

AGENDA FOR

SAFEGUARDING SUB-COMMITTEE

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To: All Members of Safeguarding Sub-Committee

Councillors: R Caserta, J Grimshaw, K Hussain,
M Powell, Susan Southworth (Chair), C Walsh and
M Whitby

Dear Member/Colleague

Safeguarding Sub-Committee

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Safeguarding Sub-Committee which will be held as follows:-

Date:	Thursday, 3 October 2019
Place:	Lancashire Fusiliers Room, Bury Town Hall
Time:	5.30 pm
Briefing Facilities:	If Opposition Members and Co-opted Members require briefing on any particular item on the Agenda, the appropriate Director/Senior Officer originating the related report should be contacted.
Notes:	

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of this group are asked to consider if they have any interest in any of the matters on the Agenda and if so to formally declare that interest.

3 MINUTES *(Pages 1 - 4)*

Minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2019 are attached.

4 MATTERS ARISING *(Pages 5-6)*

Additional information from Kirsty Walton, Service Development Manager Early Help is attached.

5 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE RESTRUCTURE *(Pages 7 - 14)*

A presentation from Assistant Director (Social Care & Safeguarding) Children & Young People Directorate is attached. Presentation is attached.

6 SOCIAL CARE STAFFING *(Pages 15 - 22)*

Janice Barr, Strategic Lead Safeguarding and Bart Popelier, Strategic Lead Practice Improvement will report at the meeting. Presentation attached.

7 FOSTER CARERS UPDATE *(Pages 23 - 36)*

Susan Harris, Strategic Lead Corporate Parenting will report at the meeting. Presentation attached.

8 URGENT BUSINESS

9 FUTURE MEETING DATES

- 28th January 2020 – Lancashire Fusiliers Room
- 9th April 2020 – Lancashire Fusiliers Room

Date of Meeting: 9 July 2019

Present: Councillor Susan Southworth (in the Chair); Councillor R Caserta, Councillor J Grimshaw, Councillor K Hussain, Councillor M Powell, Councillor C Walsh, Councillor M Whitby

Also in attendance:

Lynne Ridsdale – Deputy Chief Executive
Tony Decrop – Assistant Director Safeguarding
Steve Denton – Head of IT
Sue Harris - Strategic Lead for Placement Services
Kirsty Walton – Early Help Development Manager
Julie Gallagher – Democratic Services

Apologies for absence: There were no apologies for absence.

CS.01 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

CS.02 MINUTES

It was agreed:

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd April 2019, be approved as a correct record.

The Chair agreed that further to the published agenda the items will be re-arranged and the item "Social Work IT Update" would be considered first.

CS.03 SOCIAL WORK IT UPDATE

Lynne Ridsdale, Deputy Chief Executive and Steve Denton, Head of IT attended the meeting to provide members with an update in respect of work being undertaken to improve ICT provision for social workers.

An accompanying report circulated to members prior to the meeting included information in respect of the roll out of new devices, prioritisation, installation software, future plans and priorities.

Responding to a Member's question, the Deputy Chief Executive reported that the new equipment is compatible with the liquid logic software which is used by a number of other Local Authorities within Greater Manchester. The roll out of the new devices was staggered with social workers and personal advisors receiving their devices first. The staggered roll-out process has worked well and additional training for staff has been provided, if and when required.

With regards to sharing of data, the Assistant Director reported that the Virtual Head would work with schools with regards to sharing data in respect of Looked after however this still remains problematic with partners in the health service.

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In response to a Member's question, the Assistant Director reported that the devices are very secure, with several different verification/security access processes.

The Deputy Chief Executive reported that the completion dates for the roll out and issuing of the remaining equipment is expected to be completed by October 2019.

It was agreed:

The Deputy Chief Executive and the Head of IT be thanked for their attendance and a further update report be considered in 12 months.

CS.03 OASIS TEAM UPDATE

The Early Help Development Manager attended the meeting to provide members with an overview of the work currently undertaken by Team Oasis to prevent children, young people and their families from needing more specialist intervention and to support and empower families in accessing Universal Provision.

