

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

Care Standards Act 2000

**Inspection report
Fostering services**

Flintshire Fostering Services

County Hall
Mold
CH7 6NN

Date of publication – 11 April 2012

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| Name of fostering service: | Flintshire Fostering Services |
| Address of service: | County Hall, Mold, CH7 6NN |
| Contact telephone number: | 01352 701000 |
| Registered Provider / Director of Community Services | Flintshire County Council / Neil Ayling |
| Responsible Individual / Head of Service | Carol Salmon |
| Manager: | Liz Byrne |
| Dates of this inspection episode: | 24 November 2011 - 31 March 2012 |
| Dates of other relevant contact since last report: | N/A |
| Date of previous report publication: | 29 April 2011 |
| Inspected by: | Denise Stickels |
| Other regions contributing to this report: | N/A |

Introduction

Flintshire County Council's fostering service provides a range of placements: long and short term, respite, short break and kinship care. The inspection for this year has focussed primarily on the provision of kinship care.

Information recorded in the Annual Data Collection form (ADC) confirmed that the fostering service has a total of 91 approved foster carers, including 16 kinship carers, providing a total of 149 places. 101 children are being looked after in Flintshire County Council placements and 18 children are placed with other fostering providers, making a total of 119 children in placement. 25 children are being looked after in kinship care placements.

The fostering service is managed by Liz Byrne; the Head of Service is Carol Salmon.

Summary of inspection findings:

What does the fostering service do well?

The agency provides accessible and attractive information on the service in both paper and electronic formats.

The manager provides consistent and effective leadership of the fostering service. Staff turnover is low and there is a good range of knowledge, skills and experience within the family placement team.

Kinship carers receive very good levels of support from two designated kinship care workers.

The fostering panel is operating effectively and provides a good level of scrutiny. Evidence of good practice was seen in the quality of information recorded in some case records.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Further development of the Flintshire County Council website.

The fostering service is fully staffed.

The appointment of an additional post to support kinship carers.

The quality of supervision for staff and carers.

The development of the foster carer training programme.

The introduction of 'on-line' training for foster carers.

There is a more effective system in operation for carrying out foster carers reviews.

What needs to be done to improve the service?

a.) priorities

There are no priorities for action.

b.) other areas for improvement

To adopt a more robust approach to monitoring and controlling the activities of the fostering service, to ensure regulatory compliance.

Where there are complexities in the management of a case, a clear strategy to be put in place and timescales set, to ensure that any difficulties are resolved in a timely way and with some sense of urgency.

A protocol to be devised for dealing with requests from foster carers for a change of supervising social worker.

Foster carer agreements to be completed promptly following approval.
Panel minutes to consistently record the reasons for panel recommendations.
The monitoring and auditing of case records to ensure that formal agreements and reports are signed and dated and are completed in a timely manner.

Inspection methods

The inspection took place over 4 ½ days and involved one inspector. The inspection was conducted using the following:

Written information contained in the Self Assessment of Service (SAS) and Annual Data Collection (ADC) forms.

Information contained in the provider's annual Quality Assurance Report on the fostering service and the 2011-2012 Business Plan.

Responses to CSSIW questionnaires: family placement staff (10) child care social workers (2). (No responses were received from kinship carers or the children placed with them).

Visits to three households providing kinship care.

Discussions with the Service Manager – Resources, Team Manager, Senior Practitioner, Kinship Care support workers, Marketing and Recruitment Officer, a child care social worker and the Chair of the fostering panel.

Examination of case records for three children in kinship care placements and their carers.

Observation of a fostering panel.

Examination of panel minutes.

Section one: Policies and procedures / information

Inspector`s findings:

The statement of purpose for the fostering service contains the information required by The Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003. The document has been reviewed and updated since the last inspection and identifies the aims and objectives of the service, the

staffing arrangements and the services provided. Information on fostering allowances, the complaints procedure and independent advocacy is also included.

