

**Cwm Taf Regional Front Door**  
**RCT Corporate Parenting Board Report**  
**05/01/2022**

**Introduction**

The Regional front door for Fostering recruitment was established in April 2019 as a joint collaboration between Merthyr and RCT to address some of the concerns about the numbers of foster carers recruited, the speediness of responses and the quality of recruitment work being undertaken. The team consists of a Regional Development Manager leading on the project, a Regional Marketing Officer and a Regional recruitment Officer.

In March 2021 it was agreed that Bridgend CBC would join the regional collaboration and become part of the new regional fostering recruitment service and this came into operation on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

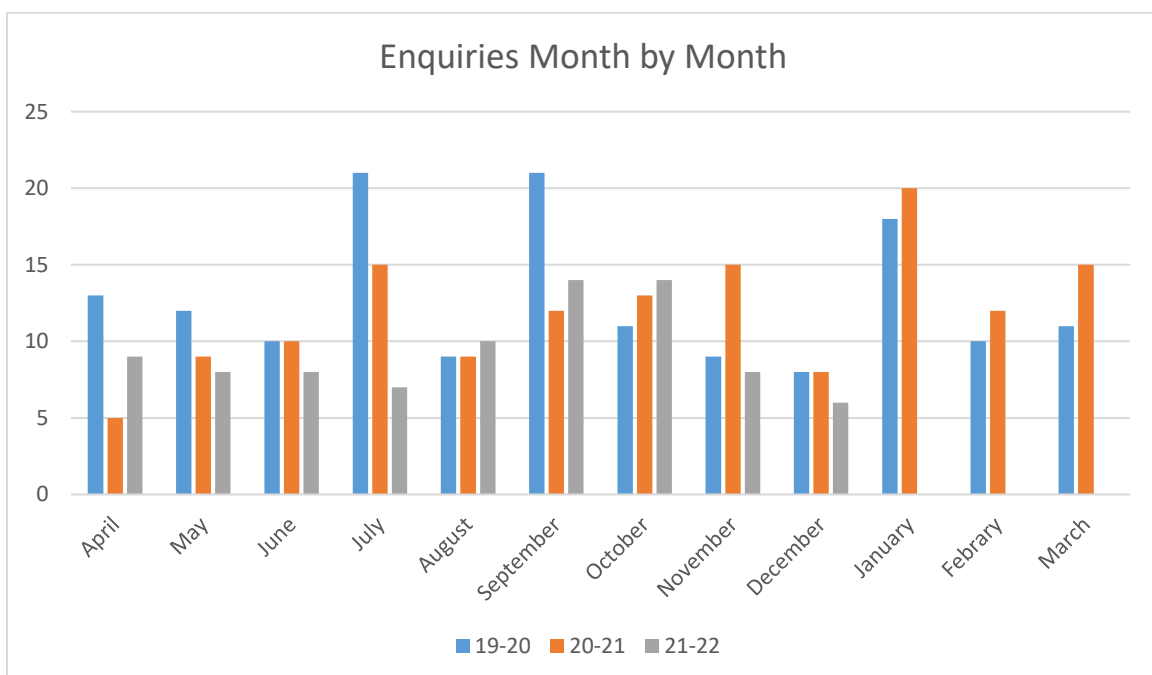
**Performance Data- Year on Year**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Enquiries</b>	<b>Initial Visits</b>	<b>Assessments Allocated</b>	<b>Approvals</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	146	24	17	13
<b>2019-20</b>	140	34	24	4
<b>2020/21</b>	143	59	29	9
<b>2021/22 (to Q3 only)</b>	84	26	20	8

