

ANNUAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT FOR CARDIFF COUNCIL FOSTERING SERVICE (01.04.2016 – 31.03.2017)

Introduction and background

The purpose of this report is to provide a review of the quality of care offered by the Cardiff Fostering Service during the period 01.04.16 – 31.03.17 (in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 42 of the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003).

The report provides information regarding quality and the monitoring of matters set out in Schedule 7 and Schedule 8, and the quality of the services being delivered. The report is produced to provide children, parents, foster carers, elected members, staff and other professionals with a review of the Cardiff Fostering Service.

This Report has been put together with contributions from Children and Young People, Foster Carers, Social Workers, and Managers from across Children's Services

Contents:

Part 1: Feedback from Children and Young People, Social Workers, Foster Carers, and Applicants, Evidence of Outcomes.

Part 2: Service Overview

Part 3: Information of performance in relation to the monitoring of the matters detailed in Schedule 7 and Schedule 8 of the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Improvements made during 2016 – 2017:-

- We have relaunched the website and now provide further information to our carers and to the general public via this medium;
- We engaged with our carers starting the year with a training needs analysis, which then informed the program of training and development for the year. This included Team and Panel training, and a series of Lunch and Learn workshops attended by both staff and carers. Subjects included Sexual Exploitation and Internet Safety.
- The carers were supported to start their own Foster Care Association.
- Staff and carers undertook Train the Trainers training, and completed the Welsh Assembly-backed twelve week Confidence in Care Program.
- Carers also commenced the QCF program.
- A panel attendees' booklet was produced.
- Cardiff engaged in a robust recruitment campaign, and a series of retention initiatives to celebrate Foster Care in Cardiff.
- We engaged with NYAS to produce a Children's Guide.
- We are looking at different ways of capturing feedback and outcomes.

PART 1

Part 1 of this report provides information in relation to the way in which the Fostering Service ensures that a quality service is being provided.

1 Quality of life of children, promoting quality of care within the child's placement

1.1 Children's Views

"I'm lucky to have my carers and it's a pretty house, the best bedroom in the house is mine"!!

"Foster Carers help me to cope with my feelings and to understand things"

"My foster carers are kind and supportive and we have lots of opportunities to do fun activities, living in my foster home, it's very comfortable and homely"

"Since living with my carer I feel safe, happy and it's nice she cares about me and I now like going to school"

A young person recently having come into care ' things are much better now for me, I like my carer she makes jokes all the time and is funny, her little grandson hugged me and I think we are friends'

"Living in a fostering household I have been able to find myself a family and safety/security. I have been able to feel a sense of belonging and the ability to be able to move on from past events without them affecting my future"

"I find it good in foster care in this home as I feel more loved and cared for and I feel more secure in this home. I love living in this safe environment, it is like my home"

"My Carer is helping me to gain asylum status in the UK"

"My foster carers are kind, caring and good listeners. The best things about where I live are Christmas, my birthday and going out."

'Happy in placement and get on with everyone'

1.2 Examples of Outcomes:

Carer successfully worked with a birth parent to enable the baby to be returned to her care.

Carer has helped a six year old to proceed through six book reading bands in a year and to walk without a walking frame.

Attends a special school, however has excelled in maths, and will be put forward for GCSE math and may achieve a C grade. When initially placed young person could not read or write.

Since starting, she has gained performer of the week, performer of the term. Also attends Trinity College London and Trinity musical Theatre in Production, where she has gained a Grade 3 Distinction.

Doing exceptionally well in school and, when the SSW attended a LAC review for her yesterday, the school has said that they view her as being “gifted” and an A* pupil.

I was very pleased to hear that a young person had achieved so well in school that he was able to assist teaching staff in helping his peers in class; foster carers are supporting this young person to achieve his goal in becoming a doctor.

Has recently passed her driving test on her first attempt, carer has bought her a little Fiat car to get around in.

Attends St Johns Ambulance and during the holidays, he was one of only 17 young people selected to work at the Big Cheese in Caerphilly.

Child’s Social Worker was very impressed by the way carer had attended the hospital for an initial contact meeting, with flowers and a small box of chocolates and a photo of the baby for the mother. This act by carer had made the relationship easier.

