

The
Fostering
Network



Mockingbird Programme Update 2021

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About the Mockingbird Programme

Mockingbird, a global award winning and pioneering programme led by The Fostering Network in the UK, delivers sustainable foster care. It is an evidence-based model structured around the support and relationships an extended family provides.

The model nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families supporting them to build a resilient and caring community. Led by a hub home carer and liaison worker, the constellation community offers vital peer support and guidance alongside social activities and sleepovers to strengthen relationships and permanence.

This reporting year has been a tough one for Mockingbird and for everyone involved in this fantastic programme.

At the start of 2020, Mockingbird families across the world experienced lockdown restrictions, in response to the spread of Covid-19. This meant the normal everyday activities that provide vital support to these communities had to stop, and staying at home became the new way of life. However, within weeks the carers and young people found new and creative ways to stay connected and support one another through the crisis.

Not only did established communities adapt, thrive and continue to provide support to one another, but new shoots sprang up too.

Despite the challenges of lockdown restrictions 17 new constellations successfully launched, albeit online or at distance to begin with, the lockdown didn't stop Mockingbird growing even further throughout the UK

We thank everyone involved in Mockingbird for their ongoing commitment to their constellations and contributions to shared learning across the national Mockingbird community.

Timeline

Running throughout this update is a timeline of quotes taken from monthly returns to show how constellations experienced this year.

APR
2020

I'm calling families most days to check on them, make sure they are well and have been able to get what food they need from the shops. Hub home carer

The hub home carers made Easter egg deliveries to all children and made a treasure hunt in the park...all the children enthusiastically joined in. Liaison worker

Mockingbird Map

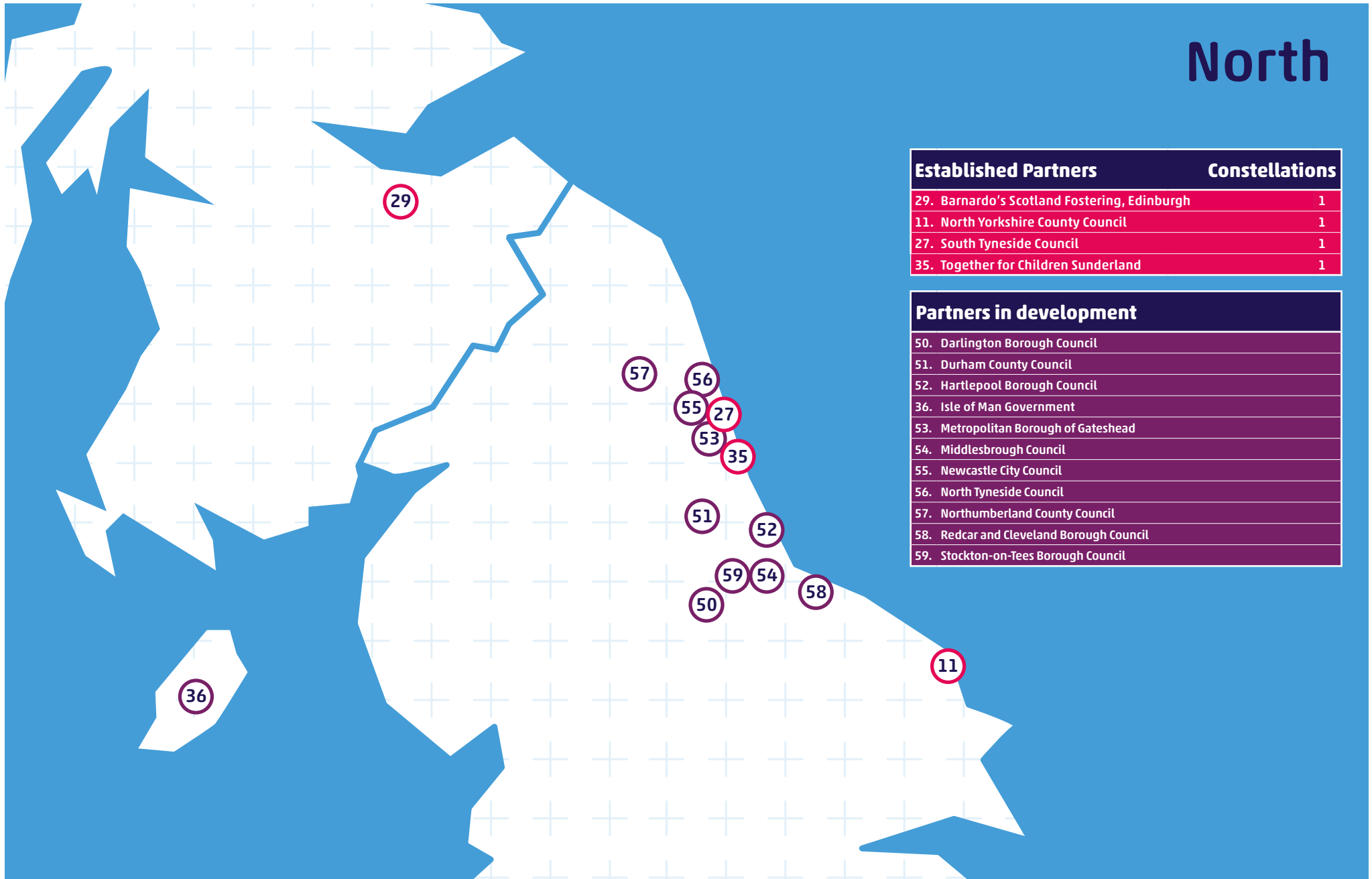
These maps show the distribution of 62 Mockingbird partners with 85 constellations as of November 2021, click the regional circle to zoom in.



