

WORCESTERSHIRE
CHILDREN FIRST

Fostering



Worcestershire Children First Fostering
Annual report 2019-2020

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Fostering



- ▶ Wholly owned by Worcestershire Children First & WCC
- ▶ Not for profit, independent fostering agency registered from 01/10/2019
- ▶ The biggest provider of foster placements for Worcestershire Looked after children
- ▶ Over 250 foster carer homes
- ▶ Caring for 350 children at any one time
- ▶ Also have a role in assessing and care planning for children around kinship care

Key achievements 2019-2020

ILAC inspection July 2019

Successfully registering as an Independent Fostering Agency alongside Worcestershire Children First 'Go live'

Migration of all fostering households to Worcestershire Children First Fostering meaning we continue to be 'The Biggest Family in Worcestershire'

Embedding good practice in line with the expected National Minimum Standards for fostering

Proactive management of performance to ensure safe and happy homes for children and young people

Sufficiency of placements-continue to recruit and grow our service-key priorities continue to be placements for brothers and sisters; children over 5 and teenage young people.

Learning and development for foster carers



- ▶ We have continued to build on the rapid progress we have made in the previous quarter to increase the scope and range of learning and development opportunities for our foster carers. We have a wide range of learning opportunities for our foster carers and each foster carer has their own learning and development plan which is bespoke to their skills and experience, specific to help them meet the needs of specific children in their care and also to develop carers skills in line with developing their ability to care for a range of children with different backgrounds and experiences.
- ▶ Our training offer has been reviewed and we are able to offer a range of ways to deliver training flexibility including face to face daytime courses as well as evening, weekend and online alternatives to ensure that carers have a variety of options to chose from to develop their skills and abilities.

Our training programme can be read in full here:

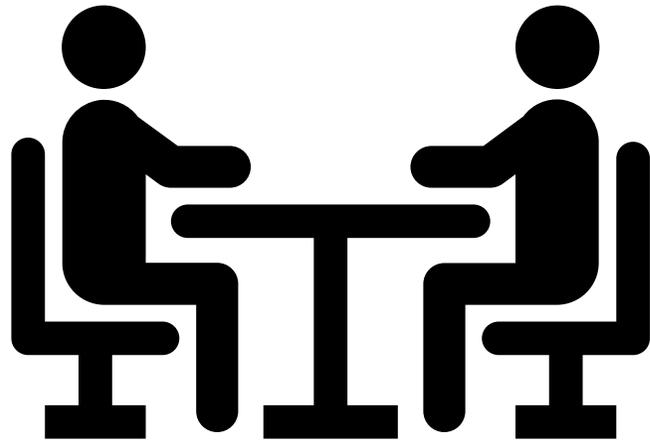
http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20726/training_and_support/2080/training_and_development

Supervision and Support to our Fostering Community

We know lots and lots of carers who all work with Worcestershire Children First Fostering and it is a strong and friendly community. We either meet at events and training or even just for coffee and a chat. It's nice to have people close by who foster with the same company, share the same values and are willing to help and support each other."

Tim & Joanna Crow

- ▶ Foster carer support groups take place across the county and around the year, supported by our supervising social workers
- ▶ Foster carer Forums have been established to allow foster carers to have a formal dialogue with the management team to collaborate towards making improvements to our services for the benefit of children
- ▶ Foster carers are consulted to take part as stakeholders in decisions that affect them eg. Procuring independent advice and mediation contract awarded to Foster Talk
- ▶ Foster carer buddies scheme
- ▶ Foster carers help fostering recruitment through information events and in facilitating preparation training for prospective foster carers
- ▶ Duty social workers and wrap around emergency duty support is available 24/7
- ▶ Foster carers can access 24/7 counselling through their membership to Foster Talk



Quality of Supervision for social workers

► Improving Quality of Social worker Supervision:

1. It is our practice standard that all social workers in the fostering and kinship

service should receive monthly management supervision with their line manager.

2. Supervision audits take place to ensure that social workers are receiving supervision. At March 2020, social worker supervisions were showing as 93.8% taking place in timescale. This will continue to be monitored as a performance indicator on a monthly basis.

3. The Fostering service now also has a performance Dash Board which monitors case management supervision for each fostering family to ensure that there is management oversight recorded clearly on each case.

