

WORCESTERSHIRE CHILDREN
FIRST FOSTERING:

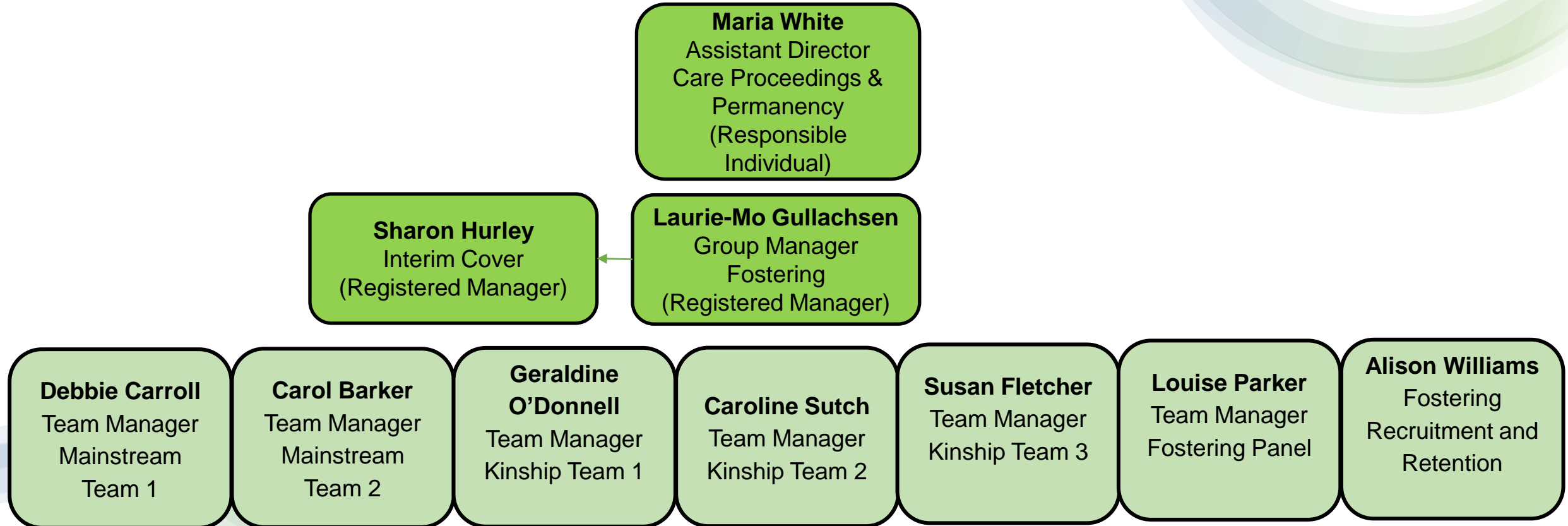
SERVICE IMPROVEMENT
PLAN 2021-2022

Corporate Parenting Board
February 2022

WORCESTERSHIRE
CHILDREN FIRST
Fostering



WCFF Leadership Team



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.

Ofsted Inspection 20-24 September 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: Requires improvement to be good

“Managers have not yet adapted to operating as a fostering agency” – Lack of clarity about Roles and Responsibilities.

“Foster Carers’ experience of support and supervision from the fostering agency is mixed.”

“Despite the shortfalls identified, children are making progress. This is because of the care and commitment of their foster carers, who ensure that children make progress in all areas of their life. Children feel part of their foster family. They are happy and settled, they enjoy a range of activities and have positive experiences of family life.”

How well children and young people are helped and protected: Requires improvement to be good

“Safe Care Plans and Risk Assessments for children remain inconsistent in quality and content”

“There continue to be omissions in the safe recruitment of staff. Managers do not have clear oversight of recruitment arrangements”

“Foster carers have access to a range of training. This includes training to support their understanding of a range of safeguarding themes. There continues to be a group of foster carers who do not access this training. Managers have plans to address this, supported by a specific staff member who has oversight of training and development for foster carers. As a result, this is an improving picture.”

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: Inadequate

“Managers rely heavily on systems established during the previous operating model of the fostering service. This significantly restricts managers’ oversight of the fostering service at all levels.”