| | Established Partners | Constellations |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------|
| NORTH | 29. Barnardo's Scotland Fostering, Edinburgh | 1 |
| | 11. North Yorkshire County Council | 1 |
| | 27. South Tyneside Council | 1 |
| | 35. Together for Children Sunderland | 1 |
| CENTRAL | 31. Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council | 3 |
| | 30. Cheshire East Council | 1 |
| | 2. Doncaster Children's Services Trust | 5 |
| | 23. Flintshire County Council | 3 |
| | 8. Fostering People | 1 |
| | 24. Fostering to Inspire | 1 |
| | 34. Kirklees Council | 1 |
| | 1. Leeds City Council | 10 |
| | 38. Rochdale Borough Council | 1 |
| | 20. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council | 3 |
| | 28. Sheffield City Council | 1 |
| | 7. Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council | 1 |
| | 12. Suffolk County Council | 3 |
| | 37. Together4Children Regional Permanency Partnership | 1 |
| | 32. Wakefield Council | 2 |
| | 13. Walsall Council | 3 |
| 26. Warrington Borough Council | 2 | |
| 14. Wigan Council | 2 | |
| SOUTH | 9. Hertfordshire County Council | 4 |
| | 10. London Borough of Barking and Dagenham | 5 |
| | 16. London Borough of Hackney | 2 |
| | 33. London Borough of Haringey | 1 |
| | 25. London Borough of Merton | 1 |
| | 3. London Borough of Tower Hamlets | 2 |
| | 17. London Borough of Waltham Forest | 1 |
| | 4. NFG Heath Farm | 4 |
| | 19. NFG London and South East | 1 |
| | 21. North Somerset Council | 3 |
| | 5. Oxfordshire County Council | 2 |
| | 39. Portsmouth City Council | 3 |
| 6. Royal Borough of Greenwich | 4 | |
| 18. Slough Children First | 1 | |
| 22. Surrey County Council | 3 | |