**Performance Data- Cumulative Q1, Q2 & Q3 2021-22**

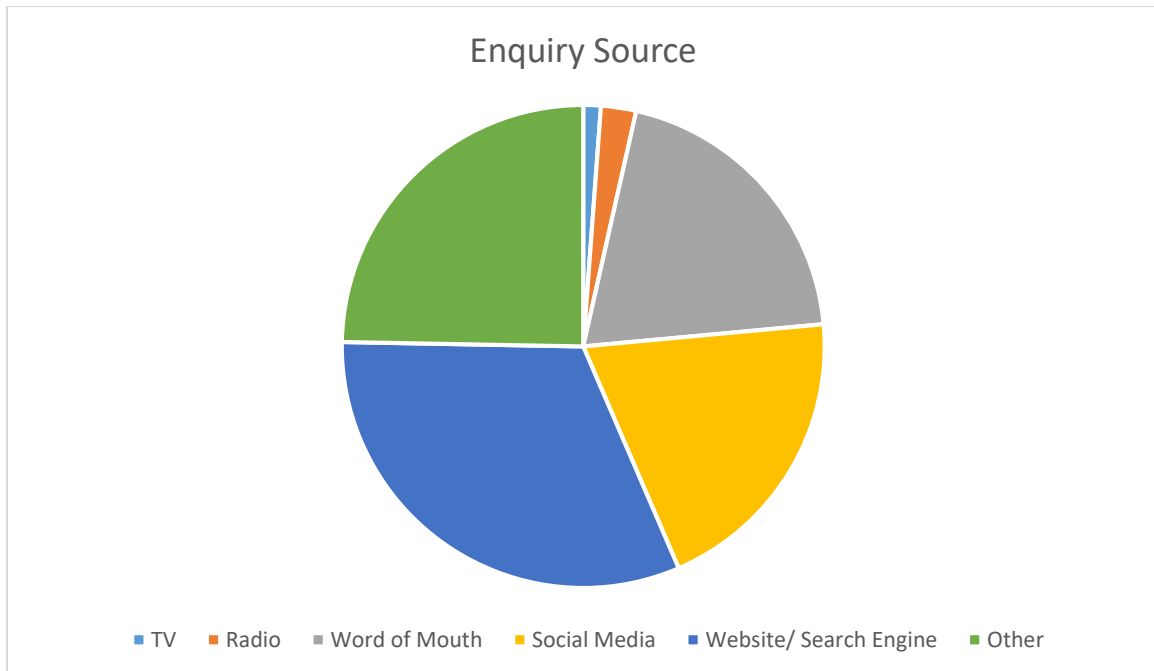
**Enquiry to Assessment Numbers**

2021/22	Enquiries	Initial Visits	Assessments Allocated	Approvals
Number	84	26	20	8
Conversation rate from Previous Stage	NA	40%	76.9%	40%
Conversion rate from Initial Enquiry	NA	40%	23.8%	9.5%
<b>2020/21</b>				
Number	93	38	16	6
Conversation rate from Previous Stage	NA	40.9%	42.1%	37.5%
Conversion rate from Initial Enquiry	NA	40.9%	17.2%	6.5%
<b>+/-</b>				
	-9	-12	+4	+2

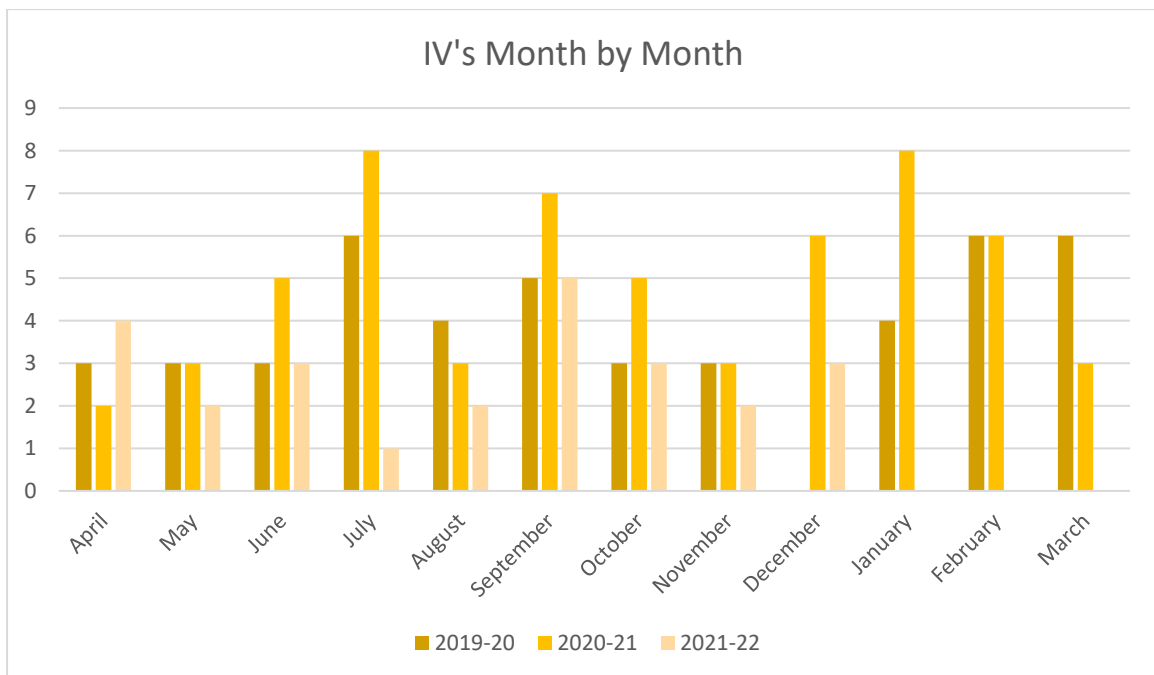


Whilst enquiries are down marginally on last year, we saw an increase on last year during September and October when the Foster Wales national campaign was live, including TV, Radio and more localised digital content.

