

Fostering Recruitment Strategy 2021/22



1. Introduction

The Camden Fostering team is responsible for all Foster Care provisions, including private fostering, recruitment, assessing prospective carers, supporting approved Foster Carers and finding suitable, safe placements to encourage the best outcomes for Camden's Looked After Children. This is a critical service for some of the boroughs most vulnerable children.

To ensure the best possible outcomes for our Looked After Children, the Camden Fostering Team are focused on ensuring as many Looked After Children are placed with in-house Foster Carers in stable placements.

Camden has seen a rise in the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, which has had an impact on both the type of children coming into care and the type of Foster Carers required to meet and promote the diverse needs and culture of children.

As of March 2021, there were **183** looked after children with an in-house provision of **74** fostering households. During the last financial year (April 2020 – March 2021) there were **176** enquiries from new perspective fostering households, with **11** going onto being approved and **5** currently being assessed with **1** on hold.

2. Current Situation

Camden currently have 74 fostering households, which offer us the following

- 110 Mainstream placements (including Family and Friends Carers)
- 16 Specialist placements
- 4 Respite placements
- 1 Parent and Child placement
- 2 Family Link placements

3. Aims and Objectives

This plans aim is to outline the needs of the service and plan out the future marketing strategies to recruit foster carers to match the changing needs of Camden's Looked After Children.

This year's objectives are:

- To receive **150** enquiries
- To have **10** new carers approved
- To improve local placement choice for young people but particularly for teenagers and children requiring respite care.
- To increase the number of in-house placements and reduce the usage of independent fostering agencies and residential units.
- To raise awareness of schemes:
 - UASC Foster Carers
 - Teenage Carers
 - Parent and Baby Carers
- To obtain further benefits for current foster carers

4. Target Audience

- Friends and Family of Camden Staff (Staff recommendation scheme)
- Friends and Families of Current Foster Carer (Carer recommendation scheme)
- Teachers
- Public sector workers i.e. Police & NHS
- Local Communities
- Older communities reaching retirement age
- London residents (with 10km of Camden) with a spare room
- Employees of Fostering Friendly Employers

Key Messages

- Promoting the rewarding aspects of Fostering and the long-term impact it can have on a young person's life.
- Raising awareness of Camden's fostering schemes
- Busting Myths
- Local people for local children
- Promoting benefits that Camden Fostering Offer
- Recommendation schemes
- Council Tax Exemptions
- Safety and Stability for children
- Free Gym memberships (confirmation of scheme needed)

We will aim to complete consumer research with current foster carers to ascertain their needs, using primary data to identify what further benefits they would like to receive. A separate document for research and insight to be completed.

5. Looked After Children/Needs Analysis

Nationally there are 80,080 Looked After Children as of 31st March 2019 (an increase of 2% from the previous year). The number of Looked After Children has increased steadily over the past 5 years.

In Camden the number of Looked After Children has remained stable with between 185 and 210 children in care over the past 4 years, despite the increase in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children through the Croydon rota and Dubs amendment.

Throughout the year the average numbers of Looked After Children each month has been approximately 191, as young people move out of care through Adoption, Special Guardianship arrangements or turning 18.

The age profile of Looked After Children in Camden remains largely the same with most of our children being over 16, more than the national and inner London averages.

Of the 184 children, 104 children are in fostering placements:

- 4 Children – Adoptive placement
- 32 Children – Children's home
- 24 Children – Family and Friends fostering

- 80 Children – Fostering placement
- 3 Mother and Baby unit
- 37 Young people – Semi Independent living
- 1 Young person – Young offender’s institute

The Table below outlines the percentage of Looked After Children in each age bank for the last 3 years:

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Under 1	5%	5.2%	4.3%
1-4	4.5%	5.8%	15.3%
5-9	7%	6.8%	14.7%
10-15	36%	28.3%	20.7%
16+	47.5%	53.9%	44.8%