4. Whole service audit takes place to ensure timeliness of social work supervision

5. Quality of staff supervision and management oversight is reviewed through

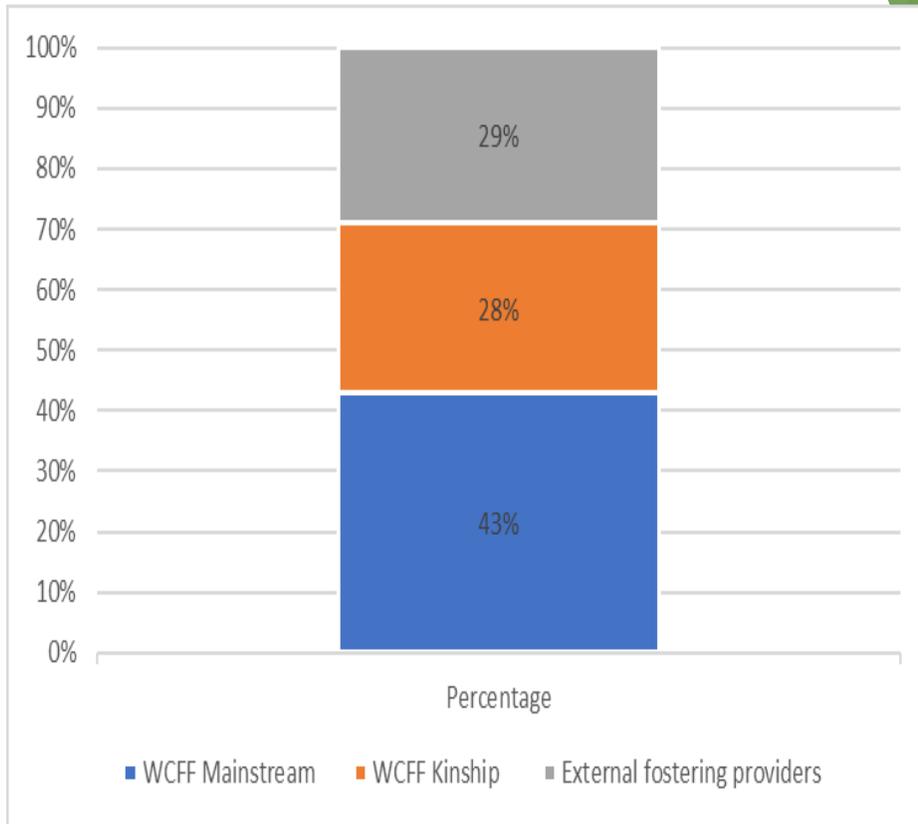
our quality assurance processes including looped and thematic audits.



Recruitment and approval of carer for WCFF 2019-2020

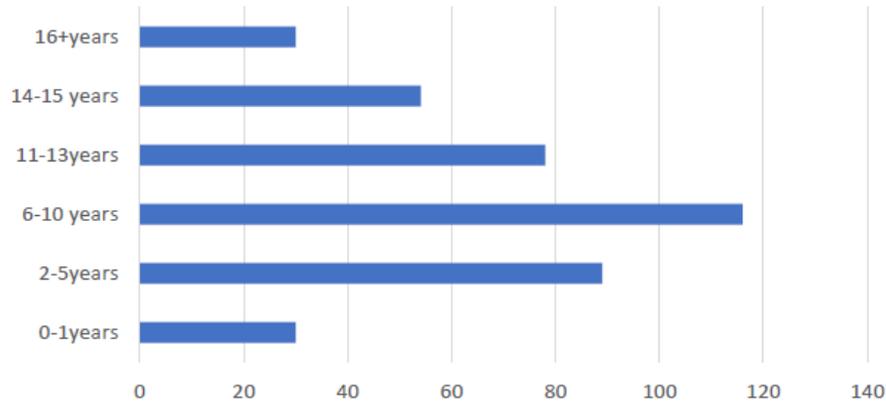
- ▶ This brings the Total of Mainstream Assessments concluding in approved foster carers during 2019-2020 to 22 households providing up to 26 additional Foster placements.
- ▶ This brings the total of kinship approved carers during 2019-2020 to 26 new households providing foster placements for 43 specific children
- ▶ We have over 250 approved foster carers looking after around 350 children at any one time!