From a child’s social worker “can I say how amazing the carers have been, they are so attuned to his needs and dedicated to promoting his wellbeing, especially given his sensitive and fractious nature, and this hard work has meant that he is developing as best he can. They have also worked very well with the parents and professionals, showing no judgement against the parents given their situations.”

A young person placed with a relative is now better behaved in school, and is attending lessons, going to extra revision sessions after hours and has been revising for exams in placement.

Of those young people in the WIR arrangements, there are four young people hoping to have university places, 5 continuing in further education and 3 undertaking training programmes. Referrals for the scheme continue to be active and there is positive interest from young people and foster carers.

The foster carer has given them a really good start in life and has loved them like her own. We are really grateful to her and her husband and children.

The foster carers have been absolutely fantastic and have put the child's needs before their own and been so supportive and helpful with the transition back home. They're amazing

A young person living with our foster carer achieved 11 GCSE's and passed her driving test first time.

Has been offered a place in three Universities to study in September 2017

It was a very positive outcome for him who was placed with adopters last week as was able to attach well to adopters and they stated that they thought this was because of all the love and stability that the foster carer and her family gave.

The school have seen a significant improvement in attendance, punctuality and behaviour since he moved to the foster placement. His current attendance is 98.5%. His attendance last academic year before he came into placement was 71.4%. He has 328 achievement points and only 21 behaviour points.

2. Applicant's and Foster carer's views in relation to the service provided

Foster Carer wanted us to know that the morning after the Christmas party at County Hall, the two children in placement said, "Nan, I wish we could go to more parties like that, it was the best party we have ever been to".

"I just wanted to say we all had a wonderful night at the pantomime the little girl I am fostering had never been to the theatre and she is on cloud nine!! The Hoff was amazing! 😊 Thank you again for the tickets it was a real treat".

2.1 Feedback from Foster care Reviews:

20.04.16

We feel the level of support that we get ranges from very good to excellent.'

17.05.16

'The Fostering Service is excellent and we are very happy with everything that is needed to provide a good service for the young people and enjoy working with the service.'

30.10.17

'Coffee mornings need to be spread across the city rather than all being held in St Mellons. As an Ely carer it is difficult to attend due to the travel involved.'

29.05.16

'I want to compliment the Fostering Service for the excellent support I receive from my support worker; she has been my support worker for over 6 years and has been a great support to me. Nothing has been much trouble for her, e.g. helping me to fill in forms, attending LAC reviews and offering to go with me on training courses. She makes us feel appreciated for what we do for the Fostering Service. On the occasions I need to call on her, I know it will be sorted quickly and efficiently.'

The feedback we receive demonstrates positive outcomes for children and young people; but also demonstrates that the service puts a high value and focus on services to Foster Carers and applicants.

Cardiff Fostering Service strives to engage with children and young people on an individual basis to ensure their wellbeing. We work in partnership with our carers and promote a high quality service. .

PART 2

Over view of Services delivered

Recruitment:

The process of recruiting foster carers to the service begins from the moment a prospective foster carer 'discovers' the service. Through the various stages of the process there is a need to be 'customer-focused' to build confidence in the agency from the outset and enhance the likelihood if approved, that foster carers will advocate for the service. In January 2017 the 'Count Yourself In' Foster Campaign was launched which aimed to reposition the communication messages, and challenging a number of misconceptions surrounding who can foster. With the growing need for potential foster carers to come forward to provide loving and stable homes for the City's children in care, the focus was to provide messages busting the most common fostering myths. The Campaign focus was specifically aimed at people who might rule themselves out as possible foster carers unnecessarily including single people, LGBT people, under 30s, over 50s and people from different ethnic backgrounds with a view to generating more interest in fostering for the City of Cardiff Council.

Recruitment materials were produced including posters, information leaflets and promotional materials such as pens, travel mugs, sports bottles, trolley fobs, pop ups for use at events. Promotional posters and leaflets were distributed to all Council venues such as Hubs, Leisure Centres, Libraries as well as being distributed to other settings including all G.P. practices. All Senior Managers in the Directorate and Fostering Staff have branded electronic signatures that contain the Cardiff Carers