A presentation submitted to members in advance of the meeting provided information in respect of the following areas:

- Referral pathway
- Green contact outcomes – 5,660 contacts were managed by team Oasis between April 2018 and April 2019
- Team Oasis referrals – 343 new referral from April 2018 and April 2019.
- Early help Assessments
- Performance
- Feedback
- Early Help Transformation

The Early Help Development Manager reported that a three month consultation period in relation to the early help team, commenced in February and concluded in May 2019. The proposal will include three locality teams working across the authority these will be integrated and aligned with wider services, including health. Schools will have named early help social workers and be supported by a team around a school model. The results of the consultation are currently being reviewed and analysed.

Responding to a Member's question, the Early Help and Development Manager reported that a single point of referral had been established. From April 2019 all green contacts transferred under the management of the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH).

Members discussed the Oasis Teams' Youth Offending Practitioners. The Early Help and Development Manager reported that this work would be targeted; working with vulnerable children at risk of committing crime to prevent offending behaviour.

Responding to a Member's question in relation to the reported figure of 81% of green contact outcomes result in no further action; the Early Help and Development Manager reported that no further action will include instances when advice and information had been given as well as cases when the client may have been referred on to another agencies.

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The Assistant Director report that any referral to the MASH would be assessed by a MDT, these team would include social workers. The Team would review the information, talk with partners and make a judgement as to whether statutory support or early help support is required. In the recent Ofsted inspection, Ofsted commented that they were confident that the assessment process was safe and robust.

The Early Help and Development Manager reported that the Oasis Team had introduced more robust quality assurance and performance processes, with monthly performance reports and greater management oversight of casework.

Members raised concerns in relation to the proposed target to increase the percentage of Early Help Assessments being completed within 20 working days to 100%, the current number is 78%. The Early Help and Development Manager reported that the assessment process has changed; going forward the assessments will include an initial snapshot of need and a quicker turnaround for any subsequent plan of support.

It was agreed:

The Early Help and Development Manager be thanked for her attendance and information with regards to the numbers of repeat referrals contained within the no further action cohort will be forwarded on to members in advance of the next meeting.

CS.04 FOSTERING TEAM UPDATE

Sue Harris - Strategic Lead for Placement Services, attended the meeting to update members on the fostering team. The presentation contained the following information:

- Fostering Panel
- Team Structure
- Bury Data
- Home from Home Scheme
- Service Developments
- Community Events

The Strategic Lead reported that the fostering service is the largest resource in terms of placements for Bury's children in care. There are currently 343 children in care with 233 places with foster carers. 105 are placed with Bury foster carers, 67 with family and friends foster carers and 61 with independent foster agencies.

From the 1st January 2019 the fee paid to Bury Carers increased to £130 per week for children 0-10 years and £140 per week for children aged 11 and over. The Council also agreed to remove the deduction for any additional children from 1st January 2019.

Members discussed the 61 children that are placed with Independent Foster Agencies. The Strategic Lead reported that reducing the numbers of Looked after Children (if safe to do so) and the reliance on more costly independent placements remains a priority. This will be helped by the establishment of the Bury Foster Career Ambassadors Scheme and increasing the availability of supported lodgings.

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In response to a member's question, the Strategic Lead reported that the Council does not have a problem recruiting foster carers within the BME community.

It was agreed:

Sue Harris, Strategic Lead be thanked for her attendance.

COUNCILLOR S SOUTHWORTH

Chair (Note: the meeting started at 5pm and ended at 7.10pm)

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SAFEGUARDING SUB COMMITTEE**3rd OCTOBER 2019****Action arising from Previous Safeguarding Sub Committee: 9th July 2019**

Action: Information concerning the numbers of repeat referrals contained within the no further action cohort to be forwarded to members in advance of the next Safeguarding Sub Committee meeting on 3-10-2019.

Out of a cohort of 5660 early help referrals into Team Oasis between April 2018 & March 2019, 81% (4596) were deemed as having "no further action" taken; of this cohort, 53% were repeat referrals.

"No further action" (NFA) decisions are made up of a variety of responses but due to system restrictions these are all captured in this one outcome.

