big smile and loud hello tells me that a good day at school has been had. Confirmation of this quickly comes as I have the school card thrust in my hand and an excuse that the one OK lesson "wasn't my fault". Positively congratulating the young person on how many points they have earned from the completed school card I then add it to the rest of the week's cards.

No skills session today so I ask what the young person would like to do, they would like to go out to the park, being on level two and having enough points banked I agree that they can go to the park for an hour and a half then return for dinner. I remind my young person before they go not to be late as they will lose a point for every minute late.

Returning five minutes late my young person is upset when I let them know that they have lost five points, not wanting to upset them more I suggest that I am thirsty and wouldn't mind a cup of tea, as I am cooking dinner would they mind making the tea. As soon as the answer is yes I tell them they have just earned bonus points for good attitude, once I receive my tea the bonus points go up. My young person is happy again now as they are 10 points up with the 15 bonus points earned.

After dinner I wash up and my young person dries, points earned for daily job. Now it's time to get ready for youth club. I drop them down and pick up as I need to know they are safe. Once home a quick shower and bed for my young person whilst I try and grab half hour rest in the living room before my shower and bed.

It's been a good week for us, as I have not had to call out of hours, although I don't mind calling as out of hours for Treatment Foster Care is just another part of being part of the team, the duty out of hours person will be a member of the team. This makes my life and my young person's easier as the person on the phone will know us personally, this reflects in the advice and recommendations that are passed to help with any issues that we may have.

Having a positive attitude, helps keep my young person positive.

We are both doing the Treatment Foster Care Programme. Hard at times, never dull, always busy and mostly fun, definitely professional.

Training & Development

Recent Event

What's New in Fostering Workshop 2011, held on 30th September & 7th October 2011.

The Workshops were arranged to give foster carers the opportunity to explore the new Revised set of Regulations, Standards and Guidance which came into force on 1st April 2011, what they mean for foster carers, how they affect foster carers, and how these changes will affect foster children?

I would like to thank all those who attended.

There was lots of lively discussion and questions, especially about what the changes mean in practice, and on a day to day basis.

The message and focus of the workshops were essentially about the importance of planning and decision making about the child's needs which must take into account the distribution and balance of responsibilities between parents, social workers and foster carers.

We discussed at the Workshop what this means in practice in terms of making day to day decisions about the care of children for example, planning and making decisions about sleepovers, and thinking about some of the choices that children may want to make about the activities they do.

At the workshops, there was a great deal of discussion about the importance of discussing these practical matters and considering them at the initial placement planning process and at every review. I am sure these discussions will continue over the coming months when the regulations and guidance are put into practice.

LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA FOR THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORKFORCE (QCF) (ENGLAND)

Many of you will know that we have worked closely with local colleges for some time. We have by now released the dates for the Thinking of Doing Diploma Workshops, which took place on 17th and 18th November 2011 at K College Campus based at Tonbridge and Folkestone Campus. The closing date for applications onto this course were due in by 5th December 2011.

The flyers for the workshops were sent out via email, and posted on KentTrustWeb.
http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/children/carers_training.cfm

I hope you all had the opportunity to read about the Diploma Level 3 Course, and to discuss this with your Fostering Social Worker. If you are interested and feel you have met the criteria as set out on the flyer.

We will keep you posted about this exciting course and the progress made by the new group of students who are due to start early next year.

Please contact Sue Douglas - if you have any further queries on 01732 525344

Lisa Fitzpatrick - Training and Development Manager - Fostering and Adoption

Training & Development

Training Courses and the Training Calendar

Although we are going into the colder time of year, there are still lots of training courses to attend across the county. For example Supervising Contact took place on 2nd December 2011 at Seasalter Christian Centre and will be taking place on 22nd March 2012 at Kings Hill Community Centre.

Some of the comments foster carers made previously about attending the Supervising Contact course included, that "they found it useful listening to group experiences, learning about the relevant knowledge of procedure and policies, gaining confidence, learning about the contact agreement forms and how useful they can be".

Other courses in the future include Communicating with Disabled Children on 22nd February 2012 at Seasalter Christian Centre.

On 6th March 2012, we are also running our Effective Communication to Get the Best Out of Meetings course at Ashford Family Learning Centre. This is an interesting course run by Partnerships with Parents. This course is for all Foster Carers. This course aims to explore the difficult situations that foster carers sometimes face, acknowledging that some conversations can go better than others? The course aims to provide a range of practical techniques to support communication and involvement with schools and other professionals.

We are still working on new courses to be added.

Please check your emails for any new dates and courses added, and the training calendar to plan your training.

Recruitment & Retention

Fostering Network Recruitment Champions initiative launched

The Fostering Network has launched a new recruitment champions initiative designed to help improve practice in the recruitment and retention of foster carers. I have been selected as one of the twelve appointed representatives from fostering services and will provide guidance and support to staff from other fostering services. The scheme is part funded by the Department for Education.