The service has produced a range of accessible and attractive information booklets on fostering for children and young people in placement and their parents, and for potential foster carers. There is a booklet entitled 'Becoming a Kinship Carer' and a BAAF publication 'Options for Kinship Carers' provides additional advice and explains the legal options available to family members. The manager has identified the need to review and update the information in relation to short break care, following the decision to provide the majority of service users with this provision under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. All information is available in Welsh and can be made available in other languages on request.

Since the last inspection there has been further development of the Flintshire County Council website which provides information of fostering and there is a link to make an enquiry or request further information. There is also a dedicated phone line for fostering enquiries. The agency has plans to upgrade the website over the next 12 months to include a secure site for approved foster carers.

The fostering service's policies and procedures and the Foster Carer Handbook were not examined at this inspection.

Requirements made since the last inspection report which have been met:

| Action required | When completed | Regulation number |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|
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Requirements which remain outstanding:

| Action required (previous outstanding requirements) | Original timescale for completion | Regulation number |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| | | |

New requirements from this inspection:

| Action required | Timescale for completion | Regulation number |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| | | |

Good practice recommendations:

NMS or other source

Section two: Management and staffing of the services, (including premises and finance)

Inspector's findings:

The manager of the fostering service has the appropriate qualifications and experience for the role and has been in her current post since August 2005; she has provided consistent and effective leadership to the family placement team during this period. The manager shares some of the management tasks with the senior practitioner, who has almost 8

years experience within the field of fostering. Since coming into post, the manager and senior practitioner have attained post-graduate diplomas in the 'Art of Leadership'. From discussions with staff and responses to the CSSIW questionnaire it is evident that staff in the family placement team receive good levels of support and regular supervision from the management team. Staff confirm that staffing levels are adequate, there are clear lines of communication and accountability and, when the manager is absent, there are satisfactory cover arrangements in place.

At the time of the inspection the team was fully staffed and it was reported that caseloads were well within the allocated points system. The manager advised that caseload management would be reviewed in March. There are 13 team members, comprising of nine qualified social workers, three Children's Services Assistants and a Marketing and Recruitment Officer. Some staff having designated roles, for example in supporting fee paid carers and / or short break and kinship carers. One member of the team specialises in private fostering. The team is stable and experienced and continues to have a low staff turnover. The arrangements for the recruitment and selection of staff were not examined on this occasion.

In accordance with the focus of this inspection, the views of child care social workers who had children in kinship care placements were sought by questionnaire; unfortunately only two were returned. The inspector also had a discussion with one of the respondents. Regarding the staffing and management of the service, social workers confirmed that the team was adequately staffed to support foster carers and felt that staff had the necessary skills and responsibilities to carry out their responsibilities. However, they both gave a negative response to the question regarding effective lines of communication between the team and themselves. One person also commented that some members of the team often react defensively when issues about foster carers are raised with them. The inspector is aware that the authority is facilitating joint team meetings in an attempt to improve communication and the effectiveness of this will be assessed at the next inspection.

The manager reported that, since the last inspection, there has been a focus on improving the quality of staff and carer supervision, developing a more appropriate framework for the assessment of kinship and private fostering applications and implementing BAAF good practice guidance in relation to foster carer reviews. A Business Plan for 2011 -2012 was provided at inspection, which evidenced the progress being made in achieving these and a number of other service objectives. It has been evident at this and previous inspections that there is a management ethos of wanting to improve and develop the service; however, this inspection has found that regulatory compliance is not consistently being achieved in a number of areas and a more robust approach to monitoring the activities of the service is therefore necessary to ensure quality performance. (Further detail will be found in later sections of this report).

A Quality Assurance Report for the period ending April 2011 was provided, which provided statistical information, commentary and some analysis on the activities of the service for the preceding 12 months. The report includes evidence of consultation with service users and other interested parties, as required.

The fostering service is based at County Hall in Mold and the manager and staff confirmed that the accommodation is appropriate for meeting the needs of the team and the service. Each member of staff has their own desk and computer and there are laptops available for working at home. There are secure arrangements in place for the storage of

paper and electronic records. Since the last inspection the service has acquired access to premises where equipment can be stored.

