

Fostering News

March 2010



FOSTER CARERS ADVISORY BOARD WELCOMES ROSALIND TURNER Managing Director of CFE

On the 24th March Rosalind Turner the Managing Director of CFE (front row 2nd from right) joined the foster carer advisory board to meet its members and to hear from carers about the work that they do along with the work of the advisory board.

The advisory board is your opportunity to feed information to senior managers of CFE as well as to hear what new developments there are for the service. Your local reps will feed back as well as take issues up via the area advisory boards.

GOODBYE AND HELLO

Important information with regard to Nursery equipment supplied to foster carers.

Following many years of the equipment service being provided by Parent Trap we recently (as required) went out to tender for the service. I am delighted to be able to inform you that our new supplier will be Kent Community equipment service. (more later)

However I would like to pass on my thanks to Hugh Dexter and his team for all the work they have undertaken on behalf of KCC fostering service.

The Kent Community Equipment will continue to supply nursery equipment (cot mattresses for every new child placed etc) and will work with you in delivering and collecting the equipment at a time to suit. If you have any equipment that needs to be collected (regardless of who delivered it!) please advise your fostering worker who will pass on your details to the KCES who will arrange a convenient time.

Contents	Page
Teresa Vickers Reports	1
KFCA	2
New Carers	3
Policy & Performance	4 & 5
Catch 22	6
EK2 Thanet with Dover Reports	7
MK Reports	8
EK1 Canterbury with Swale Reports	9
WK Reports	10 & 11
TRP Reports	12 & 13
Treatment Fostering	14
Short Breaks	15
Recruitment & Retention	16
Training & Development	17
Notice Board	18

Should you have any issues that you would like to raise with regard to the scheme please do not hesitate to let your fostering team leader know who will feed this back to me.

We look forward to working with KCES on this very important service.

Teresa Vickers
County Manager Fostering

FosterTalk

On Tuesday **23 February 2010**, Teresa Vickers announced that KCC had purchased independent support service from **FosterTalk** providing membership for all KCC foster carers. This relates back to the Allegations Project which was completed by KFCA in 2008/2009 in co-operation with KCC Fostering and represents a comprehensive package of support services for foster carers.

Membership becomes effective on 01 April 2010 for one year. The potential to extend this to future years will be dependent on foster carer utilisation and feedback as well as budget restrictions. Two workshops were held in March to allow FosterTalk to introduce the service to carers. FosterTalk will be sending all carers a welcome package for 01 April.

KFCA AGM

Monday 22 February 2010 the KFCA AGM took place at Lenham. Turn out was disappointing. The meeting noted that the new elected officers are:

KFCA Chairman - Cathy Goodwin
KFCA Secretary - Gary Dobner
KFCA Treasurer - Marie Dobner

These people have served in this capacity in previous years.

The meeting was delighted to announce the FosterTalk services purchased by KCC as mentioned above.

KFCA also announced plans to complete a project on Mental Health in 2010. Workshops have been organised to allow carers to have their input:

Wednesday, 21 April 2010 10am – 12noon.

Lenham community Centre, Groom Way, Lenham, Maidstone, ME17 2QT

Monday, 26 April 2010 10am – 12:30

Pfizer Social Club, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9QL

A conference will be organised for later in the year.
See the website for more information.

Drama Club

We now have 3 drama groups meeting at Kingsdown in West Kent; Folkestone and Minster-on-Sea, Sheppey. Please see the website for details of meetings and contacts.

www.kfca.org.uk

The website has been revamped and updated – please make use of it for details on projects and the drama group.

The Fostering Service Welcomes New Carers

Lisa & Damon Bragg - WK

Patricia Briggs - WK

Sarah & Stephen Calver - EK1

Jemma Garrod & Trevor Kempton - EK1

Carol and David Greig - EK2

Liz & Brian Harvey - EK1

Suzanna and Leigh Henderson - MK

Margaret Anne Hill - WK

Karen & Mark Johnson - EK1

Marilyn Larsen - MK

Lisa & Alec Miles - WK

Julie and Stephen Sibley - MK

Dawn & John Sims - WK

Sonia & Timothy Shaw - WK

Judith Vaughan - EK2

Allison Vicary - WK

Rachel Watmore and Ken Evans - MK

Vanessa and Michael Wilson - MK

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.**

Policy & Performance

Extract from the Delegation of Consents Policy:

It would normally be expected that delegation of day to day decision making regarding consents for overnight stays, school trips and other activities linked to a child's clubs/hobbies would be given by the child's foster carers.

