

# Action Plan

This Action Plan has been completed by the Provider and the Authority has not made any amendments to the returned Action Plan.

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|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Provider's response to Monitoring Report No:</b> | MON -0018891                      |
| <b>Name of Service Area:</b>                        | Dublin South East / Wicklow       |
| <b>Date of inspection:</b>                          | 7 February 2017 – 9 February 2017 |
| <b>Date of response:</b>                            | 22 May 2017                       |

These requirements set out the actions that should be taken to meet the identified child care regulations and *National Standards for Foster Care*.

## Theme 2: Safe and Effective Services

### Standard 10 Safeguarding and child protection

#### Moderate non-compliance

#### The provider is failing to meet the National Standards in the following respect:

Garda Síochána (police) vetting was not updated for all foster carers within the required timeframe.

There was no evidence that all foster carers were trained in Children First (2011) and in safe care practices.

The system for notifying the foster care committee of allegations against foster carers or of serious or adverse incidents, in order to provide oversight of the investigations that were carried out, was not followed in all cases.

There were delays in reports such as disruption reports and outcome reports following the investigation of allegations being presented to the foster care committee.

#### Action required:

Under **Standard 10** you are required to ensure that:  
Children and young people in foster care are protected from abuse and neglect.

#### Please state the actions you have taken or are planning to take:

- 1 Updated Garda vetting of all relevant carers is currently being completed. Our database of Garda Clearance for Carers will be updated to include the renewal date required to ensure updated clearances are processed on time. Garda Clearances will also be updated as part of the foster care review process. Audits will take place on a bi- annual basis to ensure full compliance. This was completed on 28/04/17.
- 2 An audit has commenced of all foster carers training in respect of Children First and safe care practices. Training will be provided by the fostering teams and/ or sourced through Workforce Learning and Development for those carers who have not received this training. The training audit will be completed by 30/06/17 and the training schedule is currently being put together by the team. We plan to commence delivery of training in September 2017.
- 3 In line with national procedures we have implemented the notification procedures required to notify the Foster Care Committee of all allegations/ serious welfare concerns reported in respect of foster carers, within the required timeframe. This was implemented on 03/04/17. Teams have been issued an instruction regarding the need to submit disruption reports in a timely manner to the Foster Care Committee. Meetings will be convened on a bi- annual basis between the social

work department and the Chairperson of the Foster Care Committee to analyse and reflect upon the contents of these reports and identify and address any themes emerging. Learning arising will be shared and discussed at social work team meetings and contribute to on- going professional development and service planning. First meeting will be held by 30/06/17.

- 4 Outcome reports will be tracked by Chair of FCC and reminders issued to PSWs if needed to ensure a timely response is provided.

| <b>Proposed timescale:</b> | <b>Person responsible:</b>                          |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>1 28/04/17</b>          | <b>PSWs for CIC and Fostering Team Leaders</b>      |
| <b>2 29/09/17</b>          | <b>PSWs for CIC and Fostering Team Leaders/WFLD</b> |
| <b>3 03/04/17</b>          | <b>PSWs for CIC and FCC Chair.</b>                  |
| <b>4 03/04/17</b>          | <b>FCC Chair</b>                                    |

**Standard 14b Assessment and approval of relative foster carers**

**Moderate non-compliance**

**The provider is failing to meet the National Standards in the following respect:**

The assessments of relative foster carers were not carried out in a timely manner.

**Action required:**

Under **Standard 14(b)** you are required to ensure that:

Relatives who apply, or are requested to apply, to care for a child or young person under Section 36(1)(d) of the Child Care Act, 1991 participate in a comprehensive assessment of their ability to care for the child or young person and are formally approved by the health board\*.