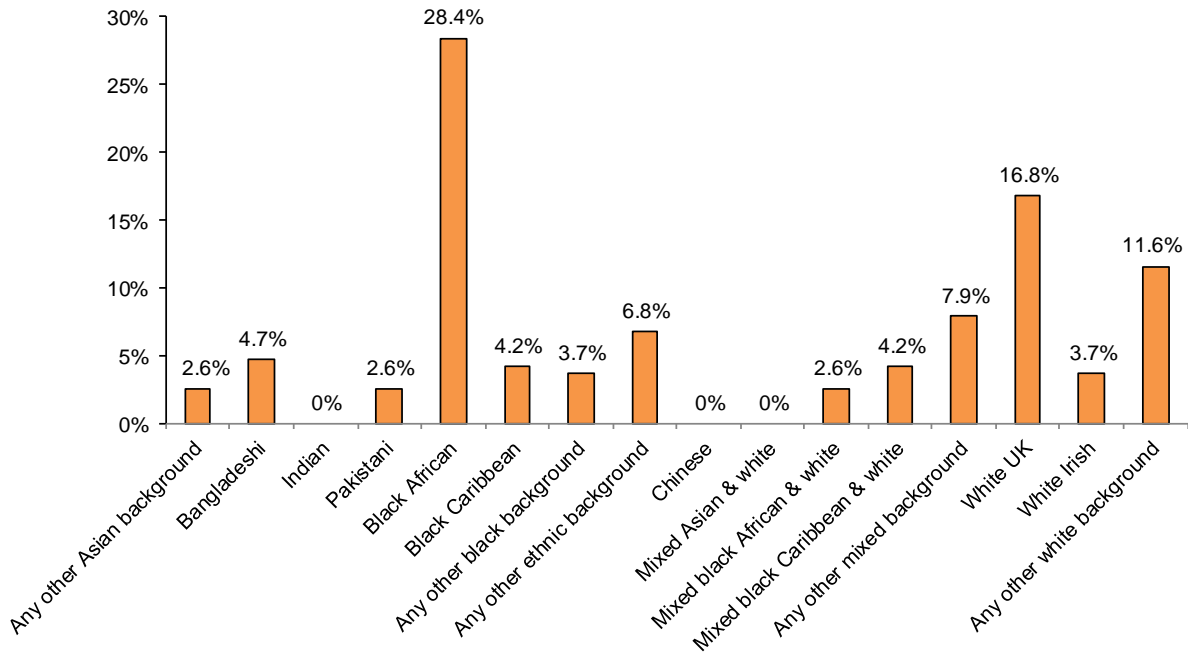
From the data above, our primary focus will be to target foster carers to look after teenagers. This is not to say we will not look to recruit foster carers for younger children as we understand that given training, support and space through our housing scheme, those carers may change their offer to Camden.

The below outlines the ethnicity of Camden’s Looked After Children as of March 2021.

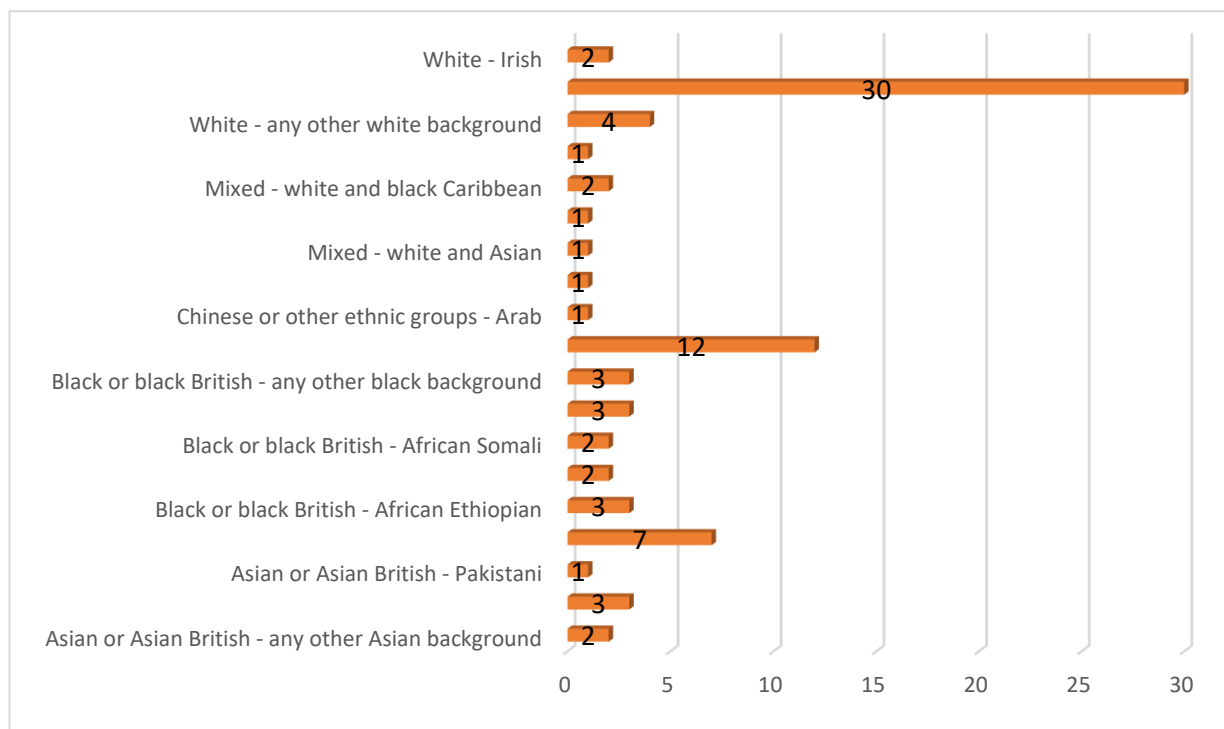
Ethnic origin	% of Camden LAC (March 2021)	% of Camden under-18 population*	% variance
Bangladeshi	4.7%	12.4%	-7.7%
Indian	0.0%	1.3%	-1.3%
Pakistani	2.6%	0.6%	+2.0%
Any other Asian background	2.6%	2.7%	-0.1%
Black African	28.4%	8.9%	+19.5%
Black Caribbean	4.2%	3.2%	+1.0%
Any other black background	3.7%	3.3%	+0.4%
Any other ethnic background	6.8%	3.8%	+3.0%
Chinese	0.0%	0.9%	-0.9%
Mixed (Asian and white)	0.0%	4.6%	-4.6%
Mixed (black African and white)	2.6%	1.8%	+0.8%
Mixed (black Caribbean and white)	4.2%	3.0%	+1.2%
Any other mixed background	7.9%	3.8%	+4.1%
White Irish	3.7%	1.0%	+2.7%
White UK	16.8%	35.7%	-18.9%
Any other white background	11.6%	13.1%	-1.5%