The exceptions to this are:

- Where the placement is an emergency placement and there is insufficient information about the child and his/her family available to inform the decision;
- If the child is accommodated under section 20 (The Children Act 1989) and a parent(s) object to decisions for consents (either generally or in relation to specific requests i.e. such as from the school) being delegated to the child's foster carer. In this circumstance, the parents wish to maintain the final say in the decision making process must be respected;
- Where the assessment of the child's needs and their circumstances identifies that they are especially vulnerable to being abused or abusing others which make it necessary for the foster carer or residential staff to seek permission from the local authority through the child's social worker. This might only be required for a limited period and should be re-considered at the next statutory LAC review to decide whether authority for granting permissions for consents should be delegated back to the child's foster carers or residential staff;
 - Where the child's foster carers request that the local authority (through the child's social worker or team leader if the case is unallocated) should take on a decision making role with respect to granting permission for a looked after child to have an overnight stay or other activities (this might be in relation to a specific request or all requests). This is only likely to occur in circumstances where carers are concerned about violence or threatening behaviour from the child or the child's parents in the event that they disagree with the decision about whether an overnight stay should go ahead;
 - Where the trip involves remaining outside of the United Kingdom for more than one day. Consent for such trips should be sought through the child's social worker (team leader if the case is unallocated) in order to ensure that everyone with parental responsibility for the child can be properly informed and consulted.

Any restrictions to the role of the child's foster carers or residential staff in consenting to overnight stays, trips/activities must be clearly stated in the child's Care Plan and the Placement Plan Part 2 agreement.

Foster carers should base their decision to give or not to give consent for a looked after child for an overnight stay or to participate in a trip/activity on the following criteria:

- Are there any relevant restrictions contained for exceptional reasons in the child's care plan, placement plan part 2 (day to day arrangements) agreement or any court orders which would restrict the child from participating in the trip?
- What are the child's views? Do they want to go on the trip and if not would it be appropriate not to give consent?
- Are there any factors in the child's past experiences or behaviour, which would preclude consent being given for an overnight stay or particular school trip?
- Are there any grounds for concern that the child may be at significant risk if they were to have an overnight stay or take part in the trip/activity requiring consent?
- How long is the child going to be away from the foster home?

For overnight stays the following should also be considered:

- Are there any grounds for concern that the child may be at significant risk in the household concerned or from the activities proposed?
- Is the child staying in the household with another child or children, rather than staying solely with an adult or adults?
- The age and level of understanding of the child concerned
- What is known about the purpose of the overnight stay?

Foster carers should also make contact with the household beforehand to assist in assessing the request for an overnight stay and to confirm arrangements, and ensure that the adults in the household supervising the overnight stay have the carers contact details.

Policy & Performance

Placements Plans

Placement Plans-

New Placement information records and placement plan forms were bought into use in Mid March. There are 3 formats which must be completed by the child's social worker before, or within a few days of the child being placed with a foster carer. Paper copies of all 3 sections must be given to the foster carer. The Placement Information Record is to be completed to ensure carers have sufficient basic information to offer good quality immediate care to a child. It includes a section covering consent to routine and emergency medical and dental treatment. The Placement Plan Part 1 contains a checklist of information given to the carer, and to the child (where appropriate). Information on the child's behaviour, and routines is included in Part 1 as well as details of contact arrangements for the child, and information on how the carer can contact the social worker. The Placement Plan Part 2 will describe the carer's expectations re routines, use of phones (if relevant), pocket money, and how Disability Living Allowance is to be managed (where payable). There is a section on education covering responsibilities for parents evenings, consent to school trips, overnight stays etc.

The new formats were developed following consultation and feedback from staff and carers.

Mandy Lowe
Policy & Performance Officer (LAC) CFE Sessions House Maidstone, ME14 1QN
Direct Dial 01622 694696

Mentoring Service

Looked After Children & young people, because of their life experiences, may need extra support to reach their potential and one way of assisting this is through mentoring. Foster carers along with social workers and teachers are asked to identify children and young people from year 3 up to year 11 who might benefit from the support of a mentor. Sessions may include homework and revision support, discussions about school life and encouragements to achieve such as rewards for additional effort and attainment.

If you are caring for a child or young person who you think might benefit from this service, please speak with their social worker or if they are happy for you to seek more information or use the fast referral system, please contact: Natasha Baciley, Catch22 LAC Mentoring Co-ordinator on: 07733 128736 who will be delighted to tell you more!