Foster a Child call to action and regular internal communications now take place including articles prompting fostering on the Intranet homepage, Inbox, Staff App, Our News and Core Brief. There was also targeted marketing mix utilising a number of different marketing channels including posters advertising fostering displayed on Council bus shelters across the city, Bus backs and the Hayes and Central Library screens. Paid advertising features were published in the We Are Family online magazine, Primary Times and Cardiff Times. All 75 City of Cardiff Council Cabinet Members was briefed and encouraged to support the campaign and to share information amongst their wards. Staff and our Foster Carer were also regularly involved in attending events to try to generate potential foster carers enquiries including manning information stands at the Jobs Fair and community events such as the Ely and Caerau and Rhiwbina Festival. Scheduled Social Media using fostering adverts and foster carer videos to share on Twitter/Facebook was undertaken throughout 2016-2017 supporting the Recruitment Events and the Campaign with targeted messaging e.g. tweets in March 2017 during LGBT Adoption & Fostering Week.

Website and Social Media is increasingly someone's first experience of a service as evidenced in 2016 – 2017 the trend in enquiry routes markedly changed with 156 of 186 enquiries being via online contacts. In terms of Marketing Data 44 enquirers indicated that they became aware about fostering for the Service through the Council website, 4 Facebook/ Twitter and 38 were via internet searches. The Service has recognised that the website is crucial to our recruitment business and is part of the wider marketing mix, the websites look and content has been refreshed and continues to be an area of ongoing development to ensure that the site remains dynamic, user friendly and up to date. A new Foster Care Cardiff video was commissioned and uploaded to the website as well as internet platforms including YouTube. The video features current foster carers telling their story and explaining why they foster and how rewarding it. Additionally there are interviews from Senior Children's Services Managers and members of the Fostering Team.

Positively, there is a seamless gateway where online enquiry forms are completed which are then sent directly to the team to enable timely responses including providing information booklets. Telephone enquiries are dealt with on the day of contact and initial online enquiries are passed to the Duty Worker to follow up within 24 hours or the next working day after a weekend / bank holiday with phone contact or email contact and information booklets being sent via post / electronically as requested. An initial enquiry form is completed for all contacts and if the outcome is positive the enquirer is offered an initial assessment visit on a date / time convenient for them where ever possible. Following initial assessment if the enquirer and the Service wish to proceed forward in the assessment process a place will be offered on the next available Skills to Foster programme. In 2016-2017 the Service ran Five Skills to Foster Programmes May 2016, August 2016, October 2016, January 2017, and March 2017; with a sixth programme postponed due to limited attendance numbers. Following attendance of Skills to Foster, 11 enquires withdrew following consideration of the 3-day information as they did not feel it was the right time for

them to start their fostering journey. Following attendance at the Skills to Foster programme, a Social Worker is identified to commence a full form F Assessment with a view to the assessment being completed within six months wherever possible. In 2016-2017 three of the full form Fs commenced after the Skills to Foster Programme were ceased at varying points in the assessment; one due to a change in circumstances; two due to concerns identified during the further assessment period; and one IFA transfer assessment which was placed on hold in response to a complaint.

2. Training:

A Training Needs Analysis Workshop for Foster Carers and Fostering team was facilitated in January 2016 to review 2015 – 2016 training, and to influence the style and topics for 2016 -2017. Lunch and Learn workshops were facilitated covering a range of topics by a diverse group of guest speakers/ trainers. All mandatory training e.g., Safeguarding, Paediatric First Aid and Safer Caring continued to run on a rolling programme. Our 2nd group of carers will start the Confidence in Care course, a 13 week programme facilitated by Action for Children – the first cohort will continue to reflect on this learning experience by attending support group meetings. A 3 Day Skills to Foster course is run throughout the year for potential new carers. A group of carers and staff who attended Skills to Foster Train the Trainer continue to receive support and develop in the shape of interactive workshops, with a view to co delivering future training. A joint induction programme will run twice alongside new carers of the Vale authority. This is a 3 day programme for our mainstream carers, covering Looked After Children's Process, Child Development and Attachment, and Allegations training. We have launched a bespoke Kinship/Connected Carers Induction day, which is delivered in house. Carers will continue to be offered the opportunity to work towards the QCF Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.

3. Connected Persons/ Kinship:

Kinship foster care is a formal arrangement where a child is looked after by the Local Authority and placed with a relative, friend or connected person. 'Relative of Friend' is defined as a: grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full blood or by marriage), step-parent, or friend of the child; A 'Connected Person' is anyone who has a pre-existing connection to a child through his or her extended network.

