

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**
DATE: **01 MAY 2014**
REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**
SUBJECT: **ANNUAL FOSTERING INSPECTION**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To advise the Committee of the outcome of the annual inspection of the Flintshire Fostering Service (20th – 22nd and 28th January 2014) by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 In accordance with the Care Standards Act (2000) the CSSIW have undertaken an annual review of Flintshire County Council's Fostering Service. The CSSIW Inspection focussed on the quality of life of children and young people in general foster care. This involved a number of key lines of enquiries ranging from meeting with young people and carers, offices of Social Services and attendance at the participation group.

2.02 The Inspection identified the following strengths, areas of progress and areas for further improvement.

2.03 What does the Service do well?

- Foster carers value the support from the Fostering Service and appreciate the Team's stability and consistency. This is a consistent message which dates back over several inspections.
- Fostering Panel was well organised, facilitated and feedback from attendees was regarded as positive.
- Good evidence of the Agency Decision Maker's scrutiny, challenge and reflection in relation to the decisions and issues noted in the Panel.

2.04 What has improved since the last Inspection?

- Closer collaboration between Senior Practitioner (Fostering Services) and child care teams. This has assisted in more effective and timely decisions to be made about potential

assessments of carers.

- Foster carers have greater access to online training and joint training with child care staff. This has resulted in carers reporting on feeling more equipped to meet the challenges of care.
- Part-time therapist (via Action for Children) has been employed to work with foster carers. This has proven a success in that carers receive closer support in responding to more challenging and difficult placement encounters.

2.05 What needs to be done to improve the Service?

- The development of a Participation Strategy and greater dissemination of outcomes to be shared with the looked after children's population.

2.06 A new refreshed Corporate Parenting Policy will incorporate this outcome. This is to be presented to the next scheduled Children's Services Forum for consultation and overview and subsequent Health Committee Meeting.

- Improvements required to support potential kinship foster carers applying for special guardianship orders. In the past carers have been concerned that without requisite support (which is evident whilst they are carers) they would be reluctant to consider this next step. The appointment to this post will encourage more kin carers to actively choose this option for permanency outcomes.

2.07 A vacancy requisition process has been completed. A Special Guardianship service policy has been designed in advance of the postholder taking up the role from June 2014.

- Some foster carers missed the opportunity to participate in a CAMHS facilitated support group.

2.08 CAMHS are to offer a modular course for carers from the Summer of 2014. This will replace the more 'ad-hoc' support provision, providing learning, supervision and a recognised certification of attendance and completion of work. In parallel is the employment of the part-time therapist (as noted above) to offer one-to-one and family support intervention.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The Flintshire Fostering Service continues to provide an excellent service, with a stable and respected staff group, committed foster carers and children and young people who experience excellent care

support.

- 3.02 The Inspection of the Fostering Service since 2005 have repeatedly identified a maturing, well organised, well managed and effective service. This reflects upon the team and their management.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That the Committee accepts this report (with the attachment).

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 No financial issues were identified as part of the Inspection.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 That the Local Authority ensures that looked after children are not disadvantaged by their status as looked after.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 None noted.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 None noted.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.01 None noted.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

- 10.01 None noted.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

- 11.01 These were undertaken as part of the Inspection process.

12.00 APPENDICES

- 12.01 Annual Fostering Inspection Report

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

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