July saw the biggest dramatic drop in enquiries, which coincided with the launch of new website, which meant people took time to find us in our new digital space.



Over half our enquiries have come from people who have interacted with our social media pages and website or searched directly for information on google.



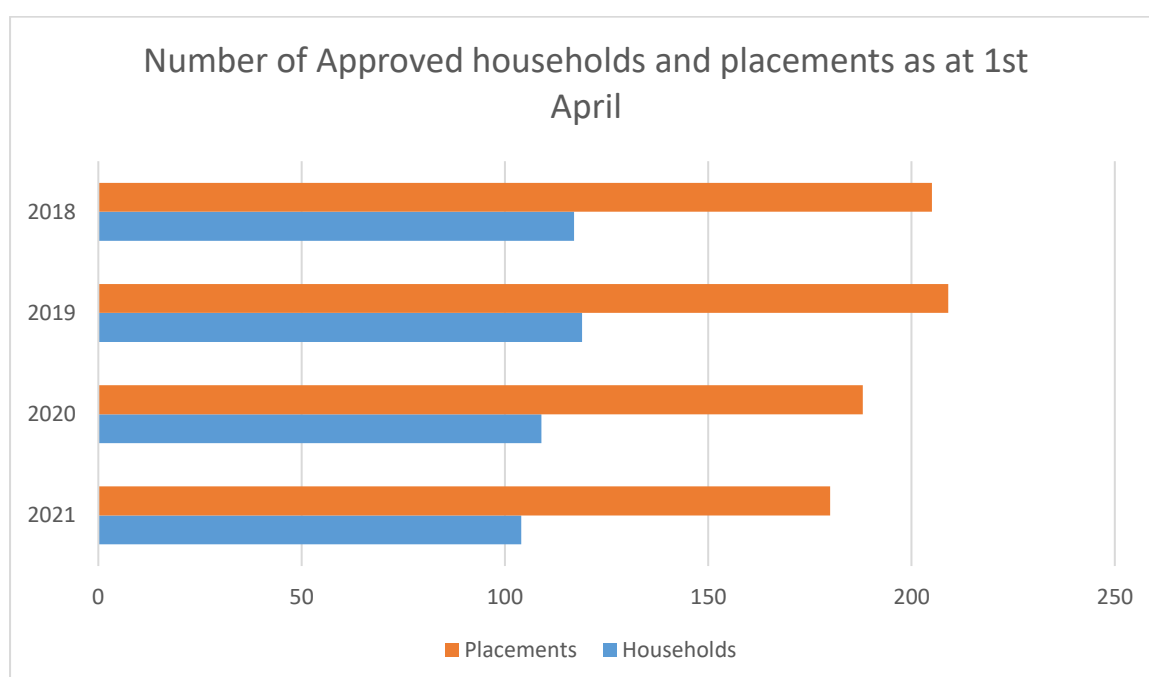
IV's have been down in every month since April 2022 in comparison to last year, the number IV's has seen similar trends to that of 2018/19, with the exception of July, which saw a dramatic decrease.