| | Partners in development |
|-------------------------------|--|
| NORTH | 50. Darlington Borough Council |
| | 51. Durham County Council |
| | 52. Hartlepool Borough Council |
| | 36. Isle of Man Government |
| | 53. Metropolitan Borough of Gateshead |
| | 54. Middlesbrough Council |
| | 55. Newcastle City Council |
| | 56. North Tyneside Council |
| | 57. Northumberland County Council |
| CENTRAL | 58. Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council |
| | 59. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council |
| SOUTH | 15. City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council |
| | 40. Hull City Council |
| SOUTH | 43. Bracknell Forest Council |
| | 44. Brighter Futures for Children |
| | 42. Buckinghamshire Council |
| | 60. Devon County Council |
| | 61. Dorset Council |
| | 41. London Borough of Lambeth |
| | 45. Medway Council |
| | 46. Southampton City Council |
| | 62. South Gloucestershire council |
| | 47. West Berkshire Council |
| | 48. West Sussex County Council |
| 49. Wokingham Borough Council | |

North



| Established Partners | Constellations |
|--|----------------|
| 29. Barnardo's Scotland Fostering, Edinburgh | 1 |
| 11. North Yorkshire County Council | 1 |
| 27. South Tyneside Council | 1 |
| 35. Together for Children Sunderland | 1 |

| Partners in development |
|--|
| 50. Darlington Borough Council |
| 51. Durham County Council |
| 52. Hartlepool Borough Council |
| 36. Isle of Man Government |
| 53. Metropolitan Borough of Gateshead |
| 54. Middlesbrough Council |
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| 58. Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council |
| 59. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council |