Recent case law has led to an increase in the assessment of a large group of kinship carers looking after Cardiff children and subsequent directives from the family courts to complete assessments in shrinking timescales has had a significant impact on Cardiff's foster panel and supervisory capacity in the Fostering Service. Kinship carers are a major growth area due to PLO and the requirement to look within a Child's own family network when initiating proceedings.

Resource's to undertake assessments were moved from within the fostering service due to capacity issues but the supervision of approved 'connected persons' remains within our service and a main area of activity during the year has been dealing with a significant increase in the number of kinship cases.

4. WIR / Supported Lodgings:

WIR

Previously, young people have continued to live with their foster carers under a person specific supported lodgings arrangement. However, under new law in Wales 'When I am ready' ('WIR') is a scheme to enable care leavers to continue to live with their former foster carers once they turn 18 years of age. Cardiff County council currently have 11 such arrangements.

Supported Lodgings

Supported lodgings are primarily a housing scheme for vulnerable young people. Providers are assessed and approved by Cardiff Council to provide safe and friendly accommodation within a family home for young people aged between 16 to 21 years of age.

Number of Supported Lodgings Providers & Beds	
Providers	
Mainstream S.L. Providers	20
Person Specific S.L. Providers (these arrangement predates WIR arrangements)	12
Total number of S.L. Providers	32
Beds	
Person Specific Supported Lodgings Places (these arrangement predates WIR arrangements)	12
Long-term S.L. Places	20
Emergency S.L. Places	7
Total number of beds	39

5. Private Fostering:

Once a Private Fostering notification is received by the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, this is processed as a contact record and the Targeted Services Team become responsible for the Well Being Assessment. Following the completion of a Well Being Assessment by the Targeted Service Team the matter is referred to the Cardiff

Fostering Service who then has the responsibility for then completing the full assessment of Private Foster Carers and the subsequent on-going monitoring of the arrangement. Responsibility for the full private fostering assessment and ongoing monitoring has been the responsibility of the fostering service in Cardiff since September 2006.

Pertinent Statistics for period 01.04.16 to 31.03.17

- 8 young people began residing in new private fostering arrangements during the year 01.04.16 to 31.03.17
- As of the 31st March 2017 there were seven children under private fostering arrangements open to the Fostering Service.
- As of the 31st March 2017 there are four known Private Fostering homes open to the Fostering Service. One private fostering home cares for four unrelated privately fostered children, and an exemption is in place.

The number of notifications received by Cardiff Local Authority remains low. Efforts have continued to raise awareness about private fostering with the public and professionals in Cardiff, both via published literature and via the internet. Raising awareness is an ongoing process and within the last 12 months information made available on the website to the public had been updated. The service will also continue to consider further means for awareness raising initiatives.

6. Retention:

Retention of approved Foster Carers is a key priority for the Service. Positively, the Service has not lost any carers through them seeking to transfer to another Agency. The Service in terms of retention is aware that for post approval support packages it is crucial to communicate directly, to be involved in decision making and carers have therefore been actively involved on the basis of partnership and consulted on the future service design e.g. involvement with the Services Training Needs Annual Training Needs Analysis held in January 2017. The Service aims to ensure that all looked after children in Cardiff receive the best possible care, so they can make the most of their opportunities, now and in the future. It recognises and values the demanding and highly significant role that Foster carers play in providing excellent care and support to our looked after children. We want to strengthen our partnership with registered foster carers to ensure they are fully involved in the development of the fostering service for the benefit of all Stakeholders.

The Service has a Fostering Mentor scheme where it seeks to link all newly approved foster carers or carers facing a new area of challenge with an experienced carer who acts as a Mentor who will be 'on hand' to offer primarily, telephone support. The aim is to enhance the support package provided to new carers with the mentor playing a crucial role on helping to a new carer into both the formal and informal fostering network. Mentees have commented that they have valued being linked with a mentor and mentors have commented that they have felt it rewarding to be involved in supporting new carers to try to improve the outcomes for children.