Children of black African, any other ethnicity, mixed (black Caribbean and white) and white Irish backgrounds are most over-represented within the care population, whilst children from the white UK, Bangladeshi and mixed (Asian and white) backgrounds are particularly under-represented.

The following chart shows Camden’s LAC population as at the end of March 2020 by specific ethnicity



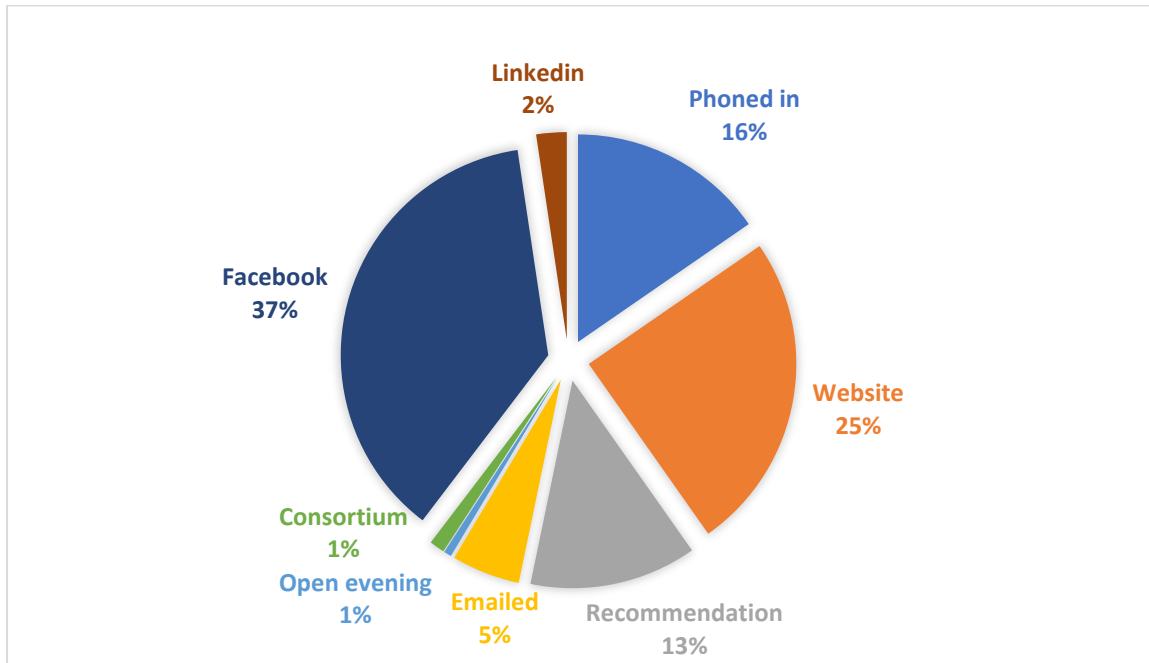
The below outlines the ethnicity of Camden’s Foster Carers as of February 2020.



This comparison shows us that we will need to target carers from Black, Asian and other ethnic minority groups, to enable us to carefully match our children in care, to promote their ethnic and cultural needs.

6. Review and update of 2020-21

Between April 2020 and March 2021, **176** enquiries were received, method of enquiries below.



Throughout the pandemic we have continued to advertise and recruit, due to the restrictions the service decided to concentrate all its resources onto an online media. There was a complete redesign of the website and a drive to increase traffic using google Ads and lowering the bounce rate which at the start of the year was over 80%, since the new website has launched we have seen an increase in web traffic and a decrease in the bounce rate – analytics below.