Sufficiency of placements Biggest Family in Worcestershire

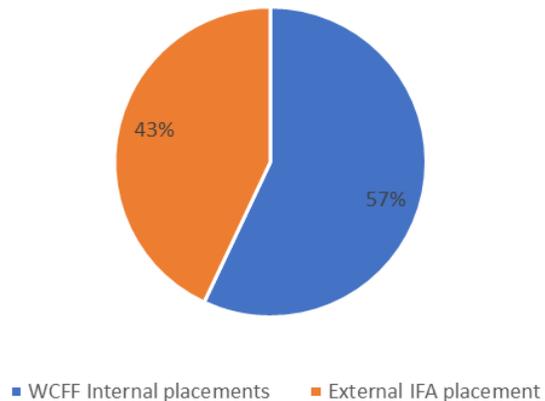


- ▶ WCFF have provided a total 339 new foster placements for looked after children during the year April 2019-March 2020 which is 50.43% of all new placements required during the year.
- ▶ We continued to provide foster placements to 316 children during 2019-2020. This means we provided foster placements to a total of 655 children during 2019-2020.
- ▶ This breaks down as WCFF providing 71% of all foster placements needed during 2019-2020 which is shown in the graph below.
- ▶ Our occupancy is around 83% at 31/03/2020.

Number of children placed with WCFF carers by age breakdown for 2019-2020



Total Inhouse to external split 2019-2020



Challenges to sufficiency

- ▶ Resignations across the year from mainstream fostering households
- ▶ Competition from Independent Fostering Agencies based in the west midlands area
- ▶ Available foster placements have reduced due to covid pandemic.
- ▶ We continue to need more placements for older children and brothers and sisters than we are able to provide

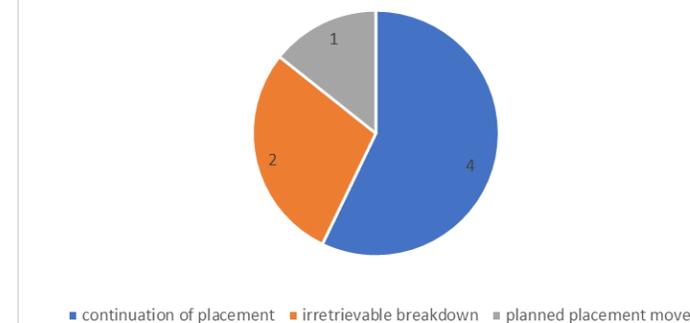
Compared with Number of disruptions from IFA Placements

Date	No of external foster placements ending	Number of disruptions	% of external placements ending because of disruption
2019/20 Q1	54	8	14.80%
2019/20 Q2	31	6	19.40%
2019/20 Q3	26	0	0.00%
2019/20 Q4	23	12	52%
Total	134	26	19.40%

Number of disruptions from In-house Foster Placements 2019-2020

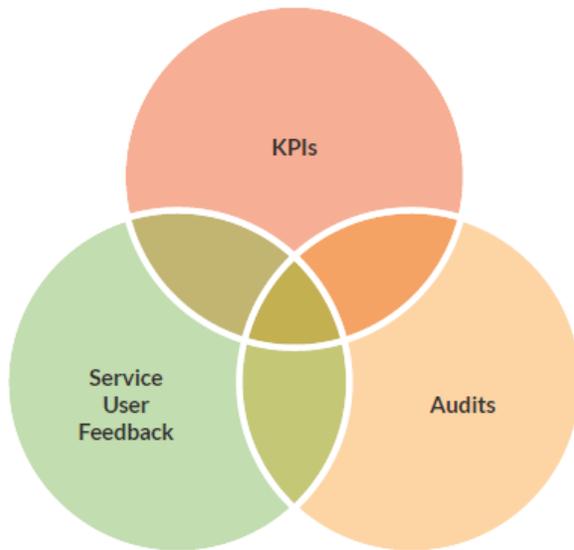
Date	No of inhouse placements ending	Number of disruptions	% of inhouse placements ending because of disruption
2019/20 Q1	72	7	11.10%
2019/20 Q2	70	11	15.70%
2019/20 Q3	67	2	2.90%
2019/20 Q4	58	4	6.90%
Total	203	25	12.31%

