

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **THURSDAY 23 JULY 2015**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER (SOCIAL SERVICES)**

SUBJECT: **FOSTERING SERVICES INSPECTION REPORT**

1.00 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To consider the Care and Social Services Inspection (2015) of the Flintshire Fostering Services and Subsequent Action Plan (Updated as of July, 2015)

2.00 **BACKGROUND**

2.01 The fostering service was subject to a regular base line inspection which assessed whether the registration of the service is justified and the conditions of registration are appropriate. This addressed quality of life of children, with other themes being staffing, leadership and management and carers.

2.02 The inspection team identified the following positives.

- The service is described as very child focused, with all staff aware of each child's needs and circumstances
- The quality of the service has maintained with some improvements made despite some staffing pressures
- Monthly meetings are held for prospective applicants to maximise recruitment
- A DVD has been produced by foster carers and young people offering their personal testimonies and experience.
- Evidence of good recording of information with decisions about placements appropriately recorded.

2.03 The inspection identified one area of non-compliance in which independent members of the Fostering Panel were employees of Flintshire County Council. (This has now been addressed with the appointment of two new members not employed by the Local Authority).

2.04 Further proactive areas were identified to improve standards, these were

- The effective recruitment of sufficient carers
- Informal network support for Foster Carers

- Documentation to include feedback from Looked After Children Education (LACE)
- improvements in the role and function of the fostering panel coordinator have been made
- questionnaire formats do reflect distinct feedback of children & kinship carers

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 This builds upon successive inspection from 2003/2004. It recognises the strengths of the service during a period of staff transition and acknowledges the significant role of the Team Manager prior to her retirement in March 2015. This has now been taken on by the new Acting Team Manager, who was previously a Senior Practitioner on the team.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 Members review and comment on this report concerning how the Fostering Service continues to make effective progress, supporting foster carers and looked after children effectively.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 In direct relation to the Fostering Service, no significant concerns were noted around financial arrangements or their implication.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 No issues were noted or identified as part of the inspection outcome.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None were reported or identified.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 It is considered that the policies, procedures and practices adhere to and respond in accordance with the Local Authorities anti-discriminatory and practice principles.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 In the context of the inspection, some staff pressures were reported. It can be confirmed that the service, since April, 2015 has operated with new staff members.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 10.01 None were noted.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 As part of the inspection an extensive range of stakeholders were consulted including

- Children in Foster Care
- Foster Carers
- Staff from the Fostering Services
- Social Work Teams
- Managers
- Questionnaire responses

12.00 APPENDICES

- Fostering Inspection 2015
- Fostering Inspection Action Plan (updated) July 2015

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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