

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE

31 JULY 2013

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - CHILDREN

CSSIW INSPECTION INTO BRIDGEND FOSTERING SERVICE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report to the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee on the outcome and findings of the inspection into Bridgend Fostering Service.
- 1.2 Within the Fostering Services Regulations (Wales) 2003, there is a requirement that the Fostering Service is subject to an annual inspection by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The report links to the following corporate priorities:
 - working together to raise ambitions and to drive up educational achievements;
 - working with children and families to tackle problems early;
 - working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent;
 - working together to tackle health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles.

3. Background

- 3.1 Under S.31 of the Care Standards Act 2000 (fostering agency registered under Part 2 Care Standards Act 2000) and S.100 of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003, local authority fostering services are required to be inspected by CSSIW. As part of this inspection process, the Fostering Service is responsible for providing CSSIW with information about service data and a self-assessment of service statement. This is required to be submitted to CSSIW by 31st May on an annual basis. This information is then used by CSSIW to inform their inspection methodology. The methodology usually consists of: interviews with relevant officers, meetings with foster carers, observation of Fostering Panel, scrutiny of foster carer, staff and childrens files, scrutiny of at least the last three sets of Fostering Panel minutes, attendance at relevant support group meetings and all staff and carers are sent questionnaires to complete regarding the service.
- 3.2 Most inspections are baseline inspections looking at all areas of the fostering service. If issues of concern are identified by the inspector on reading the information provided, a focussed inspection will be carried out. To date it is noteworthy that Bridgend Fostering Service has never had a focussed inspection.

It should also be noted that in the last five years Bridgend Fostering Service has not been served with a requirement or, more recently, a compliance notice.

4. Current situation

4.1 The 2012/2013 Fostering Service inspection took place in January 2013 with the report being published on 15th April 2013. This report was very positive with no compliance issues.

4.2 The inspection report reflects what the service does well, what has improved since the last inspection and what needs to be done to improve the service. Examples which the inspection report noted are detailed below.

4.2.1. What the Service does well

- Men in Foster Care Group held in evenings to enable male foster carers who work to access training
- Promotion of children's achievements through an annual award ceremony which promotes the success and achievements of children (BFC)
- Fostering Panel undertake quality assurance feedback for each report presented to panel
- Foster carers are given opportunity to feedback on the experience of attending panel in a questionnaire
- Panel members receive an appraisal at least annually
- Panel training in new areas of service is delivered in a timely fashion
- Panel monitor timeliness of annual reviews of foster carers
- The Accommodation and Permanence Panel ensure all looked after children have a plan for permanence
- Robust policies and procedures in place

4.2.2 What has improved since the last inspection?

- Placement support worker recruited to work with identified foster carer for support with moving children on for adoption, support when an allegation or complaint has been made and support with behavior management and specific issues identified.
- Commissioning & Placement Officer position has been made permanent
- A social worker has been appointed to specifically assess and supervise Support Carers
- The role of the Level 4 foster carers has been reviewed to ensure its effectiveness and replaced by four 'Liaison Carers', one of whom has the responsibility for family and friend carers
- 'Carers own Children Group' established, although this is still in development and not well attended
- 'Family and Friends Carer Group' established
- Resolutions carer handbook developed but not yet launched
- Greater involvement of Resolution carers in recruitment and retention of carers and promotion of the service
- Resolution support groups held every six weeks
- Family Link carers have been provided with training portfolios
- Family Link carer handbook reviewed and updated

- Timescales for introductions to placements improved
- Development of Person Centered Child profiles

4.3 There are four identified areas where practice could be further developed for the mainstream fostering service (Bridgend Foster Care), two of which are the responsibility of the childcare teams; one is for development in relation to Resolutions and one for the Family Link Scheme. These are detailed below

4.3.1 What needs to be done to improve the service?

- Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks for foster carer should be renewed every three years
- Respite arrangements to be revised to ensure these are provided in a timely way to meet the needs of children
- Children's passports should be provided in a timely way to ensure children are not disadvantaged from being able to access holidays abroad as part of their foster family
- The service would benefit from having a group specifically for looked after children
- Review staffing levels within the Resolutions service due to current levels not being sustainable

4.4 An action plan has been developed to address these issues and this plan has been submitted to CSSIW. To date all of the actions have been completed, with 2 remaining as standing items on Fostering Panel and LAC (looked after children) review agendas. The Resolutions Management Board has recently commissioned an independent person to undertake a review of the service which includes a review of staffing levels.

4.5 Copies the Inspection report and the action plan are attached as appendices.

4.6 Since the publication of the Bridgend Fostering Service Inspection Report, the manager of the Resolutions Service has left the post and interim management arrangements have been put in place. The Bridgend Foster Care Team Manager who is also the Registered Fostering Services Manager for Bridgend is responsible for the day to day operational management this service.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules

5.1 None.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 None.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. However, there may be financial implications arising from implementation of recommendations from the Fostering Inspection report.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 That the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee notes the positive information provided within the reports which also evidences Cabinet's continued and recognised commitment and support to Bridgend Fostering Services.

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Background documents

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – CSSIW Inspection Report 2012-13
Appendix 2 – Bridgend Fostering Service Inspection 2012/13 - Action Plan