Examples of outcomes captured by the "NFA" decision would include signposting for support, referrals being made to other services, recommendation for support already in place to continue, families not wishing to accept or feel support is necessary or referrals sharing or seeking information.

Example Case Studies:**1. Sibling group of 3 children**

Referral by Health visitor following birth of baby to the family. Health Visitor had noted in their files that there was a social care history for the family and queried whether a pre-birth assessment should have been completed.

Screening information demonstrated that the Children Centre was already involved supporting the family and no concerns regarding care of the children had been raised. No further action taken as support in place.

2. Sibling group of 2 children

Referred by the police due to a domestic abuse incident between male and his current partner. Concerns raised for males children with ex-partner. Screening informed that male has no contact with his children and their mother is protective. Advice and guidance provided, no further action required.

3. Sibling group of 2 children

Referral from the police following father refusing to allow his children to return to mothers care after the Easter holidays due to concerns for mother new partner. Screening and discussions with mother regarding fathers concerns; children had now been returned to her care. School spoken to and agreed with consent to monitor welfare of children. Advice and guidance provided, no further action required.

4. Sibling group of 5 children

Police referred due to one of the sibling being reported as missing from home for a 2-hour period. YP arrived home safe and well. Information sent to the team who conduct return interviews, no further action required.

5. Sibling group of 6 children

Referral from housing as family had been served an eviction notice. Screening identified that the children would not become homeless because of the eviction. Advice and guidance provided re support with housing issues. No further action required.

6. Sibling group of 2 children

Referral from police following a report of domestic abuse from ex-partner. STRIVE were already involved with the family supporting. No further action required as support already in place.

Kirsty Walton

Service Development Manager Early Help

12th September 2019

Children & Young People Restructure

Overview & Scrutiny Safeguarding Subgroup

3 October 2019

Tony Decrop – Assistant Director,
Children's Social Care & Safeguarding

Why we have restructured:

- A need to manage demand across the directorate in a different way to ensure the right support is given at the right time to children and families through an integrated Early Help Offer which will reduce the need for high cost interventions.
- To ensure schools are inclusive and provide high quality education to all children and young people of Bury
- Management capacity to drive forward transformation at pace for the children of Bury
- Recruitment, retention and development of staff; structures which support promotion and succession planning and reduce turnover of staff.
- Budget Savings

The New Divisions

- In order to respond effectively to the needs of the Children and Young People in Bury we now have three divisions:
 - Early Help and School Readiness
 - Social Care & Safeguarding
 - Education and Inclusion
- Each division will be headed by an Assistant Director supported by a reduced, reconfigured tier of Strategic Leads

Social Care & Safeguarding

- **Safeguarding** – Including responsibility for the Safeguarding service, MASH and the EDT, Initial Response, Complex Safeguarding and the Victoria Children & Families Centre.
- **Corporate Parenting** – Including responsibility for the Virtual School, Fostering, Adoption, Children & Young People in Care, Leaving Care, and Child & Adolescent Mental Health Social Work.
- **Practice Improvement** – Including responsibility for Child Protection Case Conferences, Children's Rights, Quality Assurance and Independent Reviewing, Practice Improvement and performance Management, Workforce Development.

Education & Inclusion

- **Education Services** – Including responsibility for school Asset Management, Pupil Place Planning, Admissions, Governance, Home-School Transport, Data and Performance & Standards and CLAS.
- **Inclusion & Vulnerable Children** – Including responsibility for SEND, Education Psychology, Additional Needs, Sensory Impairment, School Attendance and Connexions.