The agency’s financial systems and processes were not examined in any detail at this inspection. However, the service manger confirmed that payments to foster carers with children in the 0-5 age range had increased, in line with the Welsh Government National Standards. In the 5-18 age range, payments were already above the National Standards. The service has been given an increase in budget to meet demands for two years, until 2014.

Requirements made since the last inspection report which have been met:

| Action required | When completed | Regulation number |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|
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Requirements which remain outstanding:

| Action required (previous outstanding requirements) | Original timescale for completion | Regulation number |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| | | |

New requirements from this inspection:

| Action required | Timescale for completion | Regulation number |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| | | |

Good practice recommendations:

To adopt a more robust approach to monitoring and controlling the activities of the fostering service to ensure regulatory compliance.

NMS or other source

Section three: Provision of foster carers (including panel information)

Inspector's findings:

Information recorded in the SAS confirmed that the service has a total of 91 approved foster carers, providing a total of 149 places, which includes short break and kinship care placements. 101 children are being looked after in Flintshire County Council placements, 18 children are placed with independent fostering agencies (reduced from 26 last year). 12 fostering applicants were undergoing assessment and there were no cases waiting to be allocated. The total number of approved carers has increased by four since last year. It was reported that there was a significant reduction in the number of initial enquiries from prospective foster carers during the period when the Marketing and Recruitment Officer was on maternity leave, but has shown a marked improvement since her return to work. Currently, the focus is on recruiting fee paid carers to the short break care scheme and increasing the number of places available for children aged 10-15 years.

The assessment and approval process and the quality of support and training to carers have been assessed only in relation to kinship carers at this inspection. Evidence was gained through examination of three kinship carers' files and the case records of the children placed with them. The inspector visited three kinship carer households to talk to them about their experience of fostering. Questionnaires were sent to all kinship carers and some of the children in placement, but none were returned. At the time of the inspection there were 16 approved households providing kinship care; the majority of these were grandparents.

The local authority operates a policy of retaining children within their birth families whenever possible and provided it is in their best interests. Where necessary, family group meetings are convened in order to identify family members who might be willing to care for the child. Family placement workers attend these meetings and verbal and written information is provided on what kinship care involves. 'Viability Assessments' are carried out on potential carers and two formats have been devised, one for immediate or emergency placements and one for planned placements. The assessments are carried out by child care social workers and, current practice is that referrals are only made to the family placement team for a full kinship care assessment once the viability assessment has been completed. It was reported that there is a working group, comprising of representatives from the North Wales local authorities, which is looking at developing common policies and procedures in relation to kinship care. One anticipated outcome of this is that there will be changes to the way kinship assessments are carried out in future, with the family placement team becoming involved at a much earlier stage, thereby eliminating some of the delay which can occur in the process.

Data provided at inspection, which gave dates of when children were placed and when the kinship carers were approved, showed that 5 sets of carers were approved before placement and 3 were approved within 3 months. In the remaining 8 cases, approval took 5 months (2), 7 months (2), 9 months (1), 10 months (1) and 14 months (2). Delays in the family placement team receiving referrals, complex family situations, a lack of clarity over the legal status of some placements and confusion caused by children moving counties were cited as reasons for some of the delay, but evidence in case records indicates that much of the delay could have been prevented by more robust oversight and monitoring of

the cases concerned. The inspector would strongly recommend, where there are complexities in the management of a case, that a clear strategy is put in place and timescales set, to ensure that any difficulties are resolved in a timely way and with some sense of urgency.

The fostering service has two designated full-time posts for supporting kinship carers after their approval. Kinship carer assessments are allocated across the wider team because these designated posts are for unqualified Children's Services Assistants. From discussion with the members of staff concerned it is evident that they are very committed to their work and believe that they have developed positive, open relationships with their carers. This view was supported by the carers who were visited during the inspection who made very positive comments regarding the support they received from their supervising social worker and from the wider department. Carers spoke about being able to contact their 'link worker' at any time for advice, guidance and support and mentioned receiving some financial help (for example, to extend their premises) and practical help in the form of the equipment they needed to care for young children. The support provided by an independent therapist in relation to behaviour management was seen as particularly valuable. Carers said that they received their payments promptly. Although finding it difficult at times, they generally had positive experiences of the assessment process and of attending panel. The introduction of 'on-line' training was viewed very positively by carers, because it enabled them to learn at their own pace and could be fitted around their caring responsibilities.

