

WORCESTERSHIRE CHILDREN
FIRST FOSTERING:

**SERVICE IMPROVEMENT
PLAN 2021-2022**

Children & Families Overview
and Scrutiny Panel

23 February 2022

WORCESTERSHIRE
CHILDREN FIRST
Fostering



WCFF Background

- WCFF was registered as an Independent Fostering Agency on the 1st October 2019.
- Ofsted carried out an Assurance Visit between 16-17 December 2020, where no serious or widespread concerns identified.
- During these Inspections, WCFF as an Independent fostering agency must meet the requirements of the Fostering Regulations 2011, and the Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011.
- If we do not, Ofsted identify clearly what must be done by setting out requirements, compliance or enforcement action.
- Ofsted use recommendations to indicate where practice can improve, and these are always related to the relevant NMS and regulation/s mentioned above.

WCF Independent Fostering Service Ofsted Inspection 20-24 September 2021

Ofsted carried out a full Inspection of Worcestershire Children First Fostering between 20-24 September 2021.

- Overall, the Inspection judgement given was “Requires Improvement to be Good”
- The inspection of fostering services is reviewed in three key areas, and each is graded independently with an overall judgment reached.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account:

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

inadequate

WCFF IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Plan on a Page - Level 1

| Worcestershire Children First Independent Fostering Agency Improvement Level One Plan 2021 -2022 | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| Requirements - Fostering Service Regulations | | | | Recommendations - National Minimum Standards | | |
| Regulation 3.1: Statement of purpose and children’s guide | | Regulation 27: Foster Carer approval and agreement meet regulation. | | Standard 13: Recruiting and assessing foster carers who can meet the needs of looked after children | | |
| Regulation 8.1: Registered person – general requirements | | Regulation 31: Register of Foster Carers | | | | |
| Regulation 11 (a): the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster parents is safeguarded and promoted at all times. | | Regulation 35: Review and monitoring of quality of care. Voice of the Child. Consultation with Child about the care they receive. Regulation 36: Notable events. Notification, management, and updates. | | Standard 15: Matching the child with a placement that meets their assessed needs | | |
| Regulation 18.4: A written record is made of any complaint or representation, the action taken in response to it, and the outcome of the investigation. | | | | Standard 16: Statement of purpose and children’s guide | | |
| Regulation 20: Safer Recruitment of Staff and Panel Members | | | | Standard 21: Supervision and support of foster carers | | |
| Fostering Improvement Workstreams Improvement & Business Sponsor: Assistant Director - Permanency - Care Proceedings, Fostering & Adoption | | | | | | |
| Workstream 1 | Workstream 2 | Workstream 3 | Workstream 4 | Workstream 5 | Workstream 6 | Workstream 7 |
| SAFER CARING PLANS & RISK ASSESSMENT (Reg 11, 36 & Std 15) | NOTIFIABLE EVENTS (Reg 11, 36) | QUALITY ASSRANCE AND PERFORMANCE (Reg 3.1, 8.1, 18.4, 31 & Std 16) | SAFER RECRUITMENT/FOSTER CARER -WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (Reg 20) | VOICE OF THE CHILD & VIEWS AND EXPERIENCE OF PARENTS (Reg 35) | FOSTER CARER RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT & SUPPORT AND THE VOICE OF FOSTER CARERS (Std 13, 21) | APPROVAL/MATCHING FOSTER CARERS (Reg 27 & Std 15) |
| LEAD: Team Manager Manager: Team Manager Membership: Independent Reviewing Officer, Children and Young People, Foster Carers, Learning and Development | LEAD: Team Manager Manager: Team Manager/ Group Manager Membership: Local Authority Designated Officer, Emergency Duty Team Manager, Business Analyst | LEAD: Team Manager Manager: Team Managers Membership: Independent Reviewing Officer, Children and Young People | LEAD: Interim Group Manager/L&D Advisor/L&D Manager/Fostering Panel Manager Membership: Foster Carer, Through Care Services, Learning and Development Team, Worcestershire Children First Comms Team | LEAD: Team Manager Manager: Team Manager/Recruitment & Retention Officer/Interim Group Manager/Fostering Panel Manager Membership: Children and Young People, Independent Reviewing Officer, Foster Carer, Looked After Children Team Manager, Fostering Social Worker | LEAD: Recruitment & Retention Officer/Team Manager Manager: Team Manager Membership: Foster Carer, Children and Young People, Worcestershire Children First Comm) | LEAD: Team Manager/ Fostering Panel Manager Manager: Team Manager Membership: APPROVALS: Panel Chair and Vice, Chair, Panel Members, Panel Adviser, Agency Decision Maker, Team Managers MATCHING: Team Managers, Children and Families Social Worker |
| Workstream Membership | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Children & Young PeopleFoster CarersIndependent Reviewing OfficerWCF Safeguarding Social WorkersWCF IFA Social Workers | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">WCF Business Team/Liquid LogicWCF Management InformationWCF Communications TeamWCC Learning & Development | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">WCC HR Operational & Delivery Team/Social Work OpportunitiesVirtual School HeadteacherSEND and Vulnerable LearnersFostering Panel Chair & Fostering panel | | |
| Cross Cutting Themes | | | | | | |
| Safeguarding | | Quality Assurance | | Communication | | Performance and Monitoring |