**Please state the actions you have taken or are planning to take:**

- 1 The 21 assessments of relative carers are currently all in assessment and allocated to link workers. The progress of assessment is currently being monitored by the PSW every month to ensure assessments are progressing in a timely manner. Assessments which have not been completed within regulation time frames will be notified to the Area Manager by the Principal Social Worker. We will seek additional resources to assist with the assessments if not able to allocate any new requests. The funding for private fostering assessments if required has been agreed as of 03/04/17.
- 2 The recruitment of staff to a number of fostering vacancies is actively being progressed and vacancies are expected to be filled by 29/05/17. With full staffing levels in place the teams will be in a better position to complete assessments and plan to complete them by 29/09/17

**Proposed timescale:**

**1 29/09/17**

**Person responsible:**

**PSW CIC, Fostering Team Leaders and Link workers.**

\*Formally known as Health Boards at time of writing Standards, now known as the Child and Family Agency (Tusla)

## **Standard 15      Supervision and support**

### **Substantially compliant**

#### **The provider is failing to meet the National Standards in the following respect:**

There were some foster carers that remained on the panel of foster carers even though they had not had children placed with them in a number of years, they had not had a foster carer review and they had not been visited in the previous six months.

Formal supervision of foster carers was not carried out in line with the national policy.

There was no programme of support groups for foster carers provided by the area.

There was no dedicated out-of-hours service to support foster carers outside of office hours.

#### **Action required:**

Under **Standard 15** you are required to ensure that:

Approved foster carers are supervised by a professionally qualified social worker. This person, known as the link worker, ensures that foster carers have access to the information, advice and professional support necessary to enable them to provide high quality care.

Please state the actions you have taken or are planning to take:

- 1 A foster care review will take place on the 4 families identified during the course of the inspection who remained on the foster care panel, have not had a child placed with them in a number of years, have not had a review and have not been visited in the previous six months. Letters of assurance have been provided to HIQA in respect of this commitment. These will be completed by September 2017.
- 2 While supervision is taking place regularly with carers and is recorded on files, formal supervision of foster carers has now been implemented. It will take place 4 times a year in line with National Policy and will be recorded on a formal supervision sheet. Oversight of this process takes place by Fostering Team Leaders in monthly supervision with team members. This has been implemented in areas as of 03/04/17.
- 3 A programme of training which will also offer avenues of group support to foster carers by the fostering team will be implemented at quarterly intervals throughout the year. Oversight of this programme will be undertaken by Principal Social Workers in monthly supervision meetings. A training and support programme will be developed by 28/07/17 once feedback from carers training needs analysis is received and collated.

- 4 Tusla nationally is actively exploring the provision of an out- of- hour's social work support service to foster carers. Planned implementation in July 2017, subject to negotiations with trade unions.
- 5 When issues arise during the day for foster carers in respect of children placed in their care, link social workers and/ or team leaders agree to maintain contact with the carers concerned throughout the evening and until the issue is resolved, for the evening in question. This support is currently in place.

| <b>Proposed timescale:</b> | <b>Person responsible:</b>                            |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1 29/09/17                 | PSWs for CIC, Fostering Team Leaders, Link workers    |
| 2 03/04/17                 | PSWs for CIC, Fostering Team Leaders and Link workers |
| 3 28/07/17                 | PSWs for CIC , Fostering Team Leaders                 |
| 4 28/07/17                 | COO, Tusla  |
| 5 03/04/17                 | Fostering Team Leaders and Link workers               |

## Standard 16 Training

### Moderate non-compliance

#### The provider is failing to meet the National Standards in the following respect:

There was no overall training strategy for foster carers.

A comprehensive training needs analysis had not been carried out.

There was no structured programme of training in place.

There were no overall training records for foster carers and the training records of individual foster carers were not well maintained.

#### Action required:

Under **Standard 16** you are required to ensure that:

Foster carers participate in the training necessary to equip them with the skills and knowledge required to provide high quality care.

#### Please state the actions you have taken or are planning to take:

- 1 A comprehensive training strategy for foster carers is currently being devised by the fostering teams which shall be implemented on a quarterly basis, when finalised. This will be completed by 28/07/17 and reviewed every year.
- 2 A questionnaire has been sent to all foster carers to identify training needs and responses received will help inform the Area's Training Plan along with the mandatory training requirements. We will review feedback from carers by 30/06/17
- 3 A Link Social Worker will be identified in July 2017 on each of the fostering teams to co- ordinate the roll- out of training over a twelve month period in consultation with the Team Leaders.
- 4 A central training database will be created to capture the training records of each foster carer. A training log has been placed on each foster carer's file for regular review and updating. File audits will be undertaken to ensure full compliance with this area of recording. This work is in process with completion by 19/05/17.