Personal Education Allowance Funding

PEAs up to £500 per year are available to Kent Looked After Children to support improvements in their educational achievement. Education is considered in its widest sense so please contact your social worker or the social worker for a child you are caring for if you think an application should be made on their behalf. The choice of activity should be linked to education objectives set out in the PEP and it can cover things like extra help with revision, out of school activities, educational trips, arts and leisure activities that support their learning.

Computers for Looked After Children

Many of you will know that computers can be provided to Kent Looked After Children under the Kent Pledge. However, there is currently a national scheme running for a time limited period to increase home access in foster homes. If you are a carer who does not have a computer and/or internet access, please contact your fostering social worker to find out if you would be eligible for this scheme. Also, if you are caring for a child aged 5-18 who has complex needs who would benefit from having their own computer with assistive technology added, please contact the child's social worker, as this is also available! Hurry though as the funding is limited and is running out fast!

East Kent 2 - Thanet with Dover Area 01843 57003 Foster Carer Payments 01233 652259

Farewell to Pat Natall

Last December the Dover Foster Carer Support group paid tribute to Pat's 29 years of fostering. Maggie Nash presented her with a large bunch of flowers and complimented her work. Pat told us all how looking after children was really the 'greatest privilege there is' (despite the challenges and all the edgy moments). Pat began her fostering career by caring for a known disabled child from one of the London boroughs; joining K.C.C. after his sad and untimely death from his debilitating illness. She loved that little boy and keeps in contact with several other children whom she's fostered through the years.

Looking forward to moving to her retirement flat in January, she still said she could have someone placed over Christmas if we were 'stuck'. Guess what? We were, and kept her working to the bitter end. Pat has now moved into her new home and there is NO ROOM to foster!

Enjoy the peace Pat and your much deserved retirement.
Thanks from us and all the children you cared for.

Morag Robinson

Parent and Child Placements

We are in need of foster carers who can provide parent and child placements in the East Kent 2 area. There has been a significant increase in demand for these placements in the last twelve months.

If anyone is interested in the possibility of taking a parent child placement could they please contact Kate Ball at EK2 Fostering Team, Aberdeen House, 01843 570003 for more information about parent and child fostering.

Sons & Daughters Fun Day

On the 27th February we held a "Fun Day" for the sons and daughters of foster carers. This was set up following our successful Sons and Daughters Seminar in October, where the profile of birth children and the impact that fostering can have on families was explored and discussed with both experienced and new foster carers.



The Fun Day was designed to reward sons and daughters within a therapeutic context and we had 18 participants between 5 and 16 years of age. The day was a great success, and activities included African drumming, story telling and self expression through art and craft, and music technology where the children wrote and produced their own song which was then transferred to mobile phones.

All the children are keen to meet up again and we are hoping to facilitate another day in May. We are also collecting materials and workbooks that we hope will be useful for carers and fostering workers to help birth children explore and manage their feelings and the challenges that fostering sometimes generates.



Rob Cushway and Karen Cronin

Mid Kent Area - 01233 898635

Foster Carer Payments 01233 652266

We have had a busy start to the New Year and have welcomed to the team three new fostering Social Workers - Helen Causer, Ruth Hills and Steve Peck. Robert Attwell has also joined the team as Principal Social Worker for the Short Breaks Scheme.

Please look out for them at support groups. The team are really pleased to have some new staff especially as they bring to the team extensive knowledge from their previous roles including children and families, disability and fostering.

Farewell

The team are very sad to be saying goodbye to Kim Poynter who will be retiring from KCC on 31st March. He has worked for the department since 1975 and his wisdom and humour will be a great loss to the team. Over the years he has supported his carers and colleagues through the good times and always been there with his support through those more challenging times. We all wish Kim well and hope that he has a long and happy retirement. The team along with the carers he has supported thank him for all the work he has undertaken during his time in fostering.

CWDC Workshops

Coming up in Mid Kent we will be running two workshops to encourage and support carers to complete their CWDC. These will be held for both new carers and experienced carers and details of dates can be obtained from the Mid Kent team or supervising worker.

Support group for birth children of foster carers

We are delighted that the support group for birth children of foster carers will be continuing to run following the pilot scheme last year. The venue continues to be Linden Grove School in Ashford with two groups running to cover the different age ranges. The group meets from 4.30pm to 5.30pm (ages 4-10years) and 5.30pm to 6.30pm (ages 11-18) approximately every 4 weeks.