In 2015 the Service introduced Welcome to Cardiff Sessions pre induction training for all newly approved foster carers giving an opportunity to welcome them to the City of Cardiff Fostering Service, to share information, introduce key staff team members and to discuss ongoing foster carer development. In 2016 the Service ran 2 Welcome Sessions with these viewed as important as they provide an opportunity to meet other newly approved foster carers. A key development in 2016 was the development of the Cardiff Foster Carers' Association (CFCA) and within the first year they have with the support of funding from the Service successfully organised a number of activities including Parc Play, Climbing at Boulders with events being enjoyed by the children and carers who attended. Additionally the Fostering Service held events including St Fagan's Summer Activity; funded Pantomime tickets; hosted a Christmas party; and regularly held coffee mornings which continue to provide a safe environment in which to meet other carers and staff.

7. Performance Indicators In house Cardiff Carers

19.6% of Children returned home from care during the year (Cardiff LAC total 11.5%)

90% were placed in Cardiff (Cardiff LAC total 63.5%)

46.15% were placed within 10 miles of their home address (Cardiff LAC Total 17.2%)

55.36% were seen by a dentist within 3 Mths (Cardiff LAC total 48.4%)

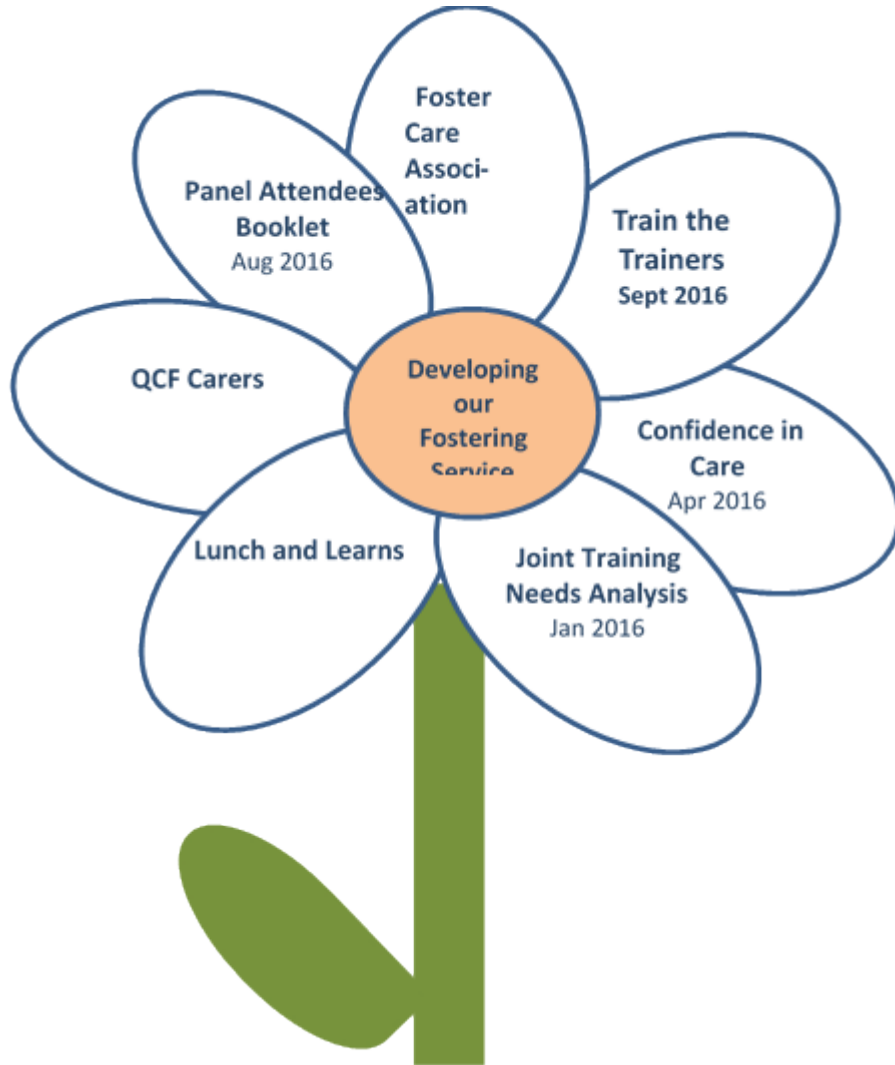
94.29% were registered with a GP within 10 working days (Cardiff LAC total 84%)

11.4% experienced one or more change of school (Cardiff LAC total 13.3%)

Hence Indicators demonstrate quality care when placed with In house carers.