Outcome of consolidation meetings



Work to prevent Disruptions

- ▶ This demonstrates a lower rate of inhouse disruptions at 12.31% compared to IFA placement disruptions at 19.40% in the year to date.
- ▶ Consolidation meetings have been positive and reduced unplanned placement endings
- ▶ Many planned placement endings are in the best interests of children in line with their care plan
- ▶ Each placement ending is reviewed
- ▶ Case learning reviews are being embedded

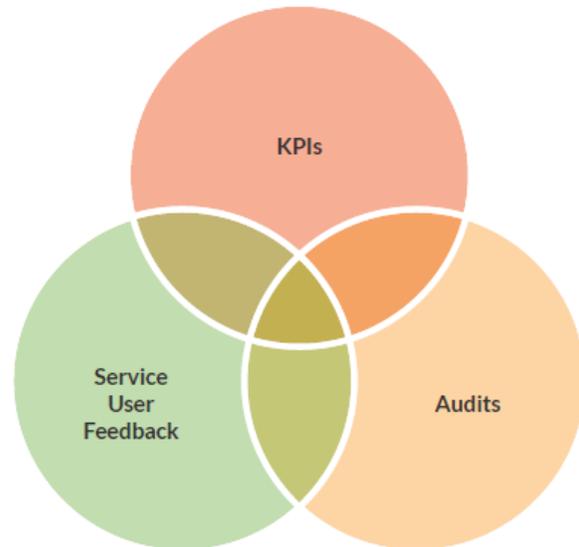


Monitoring of Children's progress in the care of WCFF

- ▶ WCFF aim to ensure that Foster carers are suitably experienced and well prepared to care for children. Our service assesses suitability of prospective fostering families for prospective unrelated and connected kinship carers.
- ▶ Our service ensures that prospective carers are supported to fulfil their role of providers of family foster placements for children.
- ▶ The progress that children make in the care of foster carers is monitored through support and supervision of foster carers by their supervising social workers. Professional supervision of foster carers helps to ensure children are making expected progress in line with their aspirations and their care plan.
- ▶ There is management oversight of the progress that children are making and oversight of the development and progress that foster carers are making in meeting children's needs and that they receive timely support in times of need.
- ▶ The registered manager has specific responsibility to oversee many aspects of the care of children, including statutory monitoring of notifiable events, which are set out in the full annual report.
- ▶ This allows trends and themes to be picked up and responded to in a strategic way for the improvement and development of the service and to ensure there is oversight of significant incidents for children including incidents in relation to children's health, incidents of children going missing, incidents of physical restraint.

Quality Assurance at WCFF

Key Performance Indicators

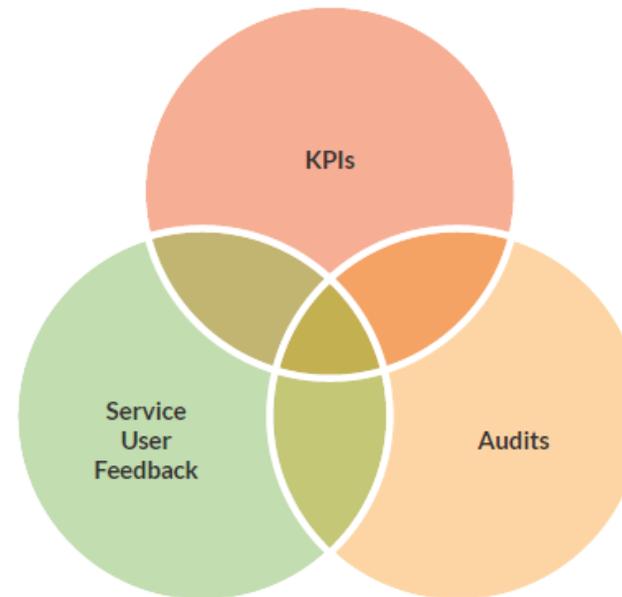


- ▶ The key performance areas for the service are:
- ▶ Mainstream assessments completed in 16 weeks
- ▶ Kinship assessments completed in 12 weeks
- ▶ Viability assessments completed in 10 working days
- ▶ Reg 24 assessments to be completed in 16 weeks
- ▶ Annual reviews completed in 12 months
- ▶ Training and development standards completed in 12 months for mainstream foster carers and 18 months for kinship foster carers
- ▶ Foster & Kinship carers to receive Formal Supervision every 12 weeks
- ▶ Foster and Kinship carers to receive support visits in line with their plan (Monthly/6 weekly or 3 monthly intervals or more frequent depending on needs)
- ▶ Social workers receive monthly personal and case management supervision
- ▶ There should be 2 unannounced visits per household per year