“The fostering agency does not have a foster carer register”

“Managers have still not implemented a system that enables them to consistently monitor serious incidents or report these to Ofsted in a timely way.”

“Staff receive regular supervision that enables them to reflect on their practice.”

“The recent introduction of a specialist recruitment officer is aimed at improving this area of the service.”

“Management oversight of complaints is not consistent, and records do not include details of all of the complaints”.

“Staff feel well supported by managers and have manageable caseloads.”

“Managers ensure that the assessments of prospective foster carers are sufficiently detailed. This enables the fostering panel to make a recommendation of suitability.”

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.		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.		Regulation 36: Notable events. Notification, management, and updates.		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: Maria White Change Manager: Liz Dutton						
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 ASSURANCE 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: Geraldine O'Donnell Manager: Debbie Carroll Membership: Independent Reviewing Officer, Children and Young People, Foster Carers, Learning and Development	LEAD: Debbie Carroll Manager: Susan Fletcher, Laurie-Mo Gullachsen Membership: Local Authority Designated Officer, Emergency Duty Team Manager, Business Analyst	LEAD: Susan Fletcher Manager: Geraldine O'Donnell/Debbie Carroll Membership: Independent Reviewing Officer, Children and Young People	LEAD: Sharon Hurley Manager: Doe Goodwin/Serina Hadley/Louise Parker Membership: Foster Carer, Through Care Services, Learning and Development Team, Worcestershire Children First Comms Team	LEAD: Caroline Sutch Manager: Susan Fletcher/Alison Williams/Sharon Hurley/Louise Parker Membership: Children and Young People, Independent Reviewing Officer, Foster Carer, Looked After Children Team Manager, Fostering Social Worker	LEAD: Alison Williams/Carol Barker Manager: Caroline Sutch Membership: Foster Carer, Children and Young People, Worcestershire Children First Comm)	LEAD: Carol Barker/Louise Parker Manager: Susan Fletcher 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 People Foster Carers Independent Reviewing Officer WCF Safeguarding Social Workers WCF IFA Social Workers 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCF Business Team/Liquid Logic WCF Management Information WCF Communications Team WCC Learning & Development 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCC HR Operational & Delivery Team/Social Work Opportunities Virtual School Headteacher SEND and Vulnerable Learners Fostering Panel Chair & Fostering panel 		
Cross Cutting Themes						
Safeguarding	Quality Assurance		Communication		Performance and Monitoring	

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

Workstream Lead: **Geraldine O'Donnell**

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.

Jan 22

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

Feb 22

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

Feb 22

Identify and commission a fostering training provider to deliver mandatory Core Offer Safer Caring and Risk Assessment training to all WCFE SW staff.

Feb/Mar 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: **Debbie Carroll**

Regulation: **11, 36**

Audit of active allegations against carers/Schedule 7 events by WCFE Team Managers to ensure compliance and completion of identified actions.

Nov 21 - Completed

Review and update WCFE Agency's current schedule 6/7 notifiable events policy and forms.

Apr 22

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

Feb/Mar 22

Update Practice Guidance for Schedule 6/7 in the Fostering handbook and cascade new guidance to WCFE 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: **Sue Fletcher**

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 WCFF
Agency Quality
Assurance Framework.

Feb 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: **Sharon Hurley**

Regulation: **20**

Audit staff HR records and undertake retrospective Safer Recruitment Checks and Risk Assessments in line with the Safer Recruitment Procedure.

Feb 22

Develop and embed a new WCFF Agency Safer Recruitment Guidance and Checklist for Team Managers. Develop and deliver Safer Recruitment training module to Team Managers.

Feb 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

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

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

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: **Caroline Sutch**

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 WCCF Agency to positively engage with them.

Jan 22

Review and update WCCF 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

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 WCCF 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 WCCF 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

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

Mar/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 WCCF engagement sessions.

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

Workstream Lead: **Alison Williams/Carol Barker**

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

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

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: **Carol Barker/Louise Parker**

Regulation: **11, 36**

Standards: **15**

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

Develop on-line WCFE ADM Induction Programme for all new to improve their understanding of the approval process, legal framework, and documentation, inclusive of observation of Fostering Panel.

Start Jan 22

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

Jan 22

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

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.

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

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



Any Questions?



Photos of Planned Monthly Activities