

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
DATE: MONDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2012
REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
SUBJECT: FOSTERING INSPECTION 2012

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To advise members of the inspection report and outcomes from the CSSIW inspection conducted for the period 2011/12.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 In accordance with the Care Standards Act (2006) the CSSIW have undertaken an annual review of Flintshire County Council's Fostering Service. The primary focus of the inspection and subsequent report was to explore and investigate the quality of life and quality of care experienced by service users (foster carers and children in placement) with particular focus upon kinship carers.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The inspection was conducted over a 4½ day period in November 2011 and used a range of information, sources, documents and meetings with social services / health / education and a number of kinship carers. The main findings of the report are set out on page 3 of the attached document. The focus of the inspection was kinship care, but covered a full examination of the fostering services – as a whole. The final draft report was published in April this year.

3.02 The outcomes were as follows: What the fostering service does well.

- Accessible and attractive information is provided.
- Consistent and effective leadership by the manager.
- A staff group which is regarded as skilled and knowledgeable.
- Kinship carers who receive good levels of support from designated workers.
- An effective Fostering Panel which provides a good level of scrutiny.
- Good practice recorded in some case files.

3.03 The inspection then considered the areas of improvement which were identified in the previous inspection in 2011, these included:

- Improved website development.

- Fully staffed service.
- Additional support for kinship care placements.
- Improved quality in supervision to staff and foster care group.
- Development of a foster care training and use of online training to supplement this.
- Foster care reviews are conducted in a more systematic manner.

3.04 At the conclusion of each section of the report the inspector identifies priorities and areas for improvement. This inspection resulted in no priorities for improvement and a number of good practice recommendations. The resultant action plan (see Appendix 2) the outcomes and actions taken. These included:

- The monitoring and controlling of activities meet statutory regulations.
- A case management strategy is to be applied in responding to complex cases.
- Protocol to be implemented for a change to supervising social workers.
- Timeliness of foster care agreements.
- Effective Panel minutes which clearly denote outcomes.
- Monitoring and auditing of case records are signed and completed in a timely manner.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 The inspection provided a thorough overview of the fostering service. Its particular emphasis on kinship care demonstrated that the Local Authority offered an effective and efficient service to this group of carers.

4.02 This reflects upon the service in general which is noted as providing good quality of supervision and care to all our foster carers.

4.03 We ask that the committee accept this report and subsequent action plan as significant and independent evidence of a well managed and organised service.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 None arising from this report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None arising from this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None arising from this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None arising from this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None arising from this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 These were conducted in accordance with the CSSIW inspection process.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 CSSIW undertook a range of consultation activities with children / young people / social workers / health / education and performance management staff to inform the outcomes of this inspection.

12.00 APPENDICES

(1) Inspection Report

(2) Action Plan Outcomes

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Contact Officer: Peter Robson
Telephone: 01352 701028
Email: peter_robson@flintshire.gov.uk