

Appendix 2 – Improvements and Actions

Area of Improvement	Action taken
Children's views to be actively sought following placement endings.	The End of Placement Process and accompanying forms have been amended so it is mandatory to obtain children's views.
Some children are not accessing statutory education, impacting on outcomes, and increasing pressure on foster carers.	Processes are now in place to gather information regarding children who are not receiving full time education who are receiving Placement Support intervention to enable this to be discussed with partners in Education.
Safeguarding procedures are not consistently followed. Information sharing between teams, consideration of risks and decision making is not robust.	Safeguarding procedures have been reviewed via the Senior Management Team with a plan for workshops to be held across the Teams. Mandatory training has taken place with the fostering team in February 2024 and a Significant Events form developed on the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) for Supervising Social Workers to record issues that occur and actions taken in response. The information will be reviewed within quarterly reports by the Management Team within the service to consider how to improve systems and support for foster carers and children.
Foster care agreements and safer caring agreements are in place, but these are not completed thoroughly.	The Safer Care process and Agreement form have been reviewed and updated to ensure they are thorough, and training scheduled for the team in May 2024. The changes are being discussed with foster carers at a consultation event taking place in April 2024.
There are shortfalls in the service considering the needs of all household members and carers capacity (matching)	An updated matching process is being embedded within the service with matching decisions evidenced via form on WCCIS that takes account of all household members, monthly reports are being completed to monitor compliance with the process.
When foster carers have been subject to safeguarding concerns, delays have occurred in completing annual reviews and presenting these to foster panel.	Timescales have been addressed with Team Managers and individual staff members performance addressed.
Some children have experienced high numbers of moves, which impacts their stability and outcomes.	Placement Support processes are in place and noted to be a strength within the report however support for foster carers has been enhanced via training provided to Supervising Social Workers, the Behaviour Analyst

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	commencing within the Team and the local authority developing processes to better enable early identification and support where there are emerging issues alongside the expansion of Placement Support Workers and a dedicated Intensive Placement Support Team.
Demand on the service is high and many foster carers are often asked to care for more children than they are approved for. Additional resources are provided to try to support these arrangements. However, these are routinely used with carers who look after children with complex needs, without robust consideration of the impact and risks involved.	<p>This has been addressed via an updated matching process, the updated Safe Care process and scheduled training for Safe Care and Risk assessment and Matching training scheduled for the team in May and June.</p> <p>A Placement Referral Officer is now in place within the service via Foster Wales Grant Funding. The role serves as a liaison between children's Teams, Fostering and Placements. The Officer supports with placement referrals, ensuring they are the best quality to enable searches to be undertaken, approaches potential carers to care for children and facilitates the placement planning and matching processes.</p>
As part of the matching process key information is shared during planning meetings, however, these meetings are not completed consistently.	Placement planning meetings are now a form on WCCIS compliance is monitored via monthly reports.
Children who need long term care are matched with carers without a thorough assessment of their long-term needs, how these change over time, carers commitment and understanding of these needs.	A long-term matching process needs to be developed in partnership with children's social work teams, this has not yet been completed.
The service is reviewing how they can improve monitoring of children's personal outcomes.	Discussions are taking place with the performance team regarding ability to run reports on WCCIS regarding outcomes for children in BCBC fostering placements.
Feedback from foster carers has been mixed regarding the foster carer charter implementation, information sharing and decision-making needing to be improved.	The Charter needs to be embedded across the local authority. There is a plan in place for the Foster Wales Recruitment Officer together with a Liaison Foster Carer to attend Team Meetings with children's teams to discuss the Charter. The Regional Foster Wales Development Manager is working together with us to develop a plan to further embed this into the local authority and will attend the Extended Team Managers Meeting taking place on 22 nd April.

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Several policies and procedures have been updated prior to inspection, to reflect the changes needed. The service is not currently operating in line with these policies and procedures which is impacting children's outcomes	Our Policy Officer has attended the Fostering Team Meeting to ensure the team are aware of the Social Services and Wellbeing (SSWB) page on the Intranet and how to access policies and procedures. A dedicated team meeting took place on 6 th March to go through policy and procedure and give team members opportunity to raise any queries or questions.
The current recording systems do not support effective oversight and smooth operation of the service. Some key information, including the DBS checks for foster carers support networks are not monitored effectively.	Regular meetings are in place to develop WCCIS to enable oversight via the development of dashboards to monitor performance. Business support arrangements are in place to ensure DBS checks for foster carers and their household members are completed. There is a separate action plan in place to support this ongoing piece of work.
The service has experienced a high turnover of staff in all areas.	Agency numbers have significantly reduced within the fostering service with 1 vacant post in Kinship and Permanence and 1 vacant post in the General Fostering Service. There have been some challenges in relation to staff sickness.
Evidence of updated DBS checks for staff needs strengthening.	DBS check compliance is recorded on the updated Supervision proforma's for staff members.
Quality assurance and learning framework has not been implemented consistently.	Service demands/ sickness and vacancies have impacted on managers' completion of case file audits. A meeting is taking place with the local authority Quality Assurance Officer on 19 th April to discuss how we better implement the framework within the service.
Not all prospective foster carers have received the information and training they require prior to their assessment	1 General carer was highlighted during inspection which was an anomaly. In other cases, these are kinship carers subject to court timescales as part of their assessments who often have children in their care impacting their ability to undertake the training fully as part of the assessment.
Some foster carers report training does not meet their needs fully as they care for children with more complex needs.	Regular meetings with training take place regarding foster carer's needs and a member of the department is attending a foster carer consultation event this month to gather carers views. Foster carer compliance with training requirements is challenging across local authorities. We have reviewed processes to support, such as the Annual Review process and form to monitor foster carer agreement compliance and ensure that foster carers are

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	evidencing engagement in learning and development in accordance with requirements.
Additional guides for children reflecting different ages and needs to be developed.	Children's guides will be updated following the creation of the National Fostering Handbook expected September 2024; the handbook is being developed for all local authorities via Foster Wales.