Case records provided additional evidence of very good support being offered to kinship carers following approval. However, in one case, where carers were requesting a change of 'link worker' (following a particular incident), it was 6 months before a new worker was assigned to them and the carers were unwilling to receive any visits from their existing supervising social worker during the intervening period. In addition, the carers' annual review had not been carried out at the appropriate time and was three months overdue. In the context of significant concerns about the parenting capacity of these carers, the inspector would have expected a swifter response. It is therefore recommended that a protocol is devised for dealing with requests of this nature, to ensure that the agency maintains its oversight of and support to foster carers.

Kinship carers are encouraged to attend the foster carer support group but it was reported that few choose to do so. Kinship carers are not required to attend the pre-approval 'Skills to Foster' training course, but have the same opportunities to attend post-approval training as general foster carers and to progress through the 'payment for skills' scheme, although this scheme is currently being reviewed.

Since the last inspection, and in partnership with the Welsh Government, the Care Council for Wales has introduced the Induction Framework for Foster Carers and Short Break Carers. The manager said that a team meeting has been put aside to look at how supervising social workers could incorporate the induction standards into the process of supporting and supervising carers. The manager has also met with the Children's Services Training Officer to see how the framework can be incorporated into the foster carers' training programme. It was reported that it is only in the last 6 months, with the appointment of a new training officer, that training has become available for foster carers. The new training programme has been designed to meet the carers' identified needs and the response so far has been very positive, with carers finding the courses to be more relevant than before. All fee paid carers are required to undertake a level 3 Diploma in

Health and Social Care (Children and Young People) and other foster carers are eligible and encouraged to apply once they have achieved Level 2 status (payment for skills). 28 fostering households have attained NVQ level 3.

Foster carer agreements were seen on all files viewed and these had been updated following foster carers' reviews. A regulatory breach was noted in relation to one case, however, with the foster carer agreement not being signed until eight months after the kinship carers' approval. It is imperative that foster carer agreements are completed as soon as possible after approval to ensure that foster carers are aware of the agency's expectations of them and to enable them to carry out their function as a foster carer effectively. A requirement is not made on this occasion because the matter has already been addressed.

The agency operates its own fostering panel which has an independent panel chair. Information gathered through observation of panel, examination of panel minutes and discussions at this inspection indicate that the panel is operating effectively and provides a good level of scrutiny. The decision making process is clear in panel minutes and panel discussions are well evidenced, however, the reasons for panel recommendations are not being recorded consistently. Panel business on the day consisted primarily of changes of approval and reviews; there were no new approvals for consideration. An issue of non-compliance in the approval status of one foster carer (operating outside their terms of approval) was noted by one panel member and it was agreed that this would be dealt with at the next panel meeting. A concern was raised by two panel members, and the panel chair, at the poor response from child care social workers and some child care team managers in providing reports for foster carers' reviews. Panel questioned whether enough time was given for them to prepare the reports. In discussion with the inspector, the panel chair confirmed that the matter has been brought to the attention of the Head of Service and subsequent inspections will monitor the outcome.

The inspector was concerned at the quality of information provided to panel for one review, where there were significant concerns about the carers. The information was several months old and did not present a clear, up to date picture of the current situation or provide panel with sufficient information on which to base their decision. Panel acted appropriately in deciding to postpone their decision and requested that the agency's expectations were made clear to the carers, that a robust, structured programme be put in place, with an update at the next panel meeting, and the matter brought back for discussion in June.

Panel has been carrying two vacancies in recent months, following the departure of two independent members, however, these posts have now been filled and the members are undertaking their induction. Information supplied on panel membership confirmed that panel was appropriately constituted, with membership reflecting the requirements of Regulation 24 of The Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003. Panel business meetings are held once a year and the panel chair has regular meetings with the Head of Service. It was reported that the Head of Service is pushing for greater efficiency in relation to assessments. Panel members have recently attended training regarding their roles and responsibilities, best practice in relation to foster carer reviews, kinship care, permanency and matching. Panel members' files were not examined on this occasion.