Quality Assurance at WCFF

Key Performance Indicators

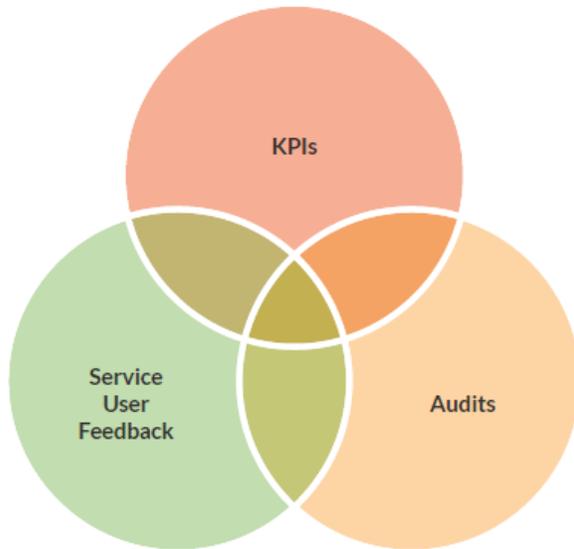
- ▶ There have been huge improvements in most areas in relation to our practice KPIs from the start of the year. This tells us that there has been an increase in timely practice which has meant that we have a better understanding of our carers and how they are in turn meeting the needs of children and also receiving timely advice, support, supervision and that we are continuing to monitor learning and development plans to continue to develop carers understanding and skills to meet the needs of looked after children.
- ▶ Where service performance dashboards have been embedded, there is continued evidence of service improvement and consistent management oversight of performance and ensuring that the correct data can be easily monitored for performance purposes is a priority during Q1 2020-2021.
- ▶ The service performance improvements have continued at pace and the teams deserve to be credited for striving to improve timeliness and quality of practice.

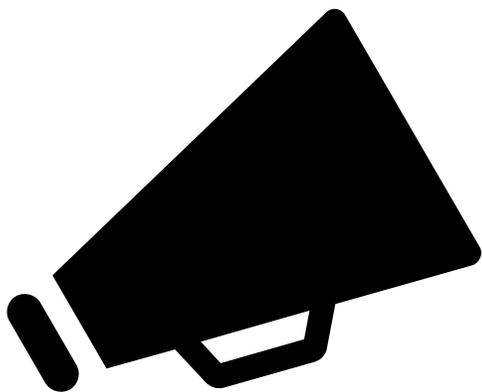


Quality Assurance

Service User Feedback

- ▶ Voice of the child
- ▶ Voice of the parents
- ▶ Voice of the Foster carers
- ▶ Voice of relevant professionals





We listened to 253 children who told us about their experience of living in their foster placements

The majority of young people provided positive feedback in a variety of ways

Voice of the child

- ▶ End of placement feedback
- ▶ Feedback as part of annual reviews
- ▶ As part of visits and direct work with children
- ▶ What they tell their IRO and social workers
- ▶ Complaints
- ▶ Compliments
- ▶ Allegations

Voice of the Child

Allegations & complaints

We know that allegations have increased across our service.

Each allegation made is treated seriously and safeguarding procedures are followed and appropriate investigations are carried out. The children's welfare is paramount. Foster carers receive support through this time.

Our number one priority is to ensure all children and young people are safe and cared for by well prepared foster carers who have the appropriate experience and support to meet children's needs

Challenges for WCFF:

What does this mean to the service?

What could have prevented this, if anything?

Where do we go from here?

- ▶ Excellent assessment & robust review
- ▶ Management oversight
- ▶ Tracking progress of children
- ▶ Understanding children's views, and those of their parents and other relevant professionals such as social workers, IROs and schools



Foster Carer Feedback

FOSTER CARER & KINSHIP CARER FEEDBACK
for Worcestershire Children First Fostering

We are pleased to share with you the recent results from our Kinship and Mainstream Foster Carer feedback survey. Seeking your views is helpful in informing our practice and areas for development and we are very pleased with the feedback we have received. I am particularly proud of the Social Workers, Managers and our Business Support Team who are working extremely hard and with great passion to support you day to day.