#### Proposed timescale:

1 28/07/17

#### Person responsible:

PSWs for CIC and Fostering Team Leaders



|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>2 30/06/17</b> | <b>PSWs for CIC and Fostering Team Leaders.</b> |
| <b>3 28/07/17</b> | <b>Fostering Team Leaders and Link workers.</b> |
| <b>4 19/05/17</b> | <b>PSWs for CIC and Fostering Team Leaders</b>  |

## **Standard 17      Reviews of foster carers**

### **Major non-compliance**

#### **The provider is failing to meet the National Standards in the following respect:**

There was no system in place to ensure that comprehensive reviews of foster carers were carried out in line with the Standards.

The majority of foster carers had not had a foster carer review for more than three years.

There was no evidence that foster carers were given a copy of their review report when it was completed.

Not all review reports were completed in a timely manner and not all had clear timeframes for the completion of recommendations.

#### **Action required:**

Under **Standard 17** you are required to ensure that:

Foster carers participate in regular reviews of their continuing capacity to provide high quality care and to assist with the identification of gaps in the fostering service.

#### **Please state the actions you have taken or are planning to take:**

- 1 The Area has started work on ensuring that comprehensive reviews of foster carers are carried out in line with the National Standards. We have set out a timetable for the completion of overdue foster care reviews and of all foster carers as required over the next eighteen months. Updates will be provided to HIQA in May 2017 and every 3 months thereafter.
- 2 Monitoring of the progress made regarding reviews will be tracked in monthly supervision meetings. Additional Team Leader support has been recruited to support the implementation of this work.
- 3 All foster carers shall receive a copy of their review report when completed. The recording of this action shall be written on the foster carers' review report. This action shall be inspected through regular file audits.
- 4 All review reports shall be completed in a timely manner and timeframes for the completion of recommendations will be made clear. These actions will be reviewed through file audits and presentation of report to the Foster Care Committee.

| <b>Proposed timescale:</b> | <b>Person responsible:</b>                     |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>1 10/08/18</b>          | <b>PSWs for CIC and Fostering Team Leaders</b> |
| <b>2 03/04/17</b>          | <b>PSWs for CIC and Fostering Team Leaders</b> |
| <b>3 03/04/17</b>          | <b>PSWs for CIC and Fostering Team Leaders</b> |
| <b>4 03/04/17</b>          | <b>PSWs for CIC and Fostering Team Leaders</b> |

## Theme 4: Leadership, Governance and Management

### Standard 23 The Foster Care Committee

#### Moderate non-compliance

#### The provider is failing to meet the National Standards in the following respect:

There was no induction programme or training programme in place for members of the foster care committee.

There was no up-to-date Garda Síochána (police) vetting on file for each of the foster care committee members.

There were no regular reports from the foster care committee to the principal social worker.

There was a lack of clarity in relation to whose responsibility it was to place the names of foster carers on the panel of foster carers.

Notifications of allegations, serious or adverse incidents, or breaches of the national Standards, were not always made to the foster care committee in a formal way or in a timely manner.

There was no system in place for tracking the progress of allegations against foster carers.

There was no single, integrated record of the panel of foster carers that contained all the information required by the national policy, procedure and best practice guidance.

#### Action required:

Under **Standard 23** you are required to ensure that:

Health boards\* have foster care committees to make recommendations regarding foster care applications and approve long-term placements. The committees contribute to the development of health boards'\* policies, procedures and practice.

#### Please state the actions you have taken or are planning to take:

- 1 The area will have a representative group of the Foster Care Committee to induct new members to the committee. Similarly, the FCC will continue to provide "in-house" training to the FCC members, the next such training is scheduled for 01/06/17. The area manager has also requested training support for FCC members and has enquired with WFLD regarding training they can access. The FCC Chair will also share learning from observations of other committees in Dublin Mid Leinster to ensure best practice.