WS1: SAFER CARING PLANS & RISK ASSESSMENT - ACTIONS/ACTIVITY

Workstream Lead: **Team Manager**

Regulation: **11, 36**

Standards: **15**

Audit of Safer Caring Plans and Risk Assessments by each Team Manager to assure risks are identified, mitigated, and reviewed.

Feb 22

Review and refresh the Safer Caring Plans and Risk Assessment template, develop Practice Guidance and cascade to WCFF via workshop.

Feb - Mar 22

Work with the WCF Development Team to add the Safer Caring Plans and Risk Assessments data to the WCFF Performance Dashboard to allow greater scrutiny, review, and monitoring by Team Managers.

Feb 22 - Completed

Develop module and deliver mandatory Core Offer Safer Caring and Risk Assessment Workshop Training to all WCFF SW staff.

Mar - Apr 22

Outcome/Progress Measure

Through the Monthly Audit Programme and Annual Review ensure that;

- every Child and Young Person has a Safer Caring Plan and Risk Assessment in place which contains all the relevant information and are updated to reflect changing needs and risks.
- every Safer Caring Plan and Risk Assessment contains clear strategies to support Foster Carers in managing risk.

WS2: NOTIFIABLE EVENTS - ACTIONS/ACTIVITY

Workstream Lead: **Team Manager**

Regulation: **11, 36**

Audit of active allegations against carers/Schedule 7 events by WCFF Team Managers to ensure compliance and completion of identified actions.
Nov 21 - Completed

Review WCFF Agency's current schedule 6/7 notifiable events policy and forms.
Dec 21 - Completed

Audit of Local Authority Designated Officer referrals, allegations against Foster Carers, and notifications within the past 12 months by WCFF Team Managers. Identify patterns and trends, recommendations for leaning and service development. Cascade learning to WCFF/WCF.
Feb - Mar 22

Update Practice Guidance for Schedule 6/7 in the Fostering handbook and cascade new guidance to WCFF staff and Foster Carers.
Mar 22

Develop and embed a Targeted Audit Form of notifiable incidents that can be used as a Quality Assurance tool to capture learning from allegations, complaints, and notifications.
Apr 22

Develop process in Liquid Logic to enable effective management of all Notifiable Incidents, Allegations and complaints made against Foster Carers, with Managers signing off the Form and the Registered Manager has final oversight of all outcomes and incidents.
May 22

Outcome/Progress Measure

Through the Monthly Audit Programme, Annual Review and Targeted Audits ensure that;

- All Schedule 7 events that are required to be reported to Ofsted are in line with Reg 36
- Registered Managers will have the ability to audit and monitor notifiable events via Liquid Logic
- Recommendations and actions are recorded in an auditable manner and the Registered Manager to have final signoff.