Early Help & School Readiness

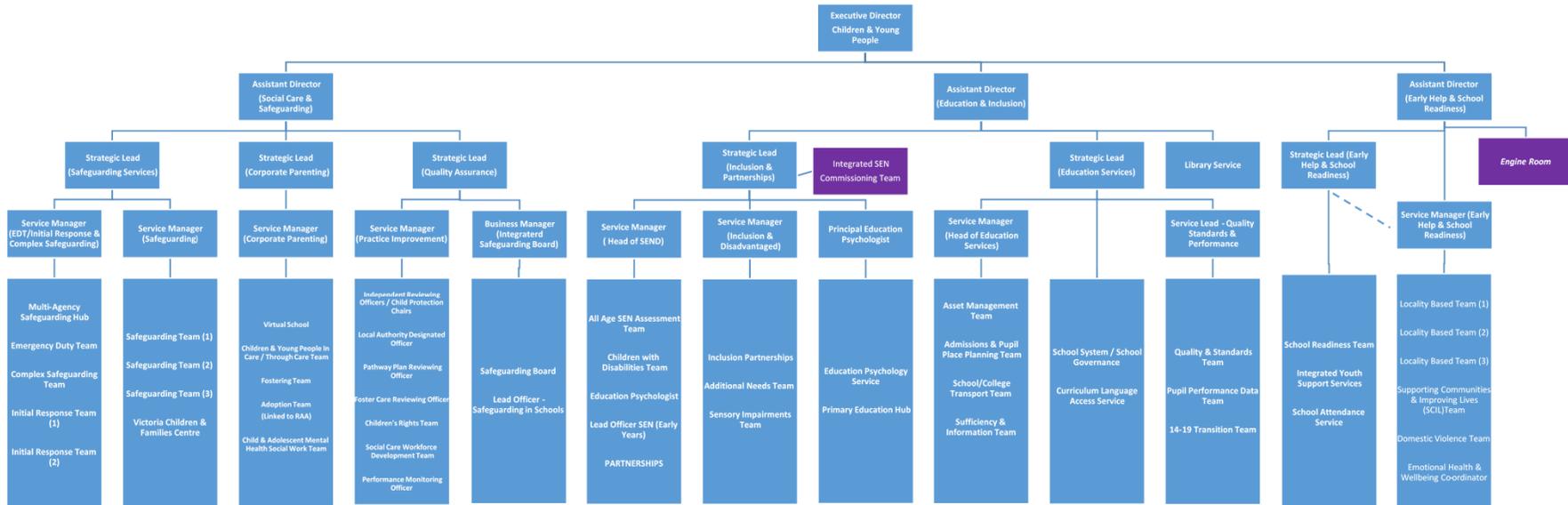
- **Early Help & School Readiness** – Including responsibility for Early Help Services, Children’s Centres, Youth Services, SCIL and School Readiness. Also will take responsibility for the Engine Room as a future area of development.

Primary Functions of each Division

- **Early Help & School Readiness** – A locality based service which integrates professionals from all sectors to support vulnerable young people (pre-birth – 19 years old) and delivers coordinated, family focused and evidence-based interventions, using a single early help assessment process and a key worker system ensuring that the family is kept at the centre of care.
- **Social Care & Safeguarding** - to support children assessed by a social worker as being in need of support, protection or need to be looked after outside of their immediate family. Also has a statutory responsibility to provide services in respect of Care Leavers, Fostering, Adoption, Child Protection
- **Education and Inclusion** – the supply of school and early years places and access to those places (**Education Services**), the quality assurance, and the support and challenge needed to ensure high performance, across the educational system (**Education Performance & Standards**), fulfilling the LA statutory role in respect of SEN assessment through an integrated multi-agency team (**SEN**) and the delivery of all LA specialist services to support the most vulnerable children and young people, including those with SEN (**Inclusion & Disadvantaged Children**)

Final Structure

Directorate Structure (Final)



O&S Sub Committee Safeguarding

Social Care Staffing

Janice Barr – Strategic Lead Safeguarding

Bart Popelier – Strategic Lead Practice Improvement

Workforce CSC

Current Social Work establishment:

11 x Team Managers

5 x Assistant Team Managers

2 x Advanced Practitioners

55 x Social Workers

7 x Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's)

Use of Agency Staff:

1 x Team Manager

11 x Social Workers (covering 5 vacancies, 4 secondments and 2 maternity leave)

New Structure - Recruitment

- Permanent Director appointed
- Permanent Assistant Director appointed
- Permanent Strategic Lead appointed
- Interview for Service Managers x 4 held, 3 appointed, further interview 01.10.19.
- Team Manager x 2 interviews arranged for 27th September 2019
- Assistant Team Manager posts x 7 advertised – interviews 2nd & 4th October 2019
- Rolling advert for Social Workers – 4 recruited/awaiting checks