Tracy Ramsden and Helen Causer will be the lead workers for this group. We have recently ordered some exciting resources and activities for the children to use, to make the group a fun time but also for them to have an opportunity to get support with different aspects of fostering, e.g. moving a child on to adoption. Children from all the Mid Kent districts are welcome to attend. Details of dates and times can be obtained from your fostering social worker.

We would like to thank the foster carers who have supported this group, especially to Rachael Isted who allows us to use the school. We also hope to plan some activity days as part of the group during the school holidays. More details of these to follow.

Mark Vening - Team Leader

Caroline Smith—Principal Social Worker

East Kent 1 - Canterbury with Swale 01227 598500
Foster Carer Payments 01233 652259

EK1 SOCIAL COMMITTEE PRESENTS
3 brilliant activities for your children

LAZER RUSH

Joseph Wilson Ind Est, Milstrood Road, Whitstable, CT5 3PS

7th APRIL 2010 – 1:30PM-3:40PM

Ages 6+

only £1 per child (payable on the day)
open to all foster and birth children

SNAPPYS ADVENTURE PLAY CENTRE

Joseph Wilson Ind Est, Milstrood Road, Whitstable, CT5 3PS

16th APRIL 2010 – 6:30-8:30PM

All ages welcome only £1 per child (payable on the day)
Open to all foster and birth children

SWATTENDEN OUTDOOR ACTIVITY CENTRE

Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 3PS

25th APRIL 2010 – 10AM – 3PM

Ages 10+ foster children and birth children welcome
Only £5 per child, payable in advance and ticket will be issued
You will also need to provide your child/ren with a packed lunch

If you have a child who is a mature child aged 8 onwards that would cope with raft building and zip line activities, you are now welcome to add them to the list.

PLACES ARE LIMITED FOR ALL 3 EVENTS SO PLEASE BOOK YOUR PLACES NOW!
TO BOOK ANY OF THE ABOVE ACTIVITIES PLEASE CONTACT:

ANNE OTTO

EMAIL - annaotto01@hotmail.co.uk

OR SPEAK TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING SOCIAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS AT SUPPORT GROUP:
SUSAN PURCELL, ANNE OTTO, CAROL MORGAN-PAYNE, DONNA DAWSON – CANTERBURY
SHELLY MASSEY, CAROLE STANTON - SWALE

West Kent Area - 01732 525324 Foster Carer Payments - 01233 652278

Hi all,

Welcome to Jill Ferrell, Fostering Social Worker who joined the Team in February.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind carers that there are currently 2 CWDC workshops running at the moment that offer carers an opportunity to look at the CWDC standards and complete their workbooks.

I do need to remind everyone that their workbooks must be completed by March 2011 for existing carers and within 1 year for all new carers.

The dates & venues for these 2 workshops are below:-

You can still turn up, even if you haven't attended previous sessions.

21st & 28th April 2010

30th April, 14th & 28th May, 18th & 25th June 2010

Kings Hill Community Centre,
West Malling ME19 4LG

Powerhouse, St Aiden's Church,
St Gregory's Crescent, Gravesend, DA12 4AG

Times: 09:30 – 12:30

Times: 10:00 – 12:30

NEW CARERS GROUP

We have also recently introduces a new carers support group that is to be held at Tonbridge & Malling Family Centre.

I would encourage all new carers to attend as this will be on a rolling programme so carers can join at any stage.

Dates are:- 19th April, 10th May, 7th June, 5th July & 2nd August
Tonbridge & Malling Family centre, 72 Martin Square, Larkfield ME20 6QN
Times: 09:30 – 11:00

Please contact Fiona Reynolds 01732 525379 or Jill Ferrell 01732 525337 if you would like further information.

SWATTENDEN ACTIVITY HOLIDAY

We have the fantastic opportunity to book a residential activity holiday at Swattenden.

**This will be Monday to Friday, 25th to 29th October 2010,
half term week.**

All activities and food included.

This will be available to LAC and birth children ages 8 to 18 years old.

**This is at the discount price of £135 for the week.
The £5 deposit is non-refundable.**

At this present time we need numbers to allow us to make a provisional booking.

Please email to:

Denise Ilott - deniseilott@googlemail.com

Sharon Watson - sharonwatson386@tiscali.co.uk

West Kent Area - 01732 525324
Foster Carer Payments - 01233 652278

ACTIVITY DAY
Swattenden Centre, Cranbrook
Wednesday 2 June 2010
10am - 3pm

ACTIVITY DAY

I am aware that the invite for the activity day at Swattenden has been sent out to all carers. If you would like a place or have any queries, please contact either:-

Denise Ilott: 01732 368831 or e-mail deniseilott@googlemail.com

Sharon Watson: 01634 711386 or e-mail sharonwatson386@tiscali.co.uk

Jenny Finch: 01732 525716 or e-mail Jennifer.finch@kent.gov.uk

West Kent Fostering Team (via the Foster Carers Social Group) are pleased to be able to offer an activity day on Wednesday 2 June for a very reasonable rate (**£5 per child**) not just for our looked after children **but for your own children too**.

