

# Foster with NORTH EAST

*North-East Pathfinder: Foster Carer Recruitment Support Hub*



South Tyneside Council



North Tyneside Council



DARLINGTON  
Borough Council



together for  
children  
SUNDERLAND



Middlesbrough  
moving forward

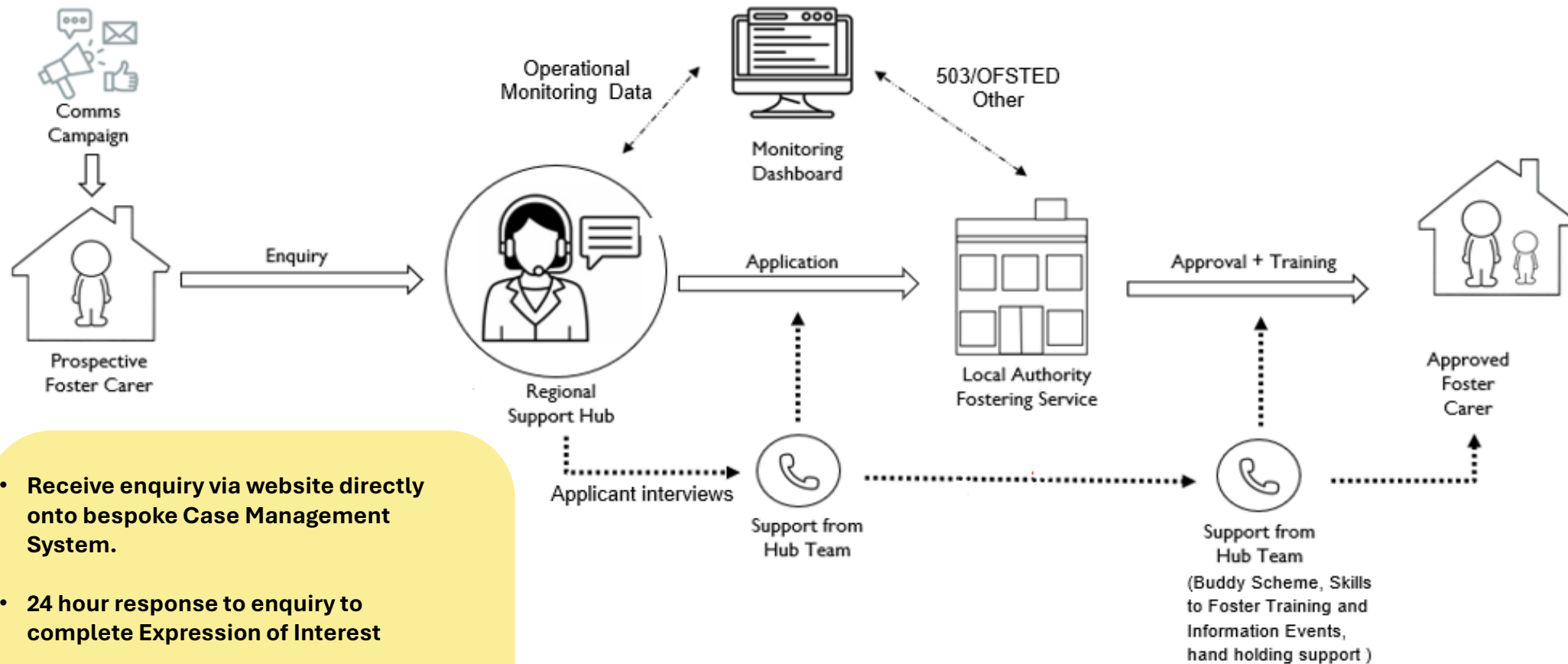


Newcastle  
City Council



Northumberland  
County Council

# Foster with North East: What it does



- Receive enquiry via website directly onto bespoke Case Management System.
- 24 hour response to enquiry to complete Expression of Interest
- Immediate sharing of EOI with receiving LA
- Pre approval training / buddy scheme / regular check ins through to approval.



Flow diagram courtesy of:



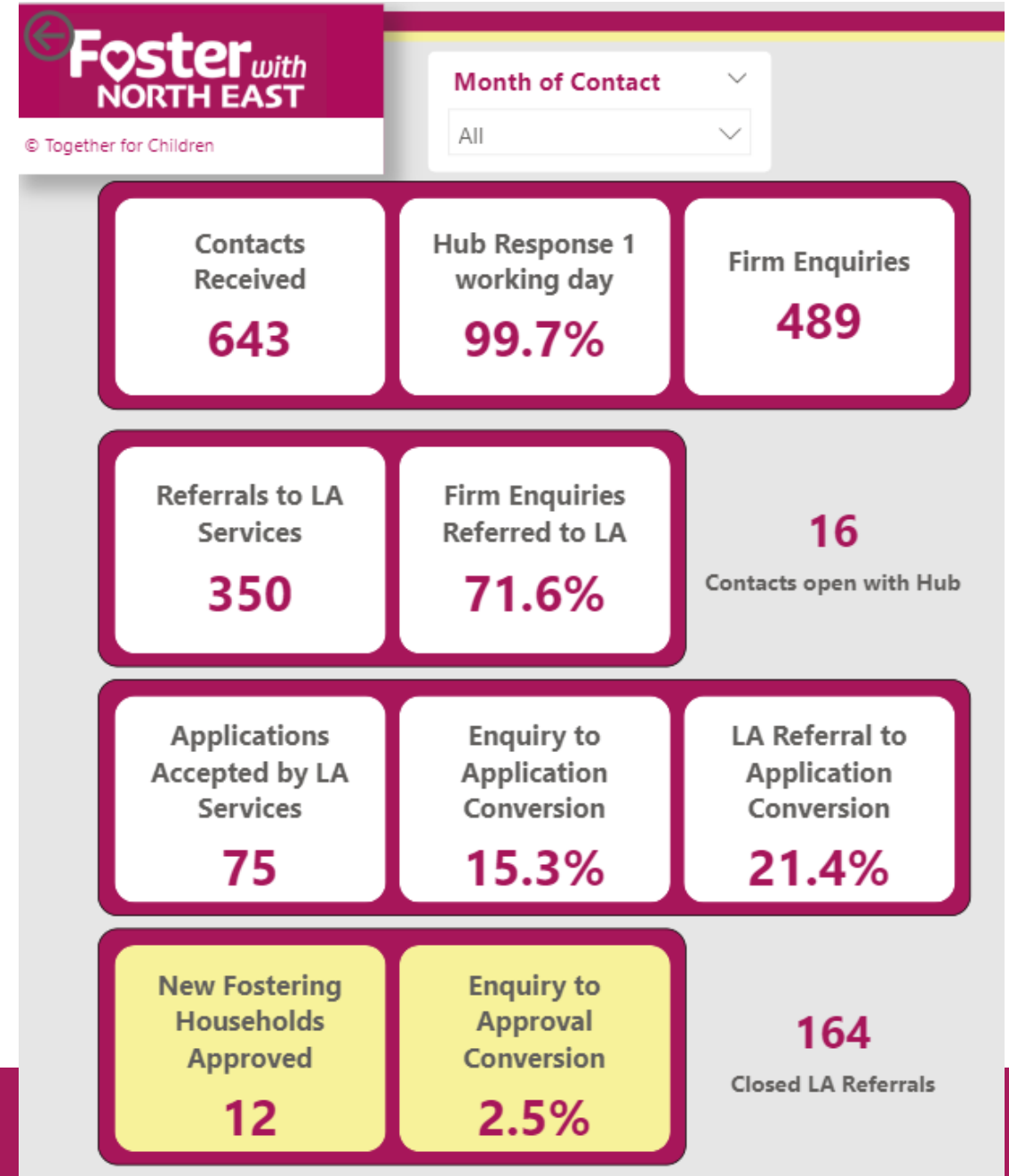
# How is it going?

From Go Live 27 September 2023

- On average 5.7 months from the enquiry being forwarded to the relevant LA team to ADM approval
- 643 enquires received by the hub of which, 489 were 'firm\*' enquiries, and the hub has referred 350 prospective applicants to LA teams.

*Currently:*

- 23.5% referral to application conversion
- 51.5% of the referrals to LA teams have since either withdrawn or been withdrawn by the LA
- 4% of these had progressed to application or further
- 2.5% conversion rate but note the time lag above from enquiry to conversion



### Getting good at....

- Comms campaign authentic and energised
- Strength of a regional brand and stronger visibility both online and out of home; better able to compete with IFAs and profile raising of fostering in general
- Increased collaboration across regional fostering leads
- Beneficial support offering from point of enquiry
- Reduced delays in responding to enquiries; a strong, consistent response for all
- Collaboration and communication is key across all workstreams (Hub operations, data, comms campaign) where the right people are involved at the right level
- Quality workforce within the Hub – Ability to recruit and retain experienced staff from across the region has been key strength and opportunity for regional buy-in
- Everyone recognises the need to try something different and has shown some level of willingness to engage at least short term
- Enhanced regional pre-approval training offer and buddy scheme

### Still feels hard.....

The sovereignty of 'place' continues with a desire for stronger LA local identity within the brand and comms

'Disguised compliance'

Sustainability: short implementation timescales means the business case is challenging. Evidencing success given small scale numbers is difficult. How do we know if it's adding to regional sufficiency?

(By the way, it's not a RCC dressed as a cat)

Operations: case recording system and duplication, including some LAs asking enquirers questions twice and a level of manual data entry in fostering teams

Collaboration: the move away from competition and desire for control; LAs not always responding to referrals or data requirements in a timely way; changes to LA staff means key messages can be lost; having the right decision-makers involved at the right level has not always been possible. Border and postcode allocation of carers.

'Collaboration not competition' - regional fees harmonisation agenda a challenge

- More:
- <https://www.fosterwithnortheast.org.uk/>