Recruitment

- Local Authorities across England are struggling to recruit experienced Social Workers.
- This has extended to agency Social Workers with the quantity and the quality of agency staff being lower than historically.
- Bury has had a fairly stable workforce; however, opportunities from the restructure afforded to staff has and will cause some internal movement.
- We have successfully recruited 3 Social Work Apprenticeships as part of a 'grow-your-own' strategy.
- Bury continues to offer good quality student placements and students have moved into permanent posts once qualified.

Retention

- Increased support to newly qualified Social Workers during their first year in employment(ASYE).
- SMART mobile phones and Laptops to all Social Care staff to support flexible agile working..
- Remodelled Advanced Practitioner posts used to support less experienced workers and work on practice improvement across the service.
- Caseloads monitored by Team Managers/Strategic Leads.
- Alignment between practitioners and Workforce Development – Research in Practice (RIP) launched and practice forums established.
- National Assessment & Accreditation System (NAAS) – Bury was one of 5 LA's to pilot the scheme. Staff embraced this opportunity and with support from Management, 23 of our Social Workers are now accredited.

Challenges

- Churn of agency staff – competitive market
- More qualified staff choosing to work for agencies than take a permanent contract
- Quality and resilience of newly qualified staff
- Succession planning
- Practice developments and skill requirements
- Social work reform & innovation agenda

Strengths

- Restructure will provide career pathway for staff and support retention
- Restructure sees increased management oversight to support and strengthen front line practice
- High retention rates of social work students and newly qualified workers (ASYE)
- Steady number of agency workers decide to become permanent
- Reputation – Bury is a good place to be a social worker

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Fostering Service

Susan Harris

Strategic Lead Corporate Parenting

Foster Care



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Family and Friends Care

Definition

- Family and Friends carers support children and young people whose parents are unable to provide them with care and support and this responsibility is taken on by a family member such as a grandparent, aunt, uncle, sibling or other connected adults to the child such as godparents or close friends of the family
- Bury Fostering Service refer to Kinship Care or Connected Persons care as `Family and Friends` carers
- Family and Friends Care can be provided as a temporary or permanent arrangement. They are assessed by the Fostering Service and presented to the Fostering panel for approval.

Family and Friends Statutory Guidance

- Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities
- The guidance sets out the legal framework for the provision of support to Family and Friends carers
- This guidance should be read in conjunction with the following statutory guidance relevant to family and friends carers in specific situations, which must be followed where applicable:
 - Replacement Children Act 1989 Guidance on Private Fostering, DfES 2005
 - Special Guardianship Guidance, DfES 2005
 - Adoption Guidance: Adoption and Children Act 2002, (revised February 2011) DfE 2011
 - Statutory Guidance on Fostering Services, DfE 2011

National Minimum Standards

The National Minimum Standards on Family and Friends Care:

- makes it clear that children and young people who are unable to live with their parents should receive the support that they and their carers need to safeguard and promote their welfare, whether or not they are looked after. It aims to ensure that local authorities understand when such children should become Looked After, and sets out what local authorities and their partners should do to deliver effective services to children and young people who are living with family members or friends
- The authority must “give preference to” a placement with a person who is a relative, friend or other person connected with the child and who is also a local authority foster parent. They must have been approved as a local authority foster carer in accordance with the 2011 Regulations or have been temporarily approved as a foster carer under the 2010 Regulations
- The Regulations, together with the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, set out the requirements in relation to support and supervision of all foster carers including those who are family members, friends or other connected persons.

Regulation 24 and 25

- Family & Friends carers can be approved in an emergency under Regulation 24 of the Fostering Regulations 2011.
- Fostering Social Workers on duty undertake Reg 24 assessments that are referred to the service that day, prompt assessments are needed in order to determine the viability of any potential family and friends' placement before the child is placed. An applicant can only be considered for Reg 24 if it is thought that a full assessment will be positive
- The Reg 24 is agreed by the Fostering Agency Decision Maker (ADM), with a full Fostering assessment including relevant checks and medicals is then presented to the fostering panel within 16 weeks
- If for any reason (for example medical and DBS have not been returned) within the 16 week timescale then the Fostering panel can be asked to extend for a further 8 weeks - Reg 25.