This will be at the Swattenden Centre which is an outdoor education and residential centre near Cranbrook, used by many schools and youth organisations. Children and young people aged from **8** to 16 are welcome.

Some carers have already let us know how many places they would like to reserve, but we need to have a definite number as soon as possible, so please complete the form sent out recently and let us have a cheque, by post to the address on the form, made payable to **West Kent Fostering Social Fund** or via your Fostering Social Worker at your Support Group.

The activities will include Climbing, Zip Wires and Raft Building and the children and young people will be put into four age groups. The instructors will tailor the activities to their age, understanding and ability. The Centre is happy if you feel you need to stay with your child for the day.

Children will need to arrive at 9.45 and the first session will be 10 – 11.05 am, the second at 11.10 – 12.15pm with lunch between 12.15 and 12.45pm. The afternoon sessions are 12.45 – 1.50pm, then 1.55 – 3pm.

The children should bring a packed lunch and it is recommended they wear OLD clothes to the centre and bring another set of OLD clothes for the activities. These should include:

Underwear and socks, trousers or shorts, T shirt, jumper, shoes (to wear in a pond) and old towel and toiletries.

A contribution to the funding of this activity will be from the 'Creativity4Health' budget (you may recall events from the Autumn 2009 half term). Therefore we will be glad to receive drawings, paintings, photography, stories, etc from the day as well.

Sue Roberts-Hughes
West Kent Team Leader

Therapeutic Reparenting Fostering

Providing specialised foster care for 4 -13 year olds

A Little Girl's Story ... By Nicki (TRP Carer).

We were brand new carers; hot off the panel press and raring to go! Within days we had that call, Sophia, a 5 year old girl needed a home for a few weeks. We had a mad panic to find presents as she was arriving on 21st December.

Sophia's history was patchy, but we knew she had moved around her family members and had multiple foster homes due to going in and out of care. Her father had been located and he had been keen to have her, but the reality of caring for her with in his new family that included other children was too difficult for the family and for Sophia. She needed to move and the family wanted it to happen quickly. Sophia was told the night before she left. Sophia arrived with her Social Worker and Dad, all smiles and hyperactive. She didn't shed a tear when Dad left she just danced the day away.

Our honeymoon period lasted 24 hours and then reality kicked in - in every sense! Sophia was hyperactive, hyper controlling, hypersensitive and had anxieties seeping out of all her pores. She had tantrums off the Richter scale. Let's just say that Asda staff at Rochester quake when they see us! Bedtime was Sophia's most difficult time, feeling vulnerable and anxious.

Of course we blamed ourselves for her struggles – after all we were new carers and (obviously !?!?) not doing anything right. Dawn, our supervising social worker was superb; she was at our house so often she felt like family. She suggested ideas to help Sophia in a caring but safe way and she reassured us that we were doing the right things.

Lord, we were tired! But the placement arrangement was short term. It would all be over soon..... It was now into the New Year! and we had not slept a night in weeks. Sophia was terrified of the dark, being on her own and sleeping! The only way we could keep her in bed was for one of us to sleep on her bedroom floor. It's weird how you can do this in your 20's and still be able to walk in the morning but when you're over 40? This went on for about 2 months before Sophia could bear to be on her own. She suffered awful night terrors at 2 hour intervals. She ran around screaming, kicking doors and banging her head against walls - it was gut wrenching to watch. Our neighbours were past talking to us they just wanted Sophia, or all 3 of us, to move!

It was clearly apparent that Sophia needed additional help. She was referred to the Therapeutic Reparenting Programme (TRP). The programme has been established since 2003 helping children between the ages of 5 and 13 who have attachment disorders. TRP carers commit to a minimum of 2 years continuous placement. The aim for Sophia was to help her form meaningful attachments, with the view to move to an adoptive family. TRP carers attend monthly network meetings with a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist, social workers from Children & Families and Fostering, and with Health, Education professionals. Together in a team approach, the child is discussed, ideas shared and plans made for the next month. The TRP carers implement the suggestions made and carefully note changes in the child. The TRP carers have to be able to think on their feet, develop an understanding of the child's attachment behaviours, needs and development in order to take the child forward in a positive way. Allowing the child to regress and offering boundaries and positive parenting (of a level usually offered to a younger child) help to fill the 'gaps' left in their early years care and trauma.