Conversion:

Of the **176** enquires, **23** households were invited to attend Skills to Foster Training with **20** attending of which **11** approval went on to be approved and **5** assessments still being carried out.

- This year's approvals came through the following methods
 - o 6 Recommendations
 - o 4 Online

Although the main source of enquiries is coming from online medias, the most successful candidates are those who are recommended to the service by current Foster Carers/ Staff Members.

7. Future approach

Advertising

Offline Medias will be completely depended on national lock down guidance – if as planned the lockdown ends in 21st June the below will be carried out – if lockdown does not ease the marketing strategy will continue to concentrate on an online media.

Bus Shelters – Camden wide

- May (*foster care fortnight*)

2 x A1 posters at O2 Centre in Finchley. Free of charge, only printing associated costs.

Print

- local magazines / newspapers
- school folders
- career focused publications (police life, teaching, NHS, youth workers).
- posters across borough

Eg:

May – Camden magazine (editorial)

July – On the hill (advert)

August – on the hill (editorial)

September – Camden New Journal, Fostering Awards Editorial

Promo items/leaflets

- Mail outs - target areas with larger housing with letter and leaflets.
- Post out information leaflets to all surgeries, libraries, community centres.
- Window stickers for local businesses
- Pens and shopping bags for giveaways.

Events

Open evenings, every first Thursday of the month.

Promotion of these via

- Information stands
- Yammer
- Essentials
- Eventbrite
- Emails to old enquiries
- Fostering websites (new family social, etc.)
- Camden events pages
- What's on sections in magazines
- Camden council and consortium social media pages

Information stands

Promotional events/recruitment stands (2 per month, more in foster care fortnight):

- 5PS
- Swiss Cottage leisure
- O2 centre
- Sainsburys Camden
- Morrison's Chalk Farm
- Community events
- Markets
- Better Gyms across Camden –

Conferences

To target specific groups of people, look to secure info stands or speaking slots at events such as British Medical Association (BMA) for preparing to retire events.

Fostering Awards

Options to be explored and set out on a separate document, dependant on national guidance.

Community Events

Local events to try have presence at:

- Camden Mela, Kilburn
- Primrose Hill Summer Fair
- Fair in the Square, N6
- London Pride
- Kentish Town Carnival
- South End Green Summer Festival, NW3
- Eid Prayer Family Fun Day, Kilburn
- St Pancras Fun Day
- 44th Queen Square Fair
- Jester Festival (2 day), West Hampstead

- Hampstead Summer Festival
- Albert Street Party
- NW5 Peckwater Neighbourhood Festival
- Rochester Terrace Annual Summer Party
- Camden New Town Community Festival, Camden Square
- Grange Park Kilburn Festival
- Fireworks evening

Online

Social Media

Run intermittent targeted Facebook and Instagram lead generating campaigns via Camden ads page.

Podcast

Create a 6-8-episode series which covers: fostering assessment process, foster carer stories and interviews, to be uploaded on to Spotify, communicate with colleagues at BBC to have it uploaded onto BBC Sounds App. (Carried over from last year)

Communications

Reach out newsletter (3 per year)

Updates can be sent to current carers and prospective carers.

- April
- September
- February

		April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March		
Events	Open evenings	Camden information session - 1 st Thursday of every month													
	Fairs					Summer Fairs						Christmas Fairs			
	Info stands	2 information stands a month (locations to be booked beforehand)													
	Talks	LGBT Forum Coffee Morning	Local Mosques (Ramadam)	Fostering Podcast			Fostering Friendly Employer	Age UK/LGBT Coffee Mornings	Schools	Local Churches (Christmas)	Local Communities				
Advertising	Campaigns		Bus Shelter Foster Carer Fortnight	Gaydio Campaign (During Pride)	Sky News (Pride)				CNJ Advert	Black History Month BAME Carers		Christmas Tree Appeal/ Met Police Appeal	Bus campaigns	LGBT History Month	
		Recommend a friend (staff initiative relaunch with fostering friendly employer)													
		Recommend a friend – Foster Carer Scheme													
		Fostering Friendly Employers													
		Football Team Sponsorship													
	Editorial	Fostering Newsletter	Ham & High (FCF)	Interview on Camden Magazine			Family Link Newsletter	Fostering Newsletter	MyLondon (Online)	Family Link Newsletter	Ham & High (Christmas)	Social Wellbeing Magazines	Fostering Newsletter	Age UK Newsletter	
								CNL Fostering Awards							
Mailouts		Community Centres		Schools (Newsletter)			Libraries		Religious Groups		Camden Residents		GP Surgeries		
Social Media	Specialist Carer		Pride Campaign (LGBT Carers)		Parent and Child		BAME Carers		Teenage Carers			Respite/Famil y Link/Short Breaks Carers			