Family & Friends Foster Care

The guidance for Family & Friends carers sets out a framework for the provision of support to these carers. It requires each local authority with responsibility for children's services, in collaboration with its local partners, to publish a policy setting out its approach towards meeting the needs of children living with family and friends carers. Bury have recently updated their Family & Friends Policy.

Family and Friends Care brings its own challenges with the overriding message that any child is best placed within its own family. This can bring demands made by the courts following the implementation of the 26 week time scale for concluding care proceedings.

If it is felt that Family and Friends applicants will not meet the Fostering standards the Courts can direct an assessment under a 38(6) which means that a placement can be assessed under a different order than fostering and the child can remain in placement.

The recruitment and assessment process of Family and Friend carers differs slightly from that of general foster carers, as the relationship with the child is an overriding factor.

Carers must adhere to the Friends & Family Care: Statutory guidance for Local Authorities Department for Education 2011 in order to continue to meet Fostering standards and to maintain approval as carers.

Family & Friends Foster care

All Foster Carers go through a robust assessment process to consider if they meet the required standard to be a foster carer, this includes DBS checks, references and compulsory training.

All approved Family & Friends carers who are assessed and approved at the Bury Fostering panel are supported, monitored and reviewed by an allocated Supervising Social Worker.

Family and Friend Foster Carers have to evidence that they continue to meet Fostering Standards by maintaining training, updating medical and DBS checks. They must work collaboratively with the Local Authority to implement the child and young persons Care Plan.

Family and Friends carers have access to the same financial package as all approved foster carers, this includes the solo and discretionary payment. Once Family and Friends carers have completed Skills To Foster, Training Standards Development and 6 mandatory training they reach Level 3 Skills for Payment which is in line with general foster carers.

Special Guardianship Orders

- Family and Friends carers once assessed and approved at Bury panel are matched long term at the point of placing. In the assessment process the applicant has to evidence they are committed to the child until the age of 18 years.
- Family and Friend carers are supported to apply for other orders to ensure permanence such a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Once an SGO is agreed by the Court, the child is no longer looked after and the Special Guardians obtain parental responsibility.
- Bury has a full time and a part time social worker who form the Special Guardianship Team
- The SGO Team assess all private applications and also assess the SGO applications from family and friends foster carers within the local authority
- The social workers also support carers post SGO, they provide a support group and training opportunities for special guardians.
- The team signpost to other services such as SCIL, healthy young minds and education
- The team can also make applications to the Adoption Support Fund (which also covers SGO)

Fostering Panel

- The Service has recently streamlined the panel process. The panel has been reduced from twice to once per month
- Reg 24 assessments are now being submitted to panel as notification only so as to reduce the amount of time panel members spend reading paperwork
- The social workers for the case no longer need to attend panel for Reg 24 notifications thus saving on social work time
- The Service has an experienced independent panel chair who has been in post for a number of years
- The Service recruited a new vice panel chair in August 18 after the resignation of the previous post holder
- The Fostering Panel play a crucial role in providing oversight in respect of approving, reviewing and terminating approvals of both Family & Friends assessment and general assessments.

