An amazing two weeks!

Foster Care Fortnight 2015 gets people connected

What an amazing two weeks! A huge thank you to everyone who supported Foster Care Fortnight™, from fostering services to foster carers, politicians to celebrities. Thousands of people across the UK joined in with our campaign which had the theme of ‘make a connection’ to fostering.

Fostering services went out and about to highlight the fantastic work that foster carers do and attract new prospective foster carers. Hundreds of people used our ‘my connection to fostering’ placards to raise awareness, and Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest were very busy with #FCF2015 activity. Our Pinterest board (pinterest.com/fosteringnet/foster-care-fortnight-2015/) sums things up perfectly, demonstrating the diversity of people who make a difference to the lives of fostered children.

We were especially delighted by the amount of media coverage the fortnight received, with our main story about the number of placement moves for teenagers and their impact receiving coverage across UK, national, regional and local media.

Thank you to everyone who provided blogs and placards, held an event or shared information on social media. You helped to make this year’s campaign a great success in shining a spotlight on fostering and the amazing work that foster carers do.

Karen Sharkey (above), an inspirational foster carer from County Tyrone, was named the 2015 Northern Ireland Foster Carer of the Year during Foster Care Fortnight.

Other winners included Brigid McKee, who was awarded Kinship Carer of the Year, and Billy and Mandy Johnston, who won the Lifetime Achievement award.
Hundreds of foster carers, children and fostering service staff joined together to have fun at our Foster Walks in Wales, Northern Ireland and England.

Thousands of pounds were raised to support the work of The Fostering Network to continue transforming children’s lives.

Thank you to all our walkers and to everyone who sponsored them – we look forward to seeing you at a Foster Walk next year.

See some photos of the day at www.fostering.net/fosterwalk

‘With 55,000 foster families in the UK, lots of people have a connection to fostering, but the placard pictures and personal testimonies we have seen have absolutely blown me away.’

Kevin Williams, chief executive, The Fostering Network

Representatives from across the fostering sector joined Wales’s health and social services minister Mark Drakeford (pictured second from right) at a Senedd reception held by The Fostering Network.

The Fostering Network used the occasion not only to celebrate the role of foster care, but also to launch The Foster Carers’ Charter for Wales. The charter, which has been developed in partnership with the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru and the Welsh Local Government Association, outlines the roles and commitments of both fostering services and foster carers.

Foster carers Jo Pollard, Tom Dodgson and Sarah Stringer were just some of the people who took part in a consultation into continuing care regulations, hosted by the Scottish Government in conjunction with The Fostering Network.

This was one of a number of events held across Scotland during Foster Care Fortnight. Others included an open day in The Fostering Network Scotland offices, a Reach Out event, which explored the issues of fostering a disabled child, and media training for our young champions from the Fostering Community Champions scheme.