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\* Formally known as Health Boards at time of writing Standards, now known as the Child and Family Agency (Tusla)

- 2 Updated Garda vetting was completed by FCC members in February 2017 and submitted to the Garda Vetting Unit.
- 3 A three monthly report for 2017 is nearing completion for the period January to March 2017 and will be forwarded to the Area Manager and PSW's by 14/04/17. Subsequent quarterly reports will be compiled by the FCC Chair, the aim of which is to contribute to the development of Tusla's Policies procedures and practice.
- 4 The Area Manager has provided the required delegation documentation to the Foster Care Committee Chair in relation to placing foster carers on foster care panel. This was completed on 28/04/17
- 5 It will be necessary for the Principal Social Workers to ensure that their staff complies with the Policy Procedures and Best Practice Guidance in relation to their responsibility to notify the FCC of allegations, serious and adverse incidents, and breaches of the national standards in a formal and timely manner. A reminder has been issued to staff regarding this issue. Forms have been circulated and implemented in areas as of 03/04/17
- 6 All allegations are now being acknowledged by the Co-ordinator on behalf of the FCC Chair. Notifications of allegations, serious incidents will be kept on file by the Co-ordinator (for the purpose of tracking progress). The Co-Ordinator, if necessary, will issue reminders for the presentation of the final outcome. The area will convene a meeting between the FCC chair and the PSWs on a bi annual basis to review all allegations against foster carers until the point that an outcome is reached.
- 7 The data bases in relation to foster care services both within the area and with the Foster Care Committee will be reviewed to ensure that these are in compliance with national policy and best practice guidance. A meeting will be convened by the area manager with the FCC chair, Principals Social Workers and Child Care Information Officers in relation to this by 30/06/17.

| <b>Proposed timescale:</b> | <b>Person responsible:</b>     |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>1 15/09/17</b>          | <b>FCC Chair and WFLD</b>      |
| <b>2 16/06/17</b>          | <b>FCC Chair</b>               |
| <b>3 14/04/17</b>          | <b>FCC Chair</b>               |
| <b>4 28/04/17</b>          | <b>Area Manager</b>            |
| <b>5 03/04/17</b>          | <b>PSWs for CIC</b>            |
| <b>6 03/04/17</b>          | <b>FCC Chair and PSWs CIC.</b> |
| <b>7 30/06/17</b>          | <b>Area Manager</b>            |

## Theme 5: Use of Resources

### Standard 21 Recruitment and retention of an appropriate range of foster carers

#### Moderate non-compliance

#### The provider is failing to meet the National Standards in the following respect:

There was no overall recruitment strategy in place for the recruitment of foster carers.

There was no overall retention strategy in place for the retention of foster carers.

There was an insufficient number and range of foster carers in place to meet the demands of the service.

There was no evidence that the panel of foster carers was reviewed periodically to ensure that there was an appropriate number and range of foster carers to meet the needs of children.

#### Action required:

Under **Standard 21** you are required to ensure that:

Health boards\* are actively involved in recruiting and retaining an appropriate range of foster carers to meet the diverse needs of the children and young people in their care.

#### Please state the actions you have taken or are planning to take:

- 1 RAFT regional team is responsible for recruitment of general foster carers in the DML region. A Principal Social Worker for this team has been successfully recruited and is to take up post in May 2017.

The agreed priority plan for the RAFT PSW will be to:

- Undertake a regional needs analysis with the fostering teams in the region.
- Develop a service plan for RAFT, outlining plans and targets in relation to recruitment.
- Implement a regional recruitment campaign for completion in September 2017.
- Support areas in the development of bespoke campaigns for individual children.

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- 2 A retention strategy will be formally developed by the 29/05/17 and this information shared within the area.
- 3 A needs analysis will be completed by RAFT PSW with the area.
- 4 The needs analysis will review our current panel of carers to identify the range and number of carers we require to meet the needs of children in our care.

| <b>Proposed timescale:</b> | <b>Person responsible:</b>                     |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>1 September 2017</b>    | <b>RAFT PSW</b>                                |
| <b>2 29/05/17</b>          | <b>PSWs for CIC and Fostering Team Leaders</b> |
| <b>3 30/06/17</b>          | <b>RAFT PSW</b>                                |
| <b>4 30/06/17</b>          | <b>RAFT PSW and CIC PSW's</b>                  |