Statement	Rated by	Average Rating
1. I AM WELL SUPPORTED IN MY ROLE	51 Responders	4.29
2. IF MY SOCIAL WORKER IS NOT AVAILABLE, I KNOW HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH SOMEONE ELSE FOR HELP AND ADVICE	51 Responders	4.45
3. I HAD GOOD PREPARATION FOR THE ROLE	44 Responders	3.80
4. I HAVE ACCESS TO GOOD QUALITY AND RELEVANT TRAINING	51 Responders	4.51
5. I FEEL MY VIEWS AND OPINIONS ARE SOUGHT AND TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN MY ROLE	51 Responders	3.80
6. I HAD CHILDREN PLACED WITH ME THAT MATCHED MY STRENGTHS	51 Responders	4.47
7. MY OWN DEVELOPMENT AND AREAS OF WEAKNESS ARE SUPPORTED THROUGH MY SUPERVISION AND ANNUAL REVIEWS	51 Responders	4.31
8. I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BUILD A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH MY FOSTERING SOCIAL WORKER	51 Responders	4.69
9. FOSTERING A CHILD HAS BEEN A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR MY FAMILY	49 Responders	4.57
10. BEING A KINSHIP CARER HAS BEEN A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR MY FAMILY	24 Responders	3.71
11. OVERALL, WHAT IS YOUR VIEW AND EXPERIENCE OF BEING A FOSTER CARER OR KINSHIP CARER FOR WORCESTERSHIRE CHILDREN FIRST FOSTERING	51 Responders	4.04

Thank you for those of you who took the time to complete the survey. We had a great response to the survey with over 50 responses and our lucky winner of the £20 Amazon voucher was Ben Finnie. We are of course continually striving to improve our Service and one way in which we will be doing this moving forward will be to introduce Foster Carer Forums which is an exciting chance to keep in touch and share your views and represent Kinship and Mainstream Foster Carers. More information about how you can get involved in Foster Carer Forums can be found in the article on the following page.

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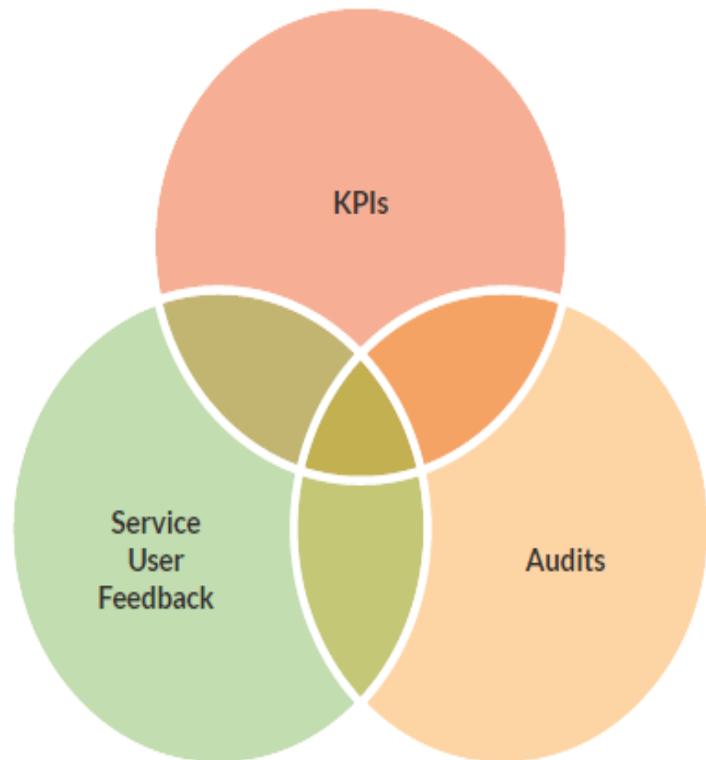
- ▶ We have received feedback from our foster carers on 542 occasions this includes
- ▶ Annual Survey
- ▶ Learning and development review
- ▶ Feedback as part of annual review
- ▶ Feedback as part of supervision
- ▶ Feedback as part of foster carer forums

What have children's parents said about our service?