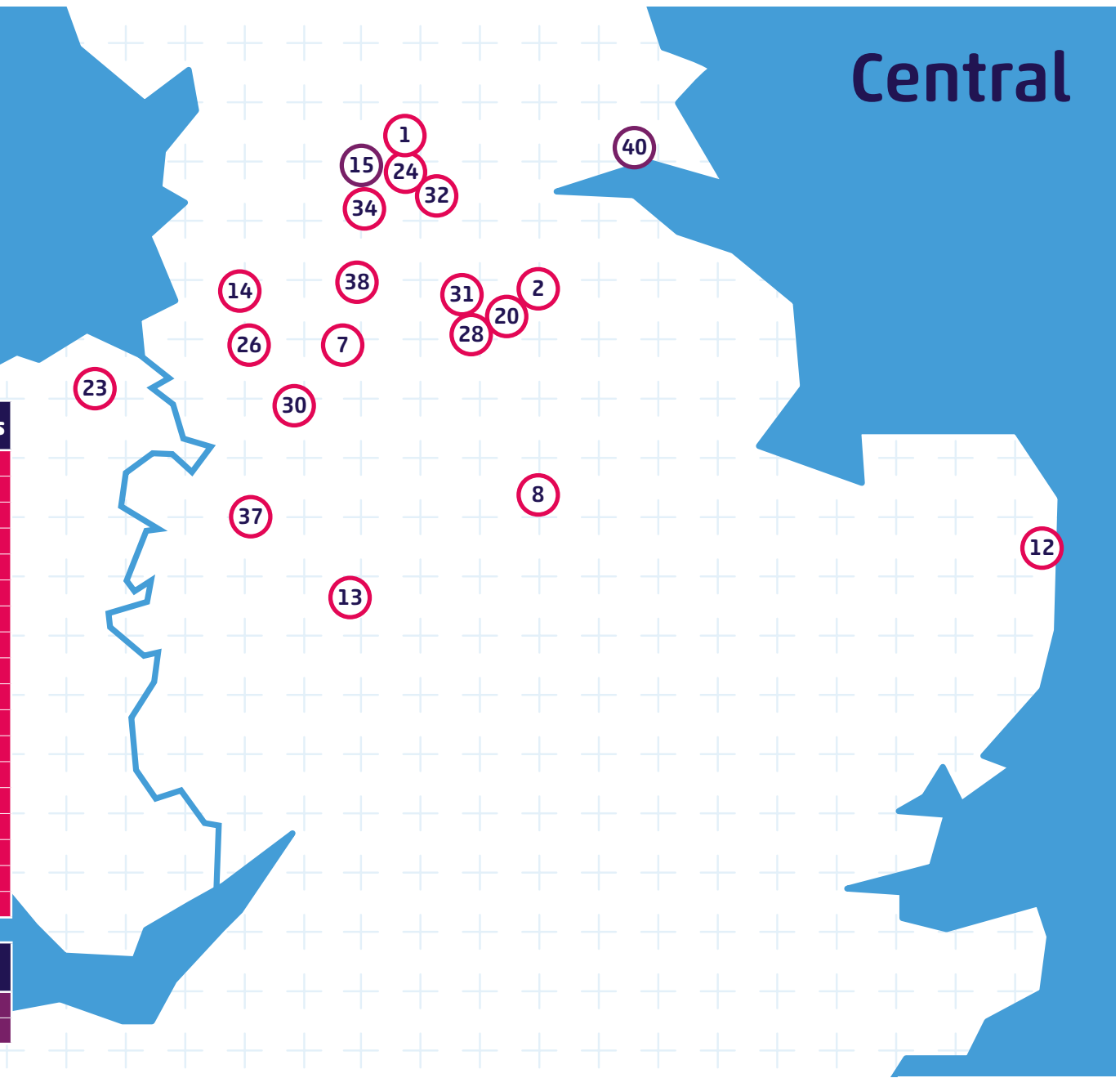
Central

Established Partners Constellations

| | |
|---|----|
| 31. Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council | 3 |
| 30. Cheshire East Council | 1 |
| 2. Doncaster Children's Services Trust | 5 |
| 23. Flintshire County Council | 3 |
| 8. Fostering People | 1 |
| 24. Fostering to Inspire | 1 |
| 34. Kirklees Council | 1 |
| 1. Leeds City Council | 10 |
| 38. Rochdale Borough Council | 1 |
| 20. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council | 3 |
| 28. Sheffield City Council | 1 |
| 7. Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council | 1 |
| 12. Suffolk County Council | 3 |
| 37. Together4Children Regional Permanency Partnership | 1 |
| 32. Wakefield Council | 2 |
| 13. Walsall Council | 3 |
| 26. Warrington Borough Council | 2 |
| 14. Wigan Council | 2 |

Partners in development

| |
|--|
| 15. City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council |
| 40. Hull City Council |