Previous inspections of the service have identified non-compliance in the frequency of foster carers' annual reviews being carried out and, since the last inspection, the agency

has been following the BAAF good practice guidance. From the documentation provided and case records viewed, whilst there are still some reviews which are falling outside the timescale, an overall improvement is noted and it is evident that there is now a more effective system in operation. The frequency of visits to foster carers during their review period was generally in line with agency expectations.

Requirements made since the last inspection report which have been met:

| Action required | When completed | Regulation number |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|
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Requirements which remain outstanding:

| Action required (previous outstanding requirements) | Original timescale for completion | Regulation number |
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| | | |

New requirements from this inspection:

| Action required | Timescale for completion | Regulation number |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| | | |

Good practice recommendations:

A protocol to be devised for dealing with requests from foster carers for a change of supervising social worker.
 Foster carer agreements to be completed promptly following approval.
 Panel minutes to consistently record the reasons for panel recommendations.

NMS or other source

Section four: Quality of care and safety for children placed

Inspector`s findings:

The focus of this inspection was on assessing children's placements with kinship carers, therefore only the case files of children who were in these placements were assessed.

The individual needs of children who are 'looked after' and how these needs are to be met (whether accommodated with kinship carers or general foster carers) should be identified in the foster placement agreement. Regulations require that the agreement is entered into before a child is placed. Agency procedures state that, if this is not possible, the agreement must be in place within 7 days. In the case records viewed, one foster placement had not been completed until 18 months after the child was placed; another was completed 4 years after placement. In the third case an agreement was completed for the first period that the child was looked after, before briefly returning home, but an updated agreement was not signed until over a year later. In discussion, the manager said that she was aware that the agency was not achieving compliance in this matter and had taken a proposal to the Senior Management Team, which had been agreed, for the first visit prior to, or immediately after placement, to be a joint visit by family placement and child care social workers, at which time the foster placement agreement would be drawn up and signed by all parties. In view of this action a requirement has not been made on this occasion, but compliance will be monitored at future inspections of the service.

There was limited information available in relation to children's health needs on the records viewed. LAC medicals had taken place in two out of three cases, but one was after a significant delay, having been highlighted by the Independent Reviewing Officer at a statutory review. The inspector was advised at inspection that 'significant progress' was being made in relation to LAC health assessments, following information published by the Welsh Government that placed Flintshire as the worst performing authority in Wales in this matter. Compliance will be monitored at future inspections of the service.

In keeping with the nature of most kinship placements, contact between children and immediate family members will usually have been established during care proceedings. Managing family contact and complex family relationships was mentioned as a significant issue by staff supporting kinship carers. In discussion with carers and in case records there was evidence of support being provided and contact being facilitated by staff within Children's Services. Where it is considered appropriate, some kinship carers will supervise family contact.

Kinship carers who were visited were well informed about the children's health, education and developmental needs and confirmed that, in most cases, they and the children were receiving the advice, help and support that they needed. One carer described how effectively all the agencies were working together to help their grandchild with their behaviour in school and at home, and the child care social worker and child care team manager were liaising with the local CAMHS service to obtain further help. Children were present at two of the three visits made by the inspector and they were evidently attached to their carers. One child was very keen to show their bedroom off and was clearly very pleased with it. Carers spoke about their experience of parenting again in later life and the impact this had had on their lives, but they all expressed a strong commitment to continue

caring for the children.

Although not specifically in relation to young people in kinship care placements, child care social workers who contributed to this inspection commented that many young people leaving care do not have the range of skills that they need to make a successful transition into independence and highlighted the need for additional training, advice and support for foster carers in this area. The manager confirmed that some training had been provided and additional relevant training would form part of the new training programme.