- ▶ All parents of looked after children in the care of WCFF should be invited to share their views about how their children are being cared for as part of foster carer annual reviews. Feedback has been sporadic over some time and during
- ▶ During Q4, formal feedback from parents has been obtained in 5 cases out of 74 situations, which is only 7% which is unacceptably low.
- ▶ During Q1 2020 a new 'snap survey' will be introduced to improve accessibility for parents to provide feedback using a mobile friendly app to complete a feedback questionnaire for parents. It is hoped that this will increase the number of feedbacks provided and also improve the quality of the feedback in line with the national minimum standards and fostering regulations.
- ▶ Unfortunately a planned event to consult with parents in Partnership with Onside Advocacy Service about how best to obtain their views and feedback had to be cancelled due to the covid-19 lockdown. However, with support from onside advocacy we intend to consult with some parents virtually during Q1 2020-2021 to ensure that we are maximising the opportunities to get feedback from parents about the care of their children whilst placed with WCFF foster parents.

Feedback from Children's Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers

- ▶ All professionals working alongside children and their carers should be invited to share their views as part of their assessments and annual reviews. Feedback has been sporadic over some time and during Q3 this has been the same.
- ▶ During Q3 all social workers and IRO were invited to take part in a survey about WCFF. 18 people responded and the summary of this feedback can be found <https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=hxj0rDe900WeZUfN5I3IWuvpp2albidHvHQfucVOSLIURUc0VEFJMzdFMEw1N0ZXSTlZV05UWjhCSi4u&AnalyzerToken=OjthRTohqbcuhaVdCHaz6RmCQHRSz4Sk>
- ▶ This feedback was mostly positive and has been shared with the fostering teams and will be repeated again during 2020.
- ▶ During Q1 2020 a new 'snap survey' will be introduced to improve accessibility for social workers to provide feedback using the Coram BAAF Form FR questionnaire for professionals. It is hoped that this will increase the number of feedbacks provided and also improve the quality of the feedback in line with the national minimum standards and fostering regulations.
- ▶ During Q4, feedback from other professionals has become a KPI, therefore I am able to report that the following:
- ▶ During Q4, feedback from professionals including IROs and Social workers for the child was provided in respect of 16 of 66 annual reviews **which is only 24%**. We hope that through changing the way in which we seek out this feedback will improve this in the next quarter and we are introducing snap surveys to improve accessibility for social workers and IROs as their views are really important to ensuring children are happy, healthy and safe.



Audits

- ▶ Quality assurance audits are embedded into practice.
- ▶ There is a range of audit activity including:
 - ▶ Social worker case audits
 - ▶ Team Manager Looped and moderated audits
 - ▶ Registered Manager Audit
 - ▶ Thematic Audit including
 - ▶ Independent Fostering Panel Chair Audit
 - ▶ Audit by Agency decision maker
- ▶ Learning from Audits is used to inform practice improvement so that it improves experiences and welfare of the children looked after by WCFF.

Staffing

- ▶ Staff are employed by WCF but work within the remit of WCFF
- ▶ All staff are subject to supervision, appraisal and continuing professional development
- ▶ There is a stable staffing group have been working hard and with increases in demand to deliver a quality service
- ▶ Staff have been embedding changes in line with our business plan
- ▶ New development opportunities have been created for social workers and we have provided additional training to introduce ADSAN-independent living award for young people preparing for independence
- ▶ We have introduced CEOP ambassadors to champion online safety with our foster carers.

Conclusions

There has been rapid service development to promote excellence in caring for children and to support the children in our care to be happy, healthy and safe.

During the first 6 months of operating, around 250 Worcestershire foster carer households have provided foster placements for around 350 looked after children at any one time.

This is by far the biggest provider of foster care placements for Worcestershire's looked after children and the majority of children have excellent care and tell us that they are happy.

We are proud to be the 'biggest fostering family in Worcestershire' and we are developing and improving the supportive network around our foster carers.

We also hold our foster carers up to very high standards, and we are challenging and supportive to enable carers to be carefully and suitably matched with children.

We know that fostering is incredibly challenging, therefore we seek to support and help our carers to develop the skills and resilience that they need to be the best and safe carers for our children.

As we move forward into 2020-2021, we do so with a vision to continue to build upon the hard work and successes that have been achieved this year.

Covid-19

Statement of purpose-ways in which we operate



Emergency response-how we know children are happy, healthy and safe



Contingency planning

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Questions
are
welcomed