Helen Clarke, Fostering Network Membership Support Consultant, is managing the recruitment champions scheme, said: "I am really excited about this new initiative and hope it is a great way to improve practice in the recruitment and retention of foster carers. We have been aware that fostering services are already making links locally and hope this is another way that we can help fostering services with the ongoing challenge of recruiting and retaining foster carers."

Do you know anyone who might be interested in Fostering a Kent child?

Ask them to contact us on 0845 330 2968
or take a look at our website www.kent.gov.uk/fostering for more information.

Should they be approved as a KCC Foster Carer you are eligible for a £250 bounty payment!

Regular information sessions are held around the county,
please give the dates and venues of the information sessions (details below)
to anyone you know who is interested
in finding out more about becoming a KCC foster carer.

Information Sessions January 2012– March 2012

Monday 16 January 2012 - 7pm - 8:30pm
St Teresa's Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Ashford TN24 8TX

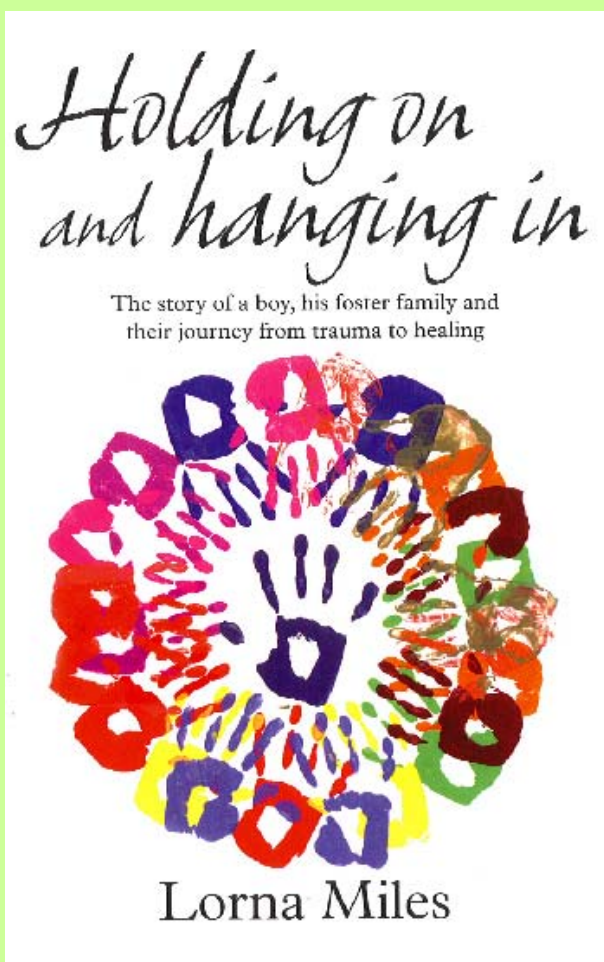
Tuesday 7 February 2012 - 7pm - 8:30pm
Dartford Grammar School for Girls, Shepherds Lane, Dartford DA1 2NT

Wednesday 14 March 2012 - 7pm - 8:30pm
The Ark Dover, Noah's Ark Road, Dover CT17 0DD

Initial Enquiries Team
0845 330 2968
www.kent.gov.uk/fostering

Chris Clark - Fostering & Adoption Recruitment Coordinator

Book Review



Holding On and Hanging In

Written by Lorna Miles

This book gives a frank account of a therapeutic fostering placement. It describes the trauma caused by the effects of separation and loss on Wayne a nine year old foster child, and shows the ways in which these negative experiences affect a child's development and behaviour.

Lorna, the main foster carer, describes various situations and issues that arise on a day to day basis during the four year placement, and through her eyes we learn how these are experienced by both the foster child and the other members of the foster family. Wayne's early experiences of neglect and domestic abuse are expressed through anger and disruptive behaviour, and the challenges and difficulties these present are openly and honestly described.

However, Lorna shows that with patience and understanding, a lot of perseverance and a sense of humour when necessary, Wayne and the family are able to manage, and resolve the problems they encounter. A support network of friends, family and social care professionals are acknowledged as having a vital part to play in the process.

Despite the difficulties experienced during the placement, it is heartening to learn of the many positive and rewarding aspects to foster care which I feel balances the book effectively. I would therefore recommend it to anyone who would like to gain a greater understanding of caring for a child within the therapeutic foster care programme.

**Celia Swain
Initial Enquiries Team
Fostering & Adoption
October 2011**



Actions speak louder than words...

FosterTalk is a not for profit organisation providing high quality, professional support, advice and preferential pricing arrangements to Foster Carers.

FosterTalk is dedicated to Foster Carers. Memberships are available individually, or by group subscription through Local Authorities and agencies.