Family & Friends Carers in Bury

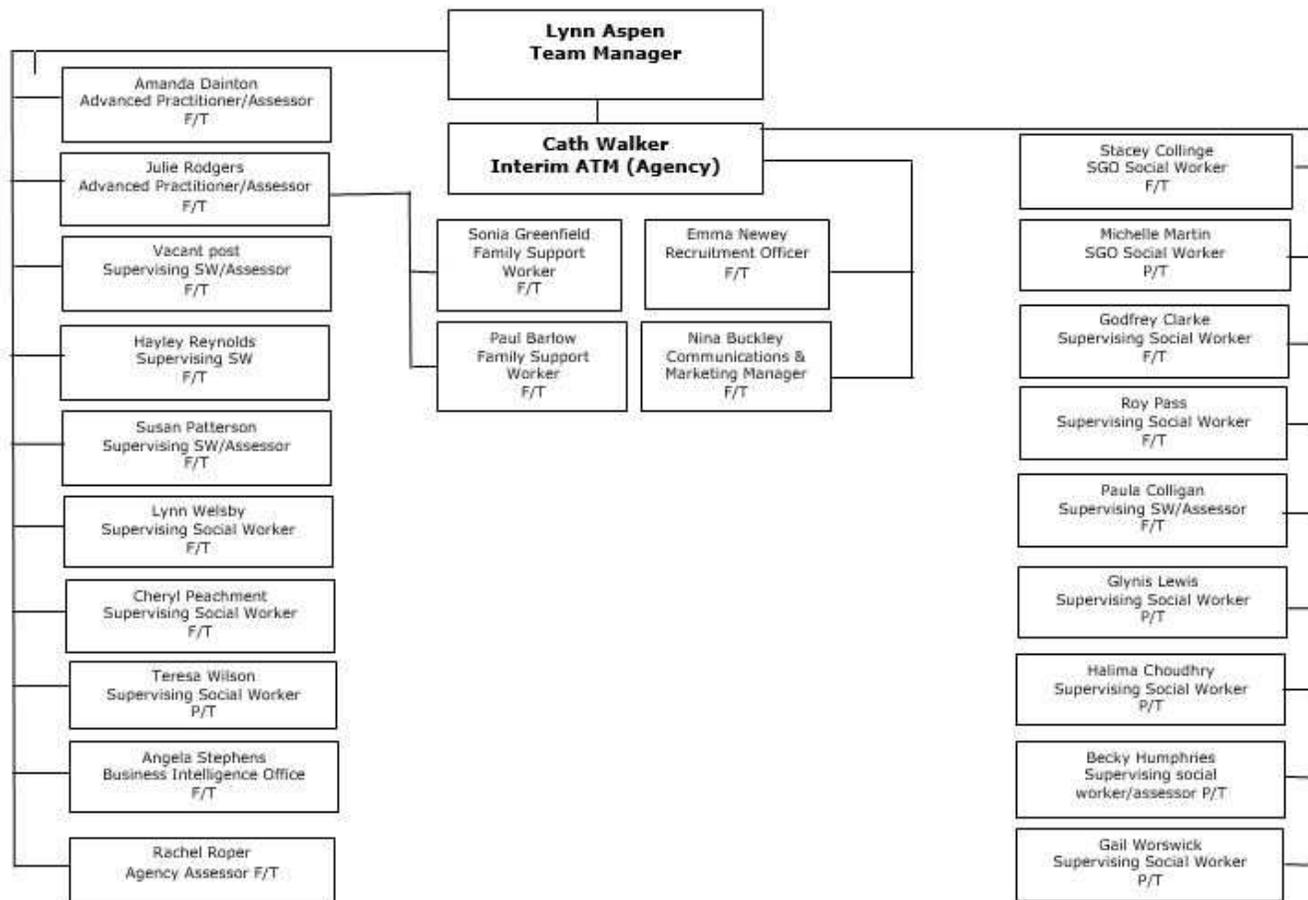
- Bury have 55 Family and Friend foster carers
- They care for and look after 73 children
- Between April and September 2019 the service approved 10 new family and Friend foster carers
- We had 5 family and friend foster carers who resigned from their role, 2 who were granted Special Guardianship Orders and 3 where there had been a change of care plan
- Family& Friend foster carers are often able to provide the most stable placements and very rarely break down

The Fostering Team

- Bury now have a large but stable fostering team, there have been some vacancies and sickness however this is now been resolved through support with HR.
- There has been continuity in the management structure as Lynn Aspen who started as Assistant Team Manager (ATM) in 2017 then secured the Manager role in 2018
- The new permanent ATM is due to start in October 2019
- We have recently had 2 agency Social workers covering vacancies within the team, both of whom have enjoyed working in the team and so have applied for permanent jobs within the service – this will provide further continuity

Team Structure

CHILDREN'S SERVICES FOSTERING TEAM



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