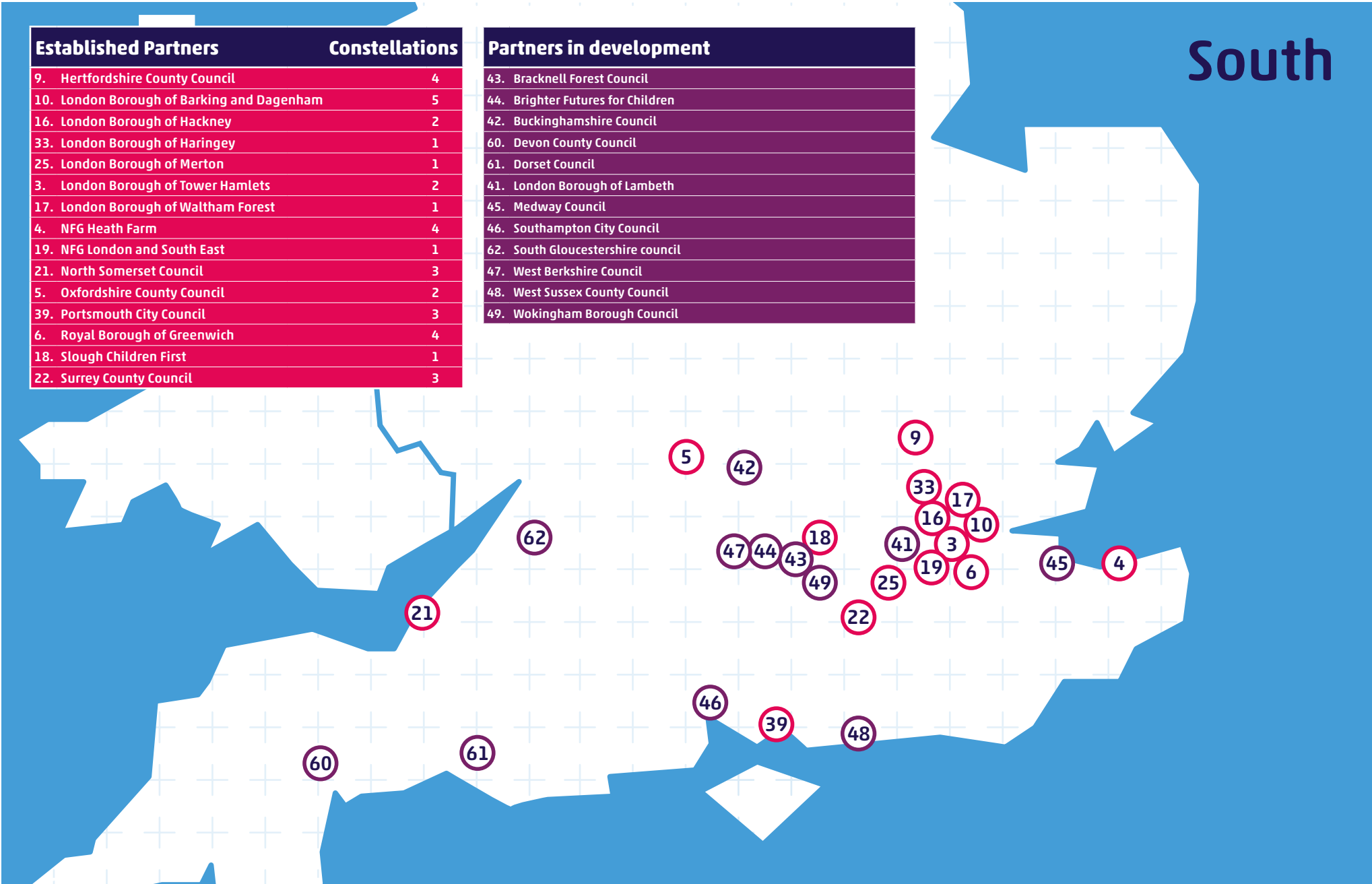
Established Partners **Constellations**

| | |
|--|---|
| 9. Hertfordshire County Council | 4 |
| 10. London Borough of Barking and Dagenham | 5 |
| 16. London Borough of Hackney | 2 |
| 33. London Borough of Haringey | 1 |
| 25. London Borough of Merton | 1 |
| 3. London Borough of Tower Hamlets | 2 |
| 17. London Borough of Waltham Forest | 1 |
| 4. NFG Heath Farm | 4 |
| 19. NFG London and South East | 1 |
| 21. North Somerset Council | 3 |
| 5. Oxfordshire County Council | 2 |
| 39. Portsmouth City Council | 3 |
| 6. Royal Borough of Greenwich | 4 |
| 18. Slough Children First | 1 |
| 22. Surrey County Council | 3 |

Partners in development

| |
|-----------------------------------|
| 43. Bracknell Forest Council |
| 44. Brighter Futures for Children |
| 42. Buckinghamshire Council |
| 60. Devon County Council |
| 61. Dorset Council |
| 41. London Borough of Lambeth |
| 45. Medway Council |
| 46. Southampton City Council |
| 62. South Gloucestershire council |
| 47. West Berkshire Council |
| 48. West Sussex County Council |
| 49. Wokingham Borough Council |

South



Mockingbird Population

This page shows point in time programme population from 74 active constellations in 31 partners in March 2021. Data collected from those constellations is summarised on the following pages.



