



**The
Fostering
Network**

What is the Fostering Potential programme?

- Aiming to raise the educational outcomes of looked after children by increasing foster carers' knowledge and confidence in their role as 'first educators'.
- Peer support project work across local authorities, supported by an information strand
- Education Champions (foster carers) working closely with other foster carers
- Embedded within and adapted by each local authority

What is the background to the programme?

- Based on the work of previous successful programmes: London Fostering Achievement, London Schools Excellence Fund and Fostering Achievement
- Further exploration of the Education Champions approach was strongly recommended by the evaluators of London Fostering Achievement
- Current programme funded by Sir John Cass Foundation and BFSS

What might local project activity look like?

- Education Champions regularly meeting foster carers 1-1 in their homes or at groups
- Providing **peer-support** to foster carers around:
 - How to support their fostered child in Maths/English
 - Meeting individual targets (from PEP)
 - Meeting their fostered child's extra-curricular target
 - Preparation for PEP meetings
- LA can also hold additional events to support, engage and inspire participants

Case study: Suffolk Fostering Service

- Worked with the Virtual School to agree a focus area: key stage transition at 11 and 16.
- Training delivered by The Fostering Network and the 16+ Assistant Head from the Virtual School
- **Successes:** closer working with the Virtual School, ongoing training for Foster Carers and a joint Aspirations Day planned at University of Suffolk
- **Challenges:** geography, retention of Education Champions and foster carer engagement.

Where are we now?

**7 local authority
fostering services
committed in
September 2018**

**58 Education
Champions were
trained
Oct 18-Jan 19**

**53 active
Education
Champions**

**71 Foster carers
have received 1-1
Ed Champion
support**

**Wider project
activities include
additional training
and trips/visits.**

**First round of
evaluation
currently in
progress**

Evaluation: early findings

Successes:

- The project work is described by local authorities as impacting positively on foster carers and children
- Promotes closer links between services
- Positive impacts on the Education Champions
- Foster carers particularly appreciated support around specific issues e.g. issues at school, homework or IT skills

Challenges:

- Capacity and resourcing at a local level
- Difficulties around data sharing between services
- Challenges in engaging foster carers in the programme



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