WS3: FOSTERING INFORMATION/PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD - ACTIONS/ACTIVITY

Workstream Lead: **Team Manager**

Regulation: **3.1, 8.1, 18.4, 31**

Standard: **16**

Review and update
WCFF Agency
Statement of Purpose
and Children's Guide.

Establish a WCFF
Agency Foster Care
Register.

Dec 21 - Completed

Refresh and Update
the WCFF Agency
Complaints Policy and
establish a WCFF
Agency Complaints
Tracker and process of
Review.

Dec 21 - Completed

Further develop and
launch WCFF Agency
Quality Assurance
Framework.

Apr 22

Audit all care placement
breakdowns and
planned terminations,
and review patterns and
trends, to identify
learning and Service
development.

Mar 22

Review, update and
embed WCFF Agency
Performance
Dashboard, inclusive
of Liquid Logic
Reporting Function.

Mar 22

Monitor the matters
set out in Sch. 6,
improving the quality
of foster care provided
by WCFF Agency and
complete the Reg. 35
Report.

Apr 22

Outcome/Progress Measure

Reports to Ofsted and WCF Board

WCFF Complaints Tracker and
Outcomes
Report

Programme of Audit Activity –
Quarterly Reports

Monthly KPI Monitoring

WS4: SAFER RECRUITMENT, FOSTER CARER & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS/ACTIVITY

Workstream Lead: **Team Manager (Interim Registered Mgr)**

Regulation: **20**

Audit staff HR records
Jan 22 - Completed

Undertake retrospective
Safer Recruitment
Checks and Risk
Assessments in line with
the Safer Recruitment
Procedure.
Feb 22

Develop a comprehensive
Training Matrix of
mandatory and optional
training requirements for
all staff and Foster Carers,
and design and embed
training tracker to capture
all training completed by
staff and Foster Carers,
including management
specific training.
Mar 22

Develop and embed a new
WCFF Agency Safer
Recruitment Guidance and
Checklist for Team Managers.
Jan 22 - Completed

Develop and deliver Safer
Recruitment training module
to Team Managers.
Feb 22

Undertake gap analysis of
Foster Carer training needs
through annual reviews and
feedback from Fostering Panel
and develop a marketing
strategy to promote the Foster
Carer Training Offer through
social media campaigns,
articles in the Foster Carer
newsletter and via Foster Carer
Forums.
Start Date Apr 22

Review and evaluate the
impact of Foster Carer
training to understand
the quality of care
provided to children and
develop an escalation
Policy for tackling Non-
Completion of required
training by foster carers.
Feb - Mar 22

Team Managers to
complete a training gap
analysis of specialist
fostering training for all
WCFF staff. Develop and
commission specialist
Fostering training core offer
for all WCFF SW's. e.g.,
Fostering Regulations and
Fostering NMS, undertaking
assessments and
supervising Foster Carers.
Apr 22

Outcome/Progress Measure

Team Managers will have oversight of all training completed and planned by Social Workers and can plan future training needs across the Service, for individual members of the Team and Foster Carers.

Social Workers to have oversight of training of Foster Carers.

Increased number of Foster Carers completing training in the mandatory timeframes to ensure they have the tools and approaches needed to support a child in their care.

Skilled staff greater understanding of the children we look after and how we support them.

Numbers of Foster Carers taken through training escalation process.

WS5: VOICE OF THE CHILD - ACTIONS/ACTIVITY

Workstream Lead: **Team Manager**

Regulation: **3.5**

Set up quarterly engagement meetings with Who Cares We Care Forum to enable sharing of views and feedback from C&YP about how they would like to be supported in their placements, generate ideas, and look at ways of how they would like WCFF Agency to positively engage with them.

Jan 22 - Completed

Review and update WCFF Quality Assurance Framework. This will include looped and themed audit activity, focusing on quality of assessments and the Voice of the Child.