As we know children respond positively to boundaries and fair discipline. With children, who are part of the TRP, saying 'in a minute' may mean they will time you to the second and you may face a tantrum, if you take longer! They thrive on routine as it decreases their anxieties. There is often a battle of wills and a need to separate and monopolise an adult's attention. Looking after these children requires a stable partnership between the carers and their supporters that is beyond the child to crack!

**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 525337

Therapeutic Reparenting Fostering

Providing specialised foster care for 4 -13 year olds

Back to the story ...I was invited to attend a network meeting to meet Sophia's future TRP carers. They were lovely and obviously excited about having a beautiful little girl. But it just felt wrong. I didn't want to let go - why? Sophia was constantly challenging me and her anxiety would lead to her hitting, pinching, punching, kicking, spitting and head butting me. I should be glad to see her go - but I wasn't. I felt my work with Sophia was not finished. I understood her and knew her ways. I was being a typical carer - worried about what would happen to her. I sat and listened to this couple (who I now know well and who are truly inspirational, my respect for them is huge). They talked about doing all the girly things with her - horse riding, ballet, dressing up ...you name it.

NO, NO, NO – they didn't know her, she likes football and rolling in the mud; she was always on the go! I felt helpless as I left the room, the couple were talking ten to the dozen about their plans and I felt like I didn't exist. All those excruciating months of getting to know and starting to understand Sophia, and now we would be letting her go to people we didn't know. Would they have the patience to wait for Sophia to wash her hands even if it took over an hour? Would they get up every 2 hours when she woke up screaming Hello, Hello, Hello? Suddenly I realised that the child psychologist was talking to me; she had followed me out and said how well we had coped with Sophia and progressed her. She smiled and said she felt she would see us in the future as we seemed good candidates to work within the TRP.

Well that set me thinking – Could we be TRP carers? We talked, and talked some more, and talked with Sophia's social worker and the TRP social worker. We understood the concern, that as new carers, we would not have the experience needed yet. We had our doubts ourselves.

Fate then took her part. Sophia's move was delayed. Sean and I discussed TRP with our social worker again. By this time we had read books on attachment and development, we now had more experience and Sophia had continued to progress.

Yes, Yes we did it! It was felt we were coping and with the support of Sophia's social worker and fostering, we were assessed and approved as TRP carers.

And here we are, 3 years later!

Sophia is still with us. She attends mainstream school and is catching up all the time. Her outbursts now only occur every few weeks instead of hours. Sophia still has the occasional blip at bedtime but gone are her night terrors and constant sleepless nights. She still has anxiety issues but she has bonded with us to the point of superglue!

In 2009 we reached the time for her to move onto a permanent family, to adoption. Sean and my hearts were breaking. I didn't want her to go; Sean didn't want her to go but we didn't tell each other! We watched her social worker working hard to find an adoptive family. Sophia attracted enquiries but once they heard about her and realised that she would probably always have additional emotional needs, coupled with the fact that she could not share her parents with children of a similar age, they were considered unable to meet Sophia's needs. I finally confessed to Sean and he looked at me and we both burst into tears. We broke the news at a network meeting and the relief on Sophia's social worker's face summed it up. Now, we know that TRP is not a long term commitment, it's a time limited placement. But sometimes, just sometimes, the fit is so right, that carers like us offer a long term family and are assessed as able to meet that child's long term needs.

Plan A is to adopt Sophia and if that falters we will long term foster her. Either way, Sophia is staying put and she now knows that. She calls me Mummy, and Sean Daddy or Papa and she says she belongs. She will always love her birth Mum but she is thrilled to stay in school with her friends and not move anymore - besides that, she has learnt to love us!

Thank you for reading this beautiful little girl's story.

The TRP leads in the fostering teams are:

East Kent One	Bobbie Thomas	01227 598573
East Kent Two	Marge Wiltcher	01843 570003
TRP Supervisor	Amanda Byatt	01732 525342

Treatment

Double good news from MTFC- Kent

Firstly:

I am pleased to announce that MTFC Kent has just become the first team nationally to become fully accredited by our American founder organisation, Oregon Social Learning Centre.

Our Programme Supervisor Annie Bousfield worked incredibly hard in her efforts to get the Kent programme through the very rigorous certification process.