MAY
2020

We had a bereavement in our constellation. The family are really struggling with their emotions and feelings. I'm trying to be there for them on the phone, but it's not the same as if I was there. Hub home carer

JUL
2020

Our young person enjoyed her sleepover! Lockdown has been hard for her to find friends - and Mockingbird has enabled her to meet other children. Satellite carer

Thriving despite a year of adjustment and adaptation

Hub home carers worked hard to prevent isolation finding creative ways to connect despite restrictions. Constellation members gave and received crash courses in video calls and used them for training, quizzes, birthdays, coffee mornings and crisis support. While WhatsApp groups were busy with everything from tips for home schooling, requests for help shopping from those isolating and photos of freshly baked banana bread and carved pumpkins.

Watch our compilation film *Mockingbird in Lockdown* to see how our constellation communities kept connected in the first part of the year.

The UK experienced over 200 days of national lockdown with additional local lockdowns and ongoing social restrictions and individuals shielding. Despite this sleepovers were nearly 60% of those recorded in 2019/20 with a total of 3,433 overnights recorded.

This year saw an increase in the total number of constellation meetings. When including virtual meetings there were 642 constellation meetings, and 227 training opportunities. There were also 185 birth family and sibling visits recorded.

Constellation socials also increased overall with adaptations to restrictions; 526 socials took place on video call, 394 socials were located in parks, on beaches and other areas which allowed for social distancing and fresh air and 54 happened in hub homes.

When comparing instances of planned sleepovers, emergency sleepovers and daytime support in 2020/21, 58% of all instances were daytime support, 37% were planned sleepovers and 5% were emergency sleepovers.

In addition to sleepovers and daytime support, this year we captured data on one-to-one support in person or via phone call, video call or text message. There were over 12,000 instances of one-to-one support recorded across the national programme.



over 12,000 instances of one-to-one support

OCT
2020

I have been visiting carers over walls and in parks, meetings in my garage, ringing to support carers and young people and also doing some baking, a bit of shopping and taking some out to try cheer carers up.
Hub home carer

NOV
2020

The greatest challenge was the return to lockdown in November. We did manage to enable two sleepovers - one with all of us outdoors! Our weekly Covid-19 testing helps us host sleepovers. As ever, we have connected through Zoom chats which have been welcomed and the WhatsApp group is still nicely active with all sharing both support and fun stuff. Hub home carer

Stability during a turbulent year

One of the central aims of Mockingbird is to provide proactive support and intervention that will mitigate the risk of a placement going into crisis or breaking down. Key data is captured to allow an understanding of how formal and informal interventions and activities contribute to the stabilisation of a placements that may have otherwise resulted in a placement breakdown.


This year monitoring data shows an increase in the number of satellite families remaining in Mockingbird compared to previous years with 88% satellite homes remaining part of Mockingbird in 2020-21 compared with 74% in 2019-20.

There was also a reported reduction in the percentage of satellite homes that ceased to foster during 2020-21 dropping to 2.4% compared to 5% in 2019-20.

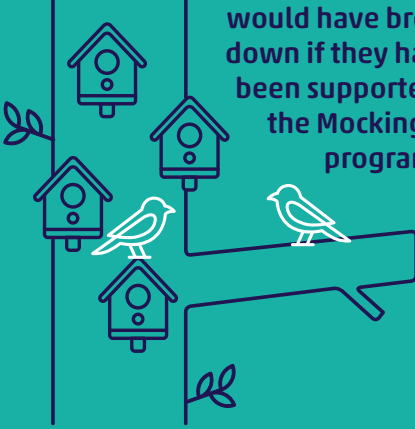
Looking at overall outcomes from Mockingbird data submitted between May 2018 – March 2021. Of the 1334 satellite carers participating in the programme between May 2018 and March 2021, services reported 134 would have resigned without the support provided by the Mockingbird programme.

Of the 1609 children and young people in placements participating in the programme between May 2018 and March 2021, services reported 299 placement breakdowns have been avoided.

10% carers
would have resigned if they hadn't been supported by the Mockingbird programme

An illustration on a blue background showing a white watering can tilted to the right, with a stream of water falling onto a row of seven small green plants. The plants are stylized with simple leaves and stems.