ACHIEVEMENTS 2016/17

22 New Carers



Developments and improvements planned for 2017 / 2018

During 2017 /2018 there are plans to further develop and improve the service and some specific areas that have been identified:-

- **Recruitment:** Publishing the Children's and Young People's Guide to Foster Care, Continued profile raising of the service involving Foster carers, various Council departments and councillors. E.g. 100+ runners wearing orange Cardiff Fostering tee shirts in the Cardiff half marathon including Care leavers, Foster carers, staff from across the Council and the Leader of the Council. Numerous events publicising the service, featured on social media and continually reviewing and updating the new website. We have a leading role in the Welsh Fostering Framework initiative.
- **Training:** Promotion of Confidence in Care, QCF and bespoke training for carers delivered at times and venues for ease of access to our carers.
- **Foster Carers Association:** We are proud that our Foster carers have started their own Foster care Association, following consultations undertaken facilitated by Fostering Network. The FCA have agreed to I organise social events and act as a Consultation group.
- **Celebration event:** Each year we hold a Celebration of Foster carer and Service Achievements , we also take the opportunity to Launch the next Confidence in Care program
- **Assessment Practice Group:** Improving practice in Assessment revising templates to ensure safety and quality. Implementing Signs of Safety. Improving Foster carer's recording and reporting at LAC Reviews ,
- **Consultation :** Use of Survey Monkey

PART 3

This section provides information and analysis of performance in relation to the monitoring of the matters detailed in Schedule 7 and Schedule 8 of the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Monitoring service delivery

There are structures and systems in place to ensure accountability of service provision and these include regular management meetings, team meetings, and the collation of performance data and feedback for example:-

- Monitoring monthly recruitment statistics;

- Monitoring information about placements and producing monthly reports related to placement / occupancy figures;
- Monitoring via monthly budget reports;
- Monitoring the regular supervisory activities of the workers and managers via supervision, files audits, etc.
- Gaining feedback from the views or comments expressed through the Statutory Reviews of children in placement and via Foster Carer Annual Reviews;
- The work of the Fostering Panel;
- Monitoring of compliments and complaints;
- Issues raised by carers through Consultations and Feedback forms;
- Producing a Quality of Care report on an annual basis (a copy of which can be obtained on making a request to the service).

All of this information is used to assist in monitoring how well the needs of Cardiff's Looked After Children (LAC) are met by the services being provided. The information provided in these reports also assists the service in identifying areas for improvement.

In addition to our in-house monitoring, the Fostering Service provides data, reports & presentations to the Children's Services Management Team and Council's Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee as requested / required.

Compliance in relation to each child placed with foster parents, with the foster placement agreement and the responsible authority's plan for the care of the child.

1 Foster Placement Agreements

Compliance in relation to fostering placement agreements for children is currently monitored through:-

- formal supervision sessions;
- file audits / file spot checks undertaken by the Managers/Senior Social Workers;
- Utilising a monitoring system which we've implemented on our CareFirst computer system i.e. when the Fostering worker completes a Foster Carer Visit they are able to log that a Fostering Placement agreement is required and the system will generate an automatic reminder ('Activity') so that the worker is prompted to chase up the agreement.

2 All accidents, injuries and illnesses of children placed with foster parents.

Accidents, injuries and illnesses are monitored through the 'Register of significant incidents' that is held/maintained by the Fostering Service. The Fostering Service monitors this area utilising 2 categories:-

- **Serious illness or serious accident of a child placed with foster parents (these incidents are reported to the CSSIW)**

Between 01.04.16 – 31.03.17 there were **0** incident(s) of this nature recorded.

- **All Other Accidents, Injuries, Illnesses (these incidents are not reported to the CSSIW)**

Between 01.04.16 – 31.03.17 there were **4** incidents of this nature recorded.

The incidents reported reflect that foster carers and social workers understand the need for reporting incidents and illnesses and any concerns for a child's welfare. The majority of the incidents required no more than low level medical treatment.

3 Complaints about the service

In addition to the information held on the 'Register of significant events' the service keep a Complaints Register to monitor all complaints received. Serious complaints about a foster parent are reported to the CSSIW.

Between 01.04.16 – 31.03.17 there were **0** complaints about the service recorded:-

The move to managers chairing reviews has meant that carers are raising issues more informally. Also the Fostering Service has strived to be more accessible via direct contact and newsletters.

4 Any allegations or suspicions of abuse in respect of children placed with foster parents and the outcome of any investigation.