To be eligible at all we needed to have a 66% success rate of young people leaving the programme with a reduction in behaviours and moving into placements where less supervision is required. We could not have achieved this success without the hard work and dedication of our Treatment Foster Carers who all gave willingly of their time and expertise to help us get through successfully.

Secondly:

MTFC Kent has now moved into our permanent new accommodation.

You can contact us at:

MTFC-Kent
Westchurch House
Godfrey Walk
Ashford Kent TN23 7XJ

Temporary telephone number: 01233 66 69 48

We are now actively looking for “follow on” placements for some of our young people please contact Debbie Simmons Programme Manager at Westchurch House.

Debbie Simmons
Treatment Programme Manager

Short Breaks

My name is Robert Attwell and I have recently taken up the post of Principal Social Worker in the County Short Break's Team and I am based at Kroner House, Ashford.

The County Short Break's Team is relatively new, but we already have dedicated social workers in three areas across the County, West Kent (Fiona), Mid Kent (Veronica) and East Kent (Gwen) supporting foster carers providing a Short Break Service to a significant number of disabled children and their families with a diverse range of learning, physical and complex health needs.

The Short Break Service arose from the Government's Aiming High for Disabled Children initiative, with significant funding allocated to local authorities to transform short break provision for disabled children and their families. Regular, planned break's can provide new opportunities and experiences for disabled children, enabling them to build new relationships outside of their family and school networks, whilst allowing families the time and space to re charge their batteries, and take a break from the demands of parenting a disabled child.

Kent's aim is to provide local foster carers for local children, and therefore new foster carers are constantly sought throughout the County – and whether they can offer just a few hours a week, or are available full time they will all be valued by the Team, and will receive the same level of assessment, training and support. We are always happy to speak with carers about our service, or indeed if you know of any one who would be interested in joining us then please encourage them to get in touch!

I hope that I can update you regular via your newsletter about the exciting challenges ahead, and maybe encourage one of our Short Break carers to submit an article letting you know about the challenges and rewards of their work with disabled children.

Lastly may I say a big thank you to all our Short Break foster carers, I have met some of you and hope in the coming months to meet many more of you – you provide an outstanding service to the many disabled children throughout the County. I value your comments about the development of the Short Break Service, and I believe that by working closely together we can build and deliver a first class service!

Robert Attwell
Principal Social Worker
Short Breaks Team

Recruitment

LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans) History Month - February 2010

During February LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans) History Month celebrated the lives and achievements of the LGBT community and their valuable contribution to today's society.

The Fostering & Adoption Service had an information display at Session House with posters and leaflets to encourage more people to come forward to become KCC foster carers.



The display was moved to Oakwood House for the Thursday 25th February, where there was a quiz night held.

Fostering Fortnight 2010 is taking place between 17th - 30th May

This is when there is a national publicity campaign to raise awareness for the more people to come forward to become foster carers. Our target for 2010/11 is 120 new foster carers and research has shown that word of mouth is the best form of advertising. People who want to find out more state they have found it very useful and informative to speak with foster carers who are actually doing the job of caring for other people's children.

Please ask your fostering worker for a supply of Foster Carers Business Cards, then when you are asked about becoming a KCC foster carer, you will be able to pass on the contact details for our Initial Enquiries Team and our website address.

Information Sessions - March - July 2010

Please give the dates and venues for the information sessions (details below) to anyone you know who is interested in finding out more about becoming a KCC foster carer.

Alternatively ask them to call our Initial Enquiries Team on 0845 330 2968 or take a look at our website www.kent.gov.uk/fostering

<p>Thursday 15th April 7pm - 8.30pm</p> <p>Pfizer Sports & Social Club Ramsgate Road, Sandwich CT13 9NJ</p>	<p>Wednesday 19th May 7pm - 8.30pm</p> <p>St. Paul's Church Hall Boxley Road, Maidstone ME14 2AL</p>
<p>Tuesday 15th June 7pm - 8.30pm</p> <p>Alexander Centre Preston Street, Faversham ME13 8NY</p>	<p>Tuesday 13th July 7pm - 8.30pm</p> <p>Cecil Road Primary School Cecil Road, Gravesend DA11 7BT</p>

Social Care Expo - 17th June 2010

The Fostering & Adoption Service will have an information stand at the Social Care Expo which is taking place at the Kent Showground—Detling Hill, near Maidstone. This event is open to the public for them to find out about opportunities within social care settings. We will have a rota for fostering staff and will require some foster carers to assist us, so please let your fostering worker know if you are available, even if it is for a few hours.