Information provided in the Quality Assurance report confirmed that there had been two complaints made by or against foster carers in the reviewing period and two cases where allegations were made against a foster carer. The complaints were taken to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure, one was partially upheld and the other was mainly upheld. Actions and outcomes arising from the complaints are monitored by the local authority Complaints Officer. Regarding the two allegations, one foster carer's approval was terminated at the conclusion of the investigation and one allegation was withdrawn. Seven children were reported as 'missing from care' and it was reported that the new 'All Wales Protocol for Children Missing from Care' was followed. The records in relation to these matters were not examined at this inspection.

Requirements made since the last inspection report which have been met:

| Action required | When completed | Regulation number |
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Requirements which remain outstanding:

| Action required (previous outstanding requirements) | Original timescale for completion | Regulation number |
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| | | |

New requirements from this inspection:

| Action required | Timescale for completion | Regulation number |
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| | | |

Good practice recommendations:

NMS or other source

Section five: Placement of children parts v & vi of the regulations

N.B. Use of this section of the report will apply primarily to inspections of local authority fostering services and the duties and responsibilities covered in Parts 5 and 6 of the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003 only. It may need to be used for inspections of independent agencies where a local authority delegates certain duties to them under Regulation 40.

Inspector`s findings:

Evidence gathered at this inspection in relation to kinship care placements, has shown that the authority is carrying out its general duty in accordance with Regulation 33 of the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003, that a placement with a particular carer (or relative) is the most suitable placement, having regard to all the circumstances.

Examination of case records where children were accommodated in kinship placements in accordance with Regulation 38, showed compliance in one of the two relevant cases. In the case where no Regulation 38 agreement was seen, a number of other regulatory breaches also occurred because there was confusion over the legal status of the child and which local authority was responsible for supervising the placement. For a period of time the case was being worked as a 'child in need' in a neighbouring authority when the child was still 'looked after' by Flintshire. Therefore, statutory reviews had not taken place as required and visits to the child were not compliant with Regulation 35. Requirements has not been made in relation to this case because the matter has subsequently been resolved, nevertheless, it is important that lessons are learned to ensure that this situation does not occur again.

As mentioned in Section 4 of this report, several breaches of regulation 34 (3) have occurred because foster placement agreements have not been completed at the appropriate time.

With the exception of the case mentioned above, statutory visits to children in placement were generally compliant with Regulation 35. Examples of good practice were seen in capturing the views of children in placement and, where they were too young to express a view, in the observations and descriptions of their general demeanour. There was evidence of children being seen alone and of their bedrooms being checked.

The arrangements regarding the termination of placements (Regulation 36), placements outside Wales (Regulation 39) and the discharge of local authority functions to independent fostering agencies (Regulation 40) were not examined at this inspection.

Requirements made since the last inspection report which have been met:

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Requirements which remain outstanding:

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New requirements from this inspection:

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Good practice recommendations:

NMS or other source

Section six: Records

Inspector`s findings:

Guidance on the authority’s expectations regarding safe and secure storage of electronic and paper records is set out in the recording policy, copies of which are given to all staff. It was noted at the inspection that satisfactory storage arrangements continue to be in place for the fostering service: current files are stored in locked cabinets in the team room and closed cases are stored under archiving arrangements.

Following a decision made by the Head of Service, as from November 2010 children’s case records ceased to be maintained in paper format and are now kept electronically. However, some documents are still produced in both paper and electronic formats (such as copies of formal reports and agreements where signatures are required). The manager explained that paper files are still being maintained alongside electronic records for foster carers, until family placement activity is fully integrated into the PARIS electronic system. A PARIS users’ group meets once a fortnight to iron out any anomalies and contributes to the development of the system; the senior practitioner represents the family placement team and it was reported that this is working quite well.

The inspector reviewed paper files and had access to the relevant electronic records for the duration of the inspection. Generally the information was up to date, paper files were easy to navigate and, with some assistance, the inspector was able to locate information held electronically. Case recording was found to be positive in style and nature. Evidence of good practice was seen in the quality of information recorded in some files. Unfortunately, a lack of attention to detail makes it difficult to be entirely positive about the standard of record keeping within Children’s Services. Too many documents are not signed and / or dated and the author of reports is not always clear. Viability assessments were unsigned and unauthorised by a line manager and the inspector could not find any evidence of parents’ signatures being obtained when children were accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. This report has already mentioned the unacceptable delays that have occurred in drawing up and signing foster placement agreements and some foster carer agreements. It is therefore recommended that the monitoring and auditing of case records ensures that formal agreements and reports are signed and dated and are completed in a timely manner.