Between 01.04.16 – 31.03.17 there 0 incidents of this nature were recorded.

5 Staff recruitment records are held and record of required checks for new workers (re: 01.04.16 – 31.03.17) No new appointments made, staff group remained stable.

Relevant checks are undertaken in relation to all staff appointed to the service e.g. DBS, references, relevant qualifications and evidence of social work registration.

6. Notifications of the events listed in Schedule 8

Compliance is monitored through the '**Register of significant incidents**' that are held/maintained by the Fostering Service.

The Fostering Service maintain the register in relation to the events listed in **Schedule 8** but also keep registers in relation to some additional categories/events that it was felt useful for the Service to record/monitor:-

Nature of Event	No. of incidents in relation to this type of event recorded between 01.04.16 – 31.03.17
Death of a child placed with foster parents	0
Referral to the Secretary of State pursuant to section 2(1)(a) of the Protection of Children Act 1999 (1) of an individual working for a fostering service	0
Serious illness or serious accident of a child placed with foster parents	0
Outbreak at the home of a foster parent of any infectious disease which in the opinion of a registered medical practitioner attending the home is sufficiently serious to be so notified	0
Involvement or suspected involvement of a child placed with foster parents in prostitution	0
Serious incident relating to a child placed with foster parents necessitating calling the police to the foster parents' home	2
Any serious complaint about any foster parent approved by the fostering service provider	1
Instigation and outcome of any child protection (CP) enquiry involving a child placed with foster parents	0
Allegation that a child placed with foster parents has committed a serious offence	0
Absconding by a child placed with foster parents	3
All accidents, injuries and illnesses of children placed with foster parents (in addition to serious illness or accidents which are reported to CSSIW)	4
Use of any measures of control, restraint or discipline in respect of children accommodated in a foster home	1
Incidents of bullying	1

The number of incidents equates to less than a quarter of the total Cardiff Foster Carer population and more than half were low level day to day incidents, that did not require reporting to CSSIW.

The reporting of incidents is discussed at each foster carer visit this needs to remain robust.

7. Any unauthorised absence from the foster home of a child accommodated there.

Between 01.04.16 – 31.03.17 there are **3** incidents of this nature recorded, each was reported to the Police and EDT and the child returned safely.

8. Use of any measures of control, restraint or discipline in respect of children accommodated in a foster home.

Between 01.04.16 – 31.03.17 there 1 incident of this nature recorded, the matter was Investigated and considered as a Part 4 Child Protection Process in the following year. .

9. Medication, medical treatment and first aid administered to any child placed with foster parents.

All children and young people placed with foster carers are registered with a GP, dentist and optician (if required). Cardiff’s foster carers receive training on meeting the health needs of children and young people in their carer, and First Aid training is mandatory for all carers. All Foster Carers should have a copy of the Foster Carer Handbook which provides information and general guidance on health issues. Furthermore, health issues are discussed as part of the supervising social workers regular visits to carers.

Carers are also required to complete a Health Record for all children placed. The Local Authority has performance indicators to monitor health outcomes for Looked After children.

Carers are required to record all details of a child in placement’s health (including medication, medical treatment and first aid administered to any child placed with foster parents). Regular medication / medical treatment would therefore be expected to be recorded by the carer in the child’s Health Record.

However, in addition to the carer recording all health related information in the child’s Health Record they are also expected to record any irregular occurrences of medication, medical treatment and first aid being administered in their log (duplicate) books.

10. Where applicable, the standard of any educational provision provided by the fostering service.

The Fostering Service does not provide any formal educational provision in relation to children and young people.

However, the Local Authority does monitor the educational performance of Cardiff’s Looked After Child population.

11. Recruitment / Assessment data

Please see table below for information in respect of the new applications that were received by the Fostering Service during 2016 / 2017:-

OVERVIEW OF FOSTERING RECRUITMENT ENQUIRES / ASSESSMENTS 2016/2017	
Total No. of Mainstream enquiries =	186
Total No. of Kinship enquiries =	30
Total No. of enquiries that proceeded to Initial Assessments =	43
Total No. of enquiries that proceeded to Full assessments =	33

Total No. Mainstream applicants / carers approved	5
Total No. Kinship applicants / carers approved	20

12. Records of Fostering Panel meetings

The Fostering Panel generally meets every two weeks (unless there are exceptional circumstances that lead to it being cancelled or if an exceptional panel needs to be held). Records of all Foster Panel minutes are held on the Fostering Services computer system (and hard copies are placed on the files of applicants and carers).