Apr 22

Review, refine and promote Annual Survey to collect Children and Young People's views and feedback to enable us to measure improvement, inform service planning and development.

Mar 22

Consult and engage with C&YP who Looked after Children in the development and launch of a WCFF C&YP Quarterly Newsletter.

Mar - Apr 22

Implement Practice Standard in Direct Work with Children in foster care placements, ensuring that Fostering SW's complete 1 session of Direct Work every 12 weeks with children in WCFF placements, focusing on day to day lived experience and quality of care in placement for C&YP. This activity will feed into the Foster Care Annual Review.

Develop WCFF Direct Work case note in Fostering Liquid Logic Pathway.

Record feedback, observation, and the feelings of children from Fostering Social Worker reviews. These should be made at least every 12 weeks.

Apr 22

Outcome/Progress Measure

Themed audit and looped audit activity.

C&YP feedback to Foster Carer Annual Reviews.

Complaints/Complements received from C&YP.

C&YP feedback from WCFF engagement sessions.

WS6: FOSTER CARER RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT & SUPPORT - ACTIONS/ACTIVITY

Workstream Lead: Recruitment & Retention Officer /Team Manager

Standard: **13, 21**

Undertake review of all marketing, promotional and information resources including online and social media presence.
Dec 21 - Completed

Review the current assessment process ensuring the focus is on the Carer journey as well as managing the realistic expectations of WCFF Agency, regards to support, supervision, and training.
Dec 21 - Completed

Complete and Launch the WCFF Recruitment Strategy.
Dec 21/Jan 22 - Completed

Develop and Launch the Carer Ambassador Scheme to support Foster Carer's, incorporating the Voice of the Carer into the Service Improvement Plans.
Jan 22 - Completed

Establish face to face annual support groups for Approved Foster Carers.

Embed the Buddy Foster Carer Scheme.
Launch Mar 22

Outcome/Progress Measure

Improved engagement through analysis of recruitment/performance and online activity.

Increase number of enquiries to the Service.

Succinct and quality assured assessment process and in timescales.

Evidence of a positive experience when engaging with the Service through feedback.

WS7: APPROVAL/MATCHING FOSTER CARERS - ACTIONS/ACTIVITY

Workstream Lead: **Team Manager/Fostering Panel Manager**

Regulation: **11, 36**

Standards: **15**

Review the ADM Process to ensure process is robust and timely ensuring effective time management for Panel.

As part of induction Programme ADMS to attend and observation of Fostering Panel at least annually.

Jan 22 - Completed

Develop on-line WCFF ADM Induction Programme for all new AMDs to improve their understanding of the approval process, legal framework, and documentation.

Jan - May 22

Review and update WCFF Carer Agreement in accordance with Sch. 5.
Develop process of issuing WCFF Carer Agreement and managing returns.

Jan 22 - Completed

Undertake a targeted Fostering Panel recruitment campaign to appoint a more sustainable and diverse panel.

Undertake gap analysis of Panel Members training needs and design and embed Training Tracker to capture all training completed by Panel Members.

Feb - Mar 22

Review and refresh the existing Matching Form to assist with better collaborative working between child's Social Worker and WCFF Agency, thereby ensuring the Child's needs are fully met and evidenced.

Mar 22

Identify and strengthen support offer available to both in County and out of County Foster Carers through, matching them with "Buddies", providing specific training, regular contact with Fostering Social Workers etc.

Produce guidance for Social Workers and develop checklist.

Mar 22

Outcome/Progress Measure

ADM completing feedback in relation to the quality of the work they receive and opportunities for improvement in relation to the Q & A role of panel.

Every ADM to observe a panel annually.

Dip sample a case monthly looking at ADM rationale, collecting and collating feedback from panel members regarding the ADM rationale.

Panel Member to have undertaken all training identified to ensure they are able to fulfil their role.

Diverse membership of Panel Members.

Forward plan of cases to be managed effectively to ensure effective time management at Panel.

Foster Carer Feedback to evidence they are receiving the support they need.

Any Questions?



Photos of Planned Monthly Activities