The register of foster carers and records of disrupted placements were not examined at this inspection.

Requirements made since the last inspection report which have been met:

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Requirements which remain outstanding:

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| | | |

New requirements from this inspection:

| Action required | Timescale for completion | Regulation number |
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| | | |

Good practice recommendations:

The monitoring and auditing of case records ensures that formal agreements and reports are signed and dated and are completed in a timely manner.

NMS or other source

Section seven: Short term placements

Inspector`s findings:

An assessment of the short break care service was undertaken at the previous inspection and was not included as part of this inspection.

Requirements made since the last inspection report which have been met:

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Requirements which remain outstanding:

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New requirements from this inspection:

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| | | |

Good practice recommendations:

NMS or other source

Section eight: Family and friends as carers

Inspector`s findings:

Kinship care was the focus of this inspection; therefore the findings are contained within the body of this report.

Requirements made since the last inspection report which have been met:

| Action required | When completed | Regulation number |
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Requirements which remain outstanding:

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New requirements from this inspection:

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| | | |

Good practice recommendations:

NMS or other source

A note on CSSIW's inspection and report process:

This report has been compiled following an inspection of the fostering service undertaken by Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) under the provisions of the Care Standards Act 2000 and associated regulations.

The primary focus of the report is to comment on the quality of life and quality of care experienced by service users (foster carers and children in placement).

The report contains information on how we inspect and what we find. The report is divided into nine sections reflecting the broad areas covered by the inspection.

This inspection focuses specifically on the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003 but also takes into account the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services.

CSSIW inspectors are authorised to enter and inspect fostering services at any time. Inspection enables CSSIW to satisfy itself that the service should continue to operate, and for IFAs this will include satisfaction that continued registration is justified. It also ensures that all fostering services are compliant with:

The Care Standards Act 2000 and The Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003, whilst taking into account the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services.
The service's own statement of purpose.

Fostering services are inspected annually by CSSIW. At each inspection episode there are visits to the service during which CSSIW may adopt a range of different methods in its attempt to capture service user's and their relatives' /representatives' experiences. Such methods may for example include self-assessment, discussion groups, case tracking, visits to carers' homes, observation, interviews, and the use of questionnaires. At any other time throughout the year visits may also be made to the service to investigate complaints and to respond to any changes in the service.

Readers must be aware that a report is intended to reflect the findings of the inspector at a specific period in time. Readers should not conclude that the circumstances of the service will be the same at all times.

The registered/responsible person/s is/are responsible for ensuring that the fostering service operates in a way which complies with the service specific regulations. CSSIW will comment in the general text of the inspection report on their compliance. For those regulations which CSSIW believes to be key in bringing about change in the particular service, they will be separately and clearly identified in the requirement section.

As well as listing these key requirements from the current inspection, requirements made by CSSIW since the last inspection, which have been met and those which remain outstanding are included in this report. The reader should note that requirements made in last year's report which are not listed as outstanding have been appropriately complied with.

Where key requirements have been identified, the provider is required under Regulation 42B, (Compliance Notification), to advise CSSIW of the completion of any action that they have been required to take in order to remedy a breach of the regulations.

The regulated service is also responsible for having in place a clear, effective and fair complaints procedure which promotes local resolution between the parties in a swift and satisfactory manner, wherever possible. The annual inspection report will include a summary of the numbers of complaints dealt with locally and their outcome.

CSSIW may also be involved in the investigation of a complaint. Where this is the case CSSIW makes publicly available a summary of that complaint. CSSIW will also include within the annual inspection report a summary of any matters it has been involved in together with any action taken by CSSIW.

Should you have concerns about anything arising from the inspector's findings, you may discuss these with CSSIW or with the registered person.

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales is required to make reports on regulated services available to the public. This report is a public document and will be available on the CSSIW website: www.cssiw.org.uk