In the period 01.04.16 – 31.03.17 minutes are held for the following dates (in accordance with all the Fostering Panels held during that period):-

April 13th and 27th, May 11th and 25th, June 8th and 22nd, July 6th and 20th, August 3rd, 17th and 31st, September, 14th and 28th, October 12th and 26th, November 9th and 23rd, December 7th and 14th, January 2017, 4th and 18th
February 2017, 1st and 15th, March 2017 1st, 15th and 29th.

The figures for 2016 -2017 show that 26 panel meetings were held during the year. A total of 69 cases were presented at the panel during 2016 – 2017 (8 of which were initial reviews of newly approved carers) and of the 61 recommendations made, the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) upheld 95% of the recommendations (which provides evidence that the panel are effective in their role).

The average time take for the ADM to provide a decision after the Panel date was 2.33 working days which evidences efficiency and timely decision making in relation to the running of the panel.

The Panel Chair and the Fostering Managers / Panel Advisors ensure that the Fostering Panel continues to operate in line with the requirements of the Fostering regulations and Cardiff's policies and procedures.

There are some very positive messages about the efficiency of the Panel and the Decision making. The panel functions well and meets Regulatory requirements. The panel completed training focusing on analysis of risk in complex situations. The figures reflect that the service continues to facilitate approximately two panels a month, with sufficient number of carers are presented with the necessary information in order that timely decisions can be made.

Consultation about Fostering Panel

Another way in which the service consults with applicants / carers is via a feedback questionnaire for people who have attended the Fostering Panel.

	No. of Responses	Rating of Panel experience on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most positive)									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Foster Carer	0										
Applicants	9								x		
Totals =	9										

In addition to the above data, some examples of the comments received via these questionnaires:-

What was your experience of Panel?

23.06.17

'Everyone was friendly and made us feel more relaxed. Everything was much organised from showing us profile pictures of everyone on the panel first so we knew who was there. We were made to feel comfortable and relaxed.'

What could Panel do better to improve your experience of Panel?

'Nothing.'

29.03.17

'The members were warm, welcoming and really listened. The sequence of events was explained well. I was impressed by the fact I was accompanied before and after my time with the panel and offered refreshments. Thank you.'

18.11.16

'Very relaxed and friendly atmosphere'

03.05.16

'Applicants made to feel relaxed, and were re-assured. SW good and provided support'

20.03.17

'Thank you for giving us this opportunity. We are very excited to hear of our 1st placement.'

The information gained via these new questionnaires are reviewed and shared to ensure that feedback (both positive and negative) given is addressed appropriately (and that appropriate action is taken) any issues raised by applicants, carers, panel members / advisors or the ADM are also discussed during the 'any other business' section of the panel and / or at Panel Business meetings.

13 Duty rosters of persons working for the fostering agency, as arranged and as actually worked

The staff in the Fostering Service are able to utilise a flexi time system; their flexi sheets are submitted to their supervisor's to be checked / approved at the end of each flexi cycle and if they are requesting over 3hrs of flexi leave.

In relation to the Fostering Duty system (within office hours) there are monthly rotas for the Duty Workers circulated to the team and any amendments to these rotas need to be agreed by the Managers.

Out of hours support to carers is provided via our Emergency Duty Team (EDT), there is always a senior manager on call that EDT can access to provide advice and guidance if required regarding matters that arise out of hours in relation to foster carers and the children placed with them.

14. Records of staff appraisals.

The procedure for Personal Performance & Development Plans (PPDP) is that they should be undertaken / completed annually but that they are then reviewed on a 6 monthly basis i.e. a Personal Performance & Development Review (PPDR) is undertaken on a 6 monthly basis.

A copy of the PPDP should be held on the relevant staff members supervision file and a record of when they have been completed is also recorded centrally i.e. all staff PPDPs / PPDRs are recorded on the 'Digi Gov' computer system and compliance is monitored by Human Resources (HR) and Senior Management.

During 2016 – 2017 the Fostering Service was **100%** compliant in respect of undertaking and completing staff PPDPs / PPDRs.

15. Minutes of staff meetings.

Team Meetings are held once a month; minutes are produced and held on file.