### Fostering approvals made

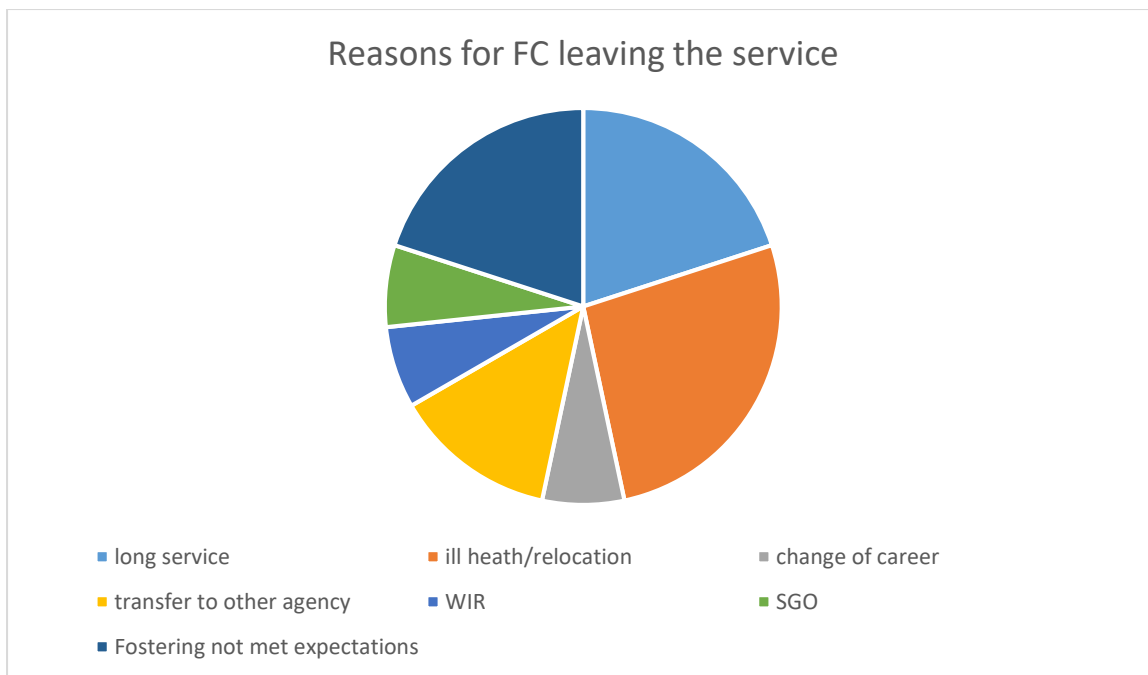
<b>2021/22 (only up until 31.12.21)</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2020/21</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2019/20</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2018/19</b>	<b>13</b>

It is expected that approvals will increase based on the previous 2 years during this financial year. Largely due to in house capacity to respond to enquiries and progress through the assessment.

Part 7 - Approvals and De-registrations	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
	House holds	Places	House holds	Places	House holds	Places	House holds	Places
Number as at 1st April	117	209	117	205	119	209	109	188
Number of approvals	14	24	13	18	4	7	9	15
Number that left the service	14	20	11	14	14	28	14	23
Number at 31st March	117	205	119	209	109	188	104	180



Our foster carer population has remained fairly consistent but with a slight decrease in the number of households and the number of placements those households offer over the last 3 years.



Retirement remains the biggest cause of foster carers terminating their approval, with nearly half of those leaving the service doing so due to giving up the role due to long service, ill health, relocation or changes within their own family. 20% of carers left because fostering did not meet their expectations. Only 2 carers terminated their approval with Foster Wales RCT due to transferring to another agency.

### **Analysis**

Although enquiries have dropped by 9.7% and Initial Visits have dropped 31.6% in the first three quarters compared with the previous year, this is consistent with the national picture in term of foster carer recruitment, with some Local Authorities reporting a 50% reduction in the number of enquiries received and initial visits taking place.

The positives are that this has not affected our numbers proceeding into assessment and being approved, both of which have increased on the same total in the previous financial year. The overall conversion rate from initial enquiry to assessments being allocated has increased from 17.2% to 23.8% and the overall conversion rate from enquiry to approval has increased from 6.5% to 9.5%.

The timescales for proceeding into IV continue to reduce, befitting from the positive impact of having a dedicated recruitment service in place. In addition, timescales for allocation of assessments and length of assessments also reducing due to Foster Wales RCT adopting the Foster Wales recruitment best practice guide.

The national Foster Wales campaign launch saw a positive impact on our enquiries throughout the months the campaign was live, during September (+2) and October (+1)

Our focus on digital marketing continues to have a positive impact with over half of enquiries (51.2%) coming from people who have interacted with our social media pages and website or searched directly for information on google.

The population of registered Foster Wales RCT Foster Carers continues to reduce and has decreased by 11.1% over the last 4 years. Work has been completed around retention including the introduction of a retention bonus, alongside other benefits such as free Leisure for Life membership and appreciation events and the majority of deregistration's were due to long service, ill health or a change in career as well as transferring to SGO/WIR. Only 2 foster carers left to transfer to other agencies during the last financial year.

### **Future Developments**

We hope to see an upturn in enquiries during quarter 4, as we launch a large regional attraction campaign. This campaign has been planned in collaboration with MTCBC and BCBC and will involve various marketing methods including press articles, radio, podcasts, buses, Social Media advertising as well as paid social media advertising and promotion of the website through google. We envisage this will build on the success of the national Foster Wales campaign in September 2021 and attract new people from relevant profession and backgrounds to consider fostering with a message of "Have you thought about changing career this new year?"

We continue to look to adapt our services in order to follow the best practice guide for recruitment and promote the Foster Wales National Commitment. This will involve introducing some new initiatives to recruit and retain our foster carer population.