Training & Development

The Training Steering Group have been working hard over the last few months to develop the 2010/11 training and Development information for both new and existing carers and this will be sent out to you shortly. All new carers will receive a training folder/portfolio with sections for completing the Children's Workforce Development Council Standards for Foster Care, and existing carers need to update their training information for the year ahead. The information has been linked to the five Every Child Matters outcomes and cross referenced to the CWDC standards, and includes a list of courses which will help you to meet the standards. Every carer should have a Personal Development Plan detailing your learning and development needs for the next twelve months and this should be completed in supervision with your fostering worker. We have added a number of new courses this year including Life Story Work, Building a Child's Self Esteem, and a joint training course for foster carers and social workers on Teenagers in Foster Care. There are also a number of other courses being developed including Parent and Child training and details will be sent out separately. An interim calendar has been published and as further dates are secured in the next few weeks a full calendar will be emailed to you. A specific disability training calendar will also be available.

Learning Logs

Learning Logs should be completed at the end of each course and the initial reflections used for discussion in supervision. The CWDC standards on the Learning Logs should be used as prompts and each course has been aligned to the standards and this information is available on each flyer. You can add to your Learning Log after the course and share these reflections with your fostering worker.

Resource Library

Can I take this opportunity to remind you that we have a Resource Library available to support your learning and development which has a wide variety of books/resources on caring for children with a variety of needs and different ages. We have updated our resources and some of the new titles include:

The Primal Wound Understanding the adopted child - Nancy Newton Verrier - BAAF
Recipes for Fostering - Andrea Warman - BAAF
Holding on and Hanging in - Lorna Miles -BAAF
The Most Precious Present in the World - Becky Edwards - BAAF
Dad David, Baba Chris & Me - Ed Merchant - BAAF
Talking about Adoption to your adopted child - Marjorie Morrison - BAAF
Life Story Work -What it is and what it means - Shar & Argent - BAAF
Life Story Work - Ryan & Walker -BAAF
We are fostering - Jean Camis -BAAF
My life and Me -Jean Camis -BAAF
The Centre for Fun & Families the 7 Excerpts Video - funandfamilies.co.uk
Secret Lives: growing with substance -Fiona Harbin & Michael Murphy -RHP
Adolescence -Ann Wheal - RHP
Forgotten Voices—DVD—Fostering Network

To obtain a resource request form contact Sue Douglas either by e-mail at sue.douglas@kent.gov.uk or telephone 01732 525344.

Foster Carer Awards Presentation

On 26th April we will be holding our annual foster carer award presentations for carers who have achieved their NVQ Level 3/Btec Level 4. We will be writing to all the carers shortly with more details.

Pritpal Sodhi
Training and Development Manager - Fostering and Adoption
01732 525466

Notice Board

The **TRY ANGLE AWARDS** were introduced in 1994 to raise the profile of the vast majority of young people in the community - aged 11-18 years -who really do **TRY**, often with little recognition, to **DO THEIR BEST!**



ALL who are nominated will receive a TRY ANGLE certificate in recognition of their nomination. The short-listed nominees in each of the categories, together with their guests, will be invited to a very high profile celebrity gala presentation. Each winner will receive a Try Angle Award Trophy.

At the end of the Year there will also be a County Celebration event which will highlight the very best of the nominations received from across the County.

YOUR NOMINATIONS are urgently required in order to ensure that young people from EVERY local school, youth group, club, etc. have their efforts recognised. We are not just looking for the HIGH FLIERS – we are looking for REAL TRIERS!! If you know of a young person who deserves recognition from the local community, please tell us about them.

To nominate someone for a TRY ANGLE AWARD, complete a nomination form available at http://www.kent.gov.uk/education_and_learning/kent_youth_service/try_angle_awards.aspx and return it as soon as possible. Please ensure you write the full address and telephone number of the nominee. It is important we can contact them to invite them to the awards night should the judges select them as one of the finalists. If they are a member of a club, please also write down the school they attend.
CLOSING DATE: 30 APRIL



Do it 4 Real 2010 Summer Camps for children and young people aged between 10—16 are now available for bookings.

Visit www.doit4real.co.uk to complete your application form online.

Luckily, Di4R camps are back this summer, so now's your chance to find out what it's all about.



THE FOSTERING NEWSLETTER IN 2010

Publication Dates

30th June

30th September

3rd December

Deadline for articles

4th June

3rd September

5th November

Please send articles to Chris Clark, Fostering Recruitment Co-ordinator based at Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford TN24 8XU