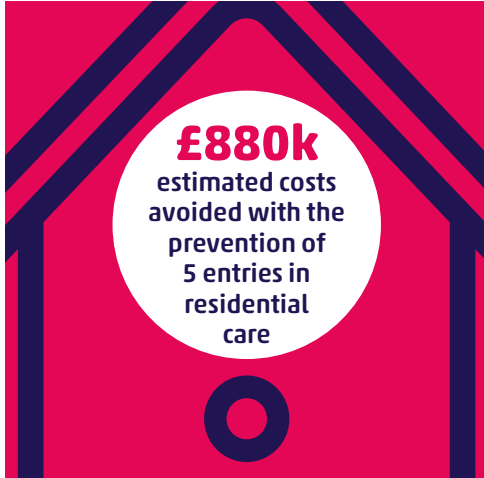
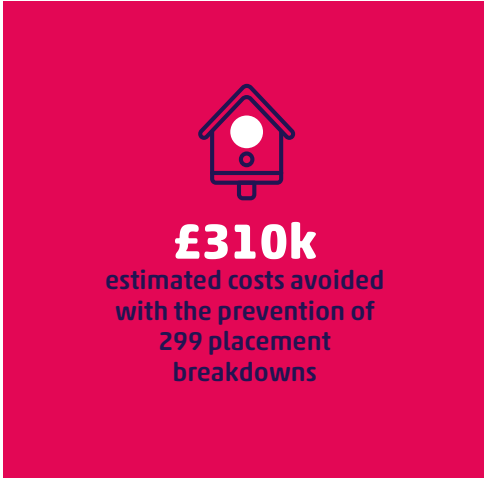
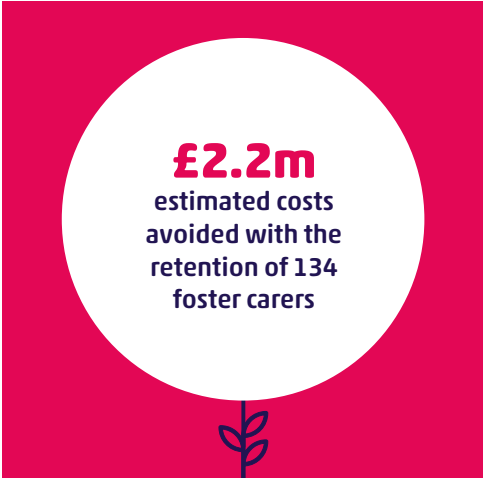
18.5% placements
would have broken down if they hadn't been supported by the Mockingbird programme

An illustration on a teal background showing a vertical line with several birdhouses attached to it. Two birds are perched on a horizontal branch that extends from the line. The style is simple and line-art.

We have a little summerhouse that we're turning into a grotto for families to visit individually. Some of the older teens in the constellation have been helping make items for Christmas Eve boxes. There will be a letter from Santa, a magic key, reindeer food, a movie, games and treats for each family to share. We hope even though we can't get together we will all have a shared memory of Christmas 2020. Hub home carer

A Sustainable System

These infographics show cumulative estimated costs avoided using data collected 2018 - 2021. The programme has grown each year and some satellite carers and children, and young people will have joined or left in a particular year, or continued participating through multiple years.



JAN 2021

Carers have been up and down. Friends and family falling ill. Children having to come home because someone in their bubble has tested positive. But, all our hub had covid jabs this week...all were relieved we have had it, 'cause there's light at the end of all this. Hub home carer

FEB 2021

Despite me being clinically vulnerable I have been able to keep up to date with all my carers and children on facetime which has been delightful. The hub is going strong!! Hub home carer



The Fostering Network is the UK's leading fostering charity. We are the essential network for fostering, bringing together everyone who is involved in the lives of fostered children.

We support foster carers to transform children's lives and we work with fostering services and the wider sector to develop and share best practice.

We work to ensure all fostered children and young people experience stable family life and we are passionate about the difference foster care makes. We champion fostering and seek to create vital change so that foster care is the very best it can be.

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