FosterTalk membership includes the following services;



- **Legal Expenses Insurance Cover**
Insurance that covers Foster Carers' legal expenses in the event of having to defend against criminal prosecutions, civil claims and appeals against an ISA Barring decision.

- **24-Hour Legal Advice Service**
Unlimited access to a 24-hour telephone legal advisory service, that can offer help and guidance on a broad range of legal related matters.
- **Arrest & Interview Assistance Cover**
For specialist legal representation in the event of being arrested or interviewed under caution in conjunction with an allegation relating to your role as a Foster Carer.



- **Accountancy Advice**
A telephone advice service to help carers deal with all aspects of their Foster Carer tax, national insurance, state benefits and fostering allowances.

- **Counselling Helpline**
Confidential personal telephone support from qualified professionals on matters relating to fostering and on wider issues, including stress and bereavement.
- **Social Work Support**
Access to FosterTalk's team of Social Workers who can provide independent support and give information and guidance around fostering legislation and general fostering matters, such as child protection procedures, safer caring, special guardianships, reviews and other issues that affect the daily lives of Foster Carers.
- **Education Advisory Service**
Our qualified education team offer telephone support and advice on education issues relating to Looked After Children.



Members have unlimited access to Learnpremium, the award winning educational website from *The Guardian*. Learnpremium provides a huge range of on-line lessons, interactive resources, worksheets and tests for all ages.

- **Personal Finances**
Consultation with qualified independent financial advisers specialising in personal finance matters for Foster Carers including; mortgages, pensions, income protection, critical illness, life assurance and investment plans.
- **Medical/First Aid Helpline**
24 hour telephone advice from qualified nurses on medical and healthcare matters including practical advice regarding first aid.
- **Website Forums**
An on-line community where carers can discuss fostering issues and share advice and information with fellow carers.
- **Quarterly Magazine**
A bright, stimulating magazine packed full of relevant information and interesting features, including contributions from carers, useful links and much more.
- **Hundreds of Discounts**
Preferential pricing arrangements with top suppliers offering hundreds of excellent discounts on goods and services nationwide.



Who benefits?

The Carer Household

- Legal advice 24 hours, 365 days a year
- Legal expenses insurance cover
- Independent financial advice
- Website and magazine communication
- Hundreds of discounts on lifestyle products and services
- Access to forum communities helping to avoid isolation
- Advice on education issues
- Personal counselling and support
- Medical/First Aid Helpline

The Agency

- Provides benefits that recognise and reward the contribution made by your Foster Carers to the success of fostering
- Demonstrates ongoing commitment to your Foster Carers
- Aids the recruitment and retention of Foster Carers
- Extremely cost effective – less than £1 per week per household
- Overcomes 'no support' complaints from Foster Carers
- Assists with communication for Foster Carers
- Assists agencies in meeting National Minimum Standard (22.9)

Contact us or visit www.fostertalk.org to obtain your registration form

KCC pays for memberships for all KCC foster families who can all access the support services and discounts

“FosterTalk”

Call today for further information and to discuss your requirements

0844 800 3880

Who will your Foster Carers turn to in the event of an allegation or serious complaint?



Foster Carers Independent Support Service

Foster Carers Independent Support Service (FISS) offers locally based, independent qualified advisors who provide personal support, advocacy and mediation services to Foster Carers who are facing allegations, complaints and serious concerns.

FISS support includes:

- An effective response time
- Personal visits to the foster family
- Liaison with all professionals involved
- Objective support and guidance to the Foster Carer

FISS operates to the Action For Advocacy code of practice.

Web: www.fostertalk.org Email: enquiries@fostertalk.org Company No: 06318354

Notice Board

Holiday Insurance

A reminder to all carers that if they are taking children on holiday with them it is their responsibility to purchase travel insurance for the child, as they would for their own family, and if travelling in Europe to ensure that there is an E111 in place for the child.

Discounted Attraction Tickets & Holidays

Interested in discounted tickets to Thorpe Park, Chessington World of Adventures etc..

Ring 0871 2224001 and give the code "You at Work"

Each carer that is joined to FosterTalk is provided with a unique Username and Password to the website www.fostertalk.org and once logged in, you will be able to access the **members only** area which includes 'member discounts'.

You will be re-directed to a third party website (You at Work) where there will be access to hundreds of discounts which are updated every week by You at Work.

If you are unsure of your username or password (which would have been sent on all welcome, renewal and reminder letters) you can request for this to be emailed to you by clicking on 'forgotten login?' under the member login on the website. This will then send a request through to Foster Talk for processing.

You are also welcome to call them on 0844 800 3880 where they will be happy to talk you through the process over the telephone.

Please send articles for the next Newsletter to Chris Clark, Fostering Recruitment Co-ordinator based at Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford TN24 8XU
01233 898572 Email: chris.clark@kent.gov.uk

Deadline for articles

2 February
4 May
3 August

Publication Dates

2 March
1 June
7 September