

Action Plan

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

Provider's response to Inspection Report No:	757
Name of Agency:	Five Rivers Fostering Services Ireland
Date of inspection:	19/04/2016 to 28/04/2016
Date of response:	04/07/2016 (accepted response)

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

Theme 1: Child Centred Services

Standard 3

Requires improvement

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

There was no clear guidance on how children could access information on their files.

Action required:

Under **Standard 3** you are required to ensure that:

Children and young people are treated with dignity, their privacy is respected, they make choices based on information provided to them in an age-appropriate manner, and have their views, including complaints, heard when decisions are made which affect them or the care they receive.

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

- 3.1. Five Rivers will make improvements to the current children's guides. This will include clear information in relation to how children and young people can access information on their files. Five Rivers will also include the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in child friendly language in the booklets.
- 3.2. The electronic system has been updated to ensure that it can be clearly evidenced when the children's guide is provided to the young person.
- 3.3. Five Rivers will ensure that all link workers speak directly to the young people when providing them with the booklets and advise them about the content. Special consideration will be given to supporting children or young people with learning disabilities so that they can understand the information they are given. Where English is not the first language of the child or young person, an interpreter can be used. Similarly sign language or recorded information can be provided to children with hearing or visual impairments. Training will be provided to staff to ensure that there is an improvement in the recording of contact with children that takes place.
- 3.4. Children's social workers will also receive a copy of the guide.
- 3.5. Children and young people will also be provided with a leaflet from EPIC, the organisation that supports young people in care. Five Rivers will continue to involve EPIC in our training of foster carers and our family support days.

Proposed timescale:

- 31 July 2016
- Completed 16 June 2016
- 30 September 2016
- 30 September 2016
- 30 September 2016

Person responsible:

- Operations manager
- Database administrator
- Team leaders and Link social workers
- Team leaders and Link social workers
- Link workers and Training coordinator

Standard 4

Requires improvement

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

The service had an insufficient number of culturally appropriate placements, given that over 50% of the children in the foster care placements were from a diverse ethnic, cultural and religious background.

Foster carers had not received specific cultural awareness training.

Action required:

Under **Standard 4** you are required to ensure that:

Children and young people are provided with foster care services that take account of their age, stage of development, individual assessed needs, illness or disability, gender, family background, culture and ethnicity (including membership of the Traveller community), religion and sexual identity.

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

- 4.1. Five Rivers will expand the training in relation to Traveller Culture that has taken place to date to ensure that it is offered to carers across the country.
- 4.2. A workshop is currently being prepared in relation to African cultures. This will be provided to carers across the country.
- 4.3. Training will be identified in relation to European cultures also.
- 4.4. Five Rivers will continue to target recruitment of carers from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. This is an ongoing challenge. Where possible, children will be placed in culturally appropriate placements. Where this is not possible, Five Rivers' link workers ensure that foster carers receive information and training that is relevant to the specific culture and ethnicity of the child being placed. Improvements will be made in how this is recorded.
- 4.5. Five Rivers will hold a Celebration of Culture Day at our premises in Kilkenny. This will harness the wide range of cultures that we have within our organisation.
- 4.6. Training in relation to supporting children with disabilities will continue to be devised in the future. New training on dyslexia being devised will be provided to carers and staff this year. It is hoped that this will improve on the dyslexia training which has already taken place. Training and consultation will continue to be made available to carers who are caring for children with specific disabilities or medical conditions.
- 4.7. Five Rivers encourages applications to foster from suitable adults regardless of culture, ethnicity or sexual orientation. This will be continued indefinitely. Link workers have received training in assessing gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender applicants. Previous training in sexuality and relationships to be delivered again.

Proposed timescale:

- 31 December 2016
- 30 October 2016
- 30 November 2016
- 31 December 2016
- 5 November 2016

Person responsible:

- Training coordinator
- Team leader
- Training coordinator
- Operations manager
- Training coordinator

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 September 2016 • 30 November 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education coordinator and Training coordinator. • Psychologist and Link worker
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Theme 2: Safe and Effective Services

Standard 8

Requires improvement

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

There was no formal system in place to match children to appropriate foster carers.

Action required:

Under **Standard 8** you are required to ensure that:

Children and young people are placed with carers who are chosen for their capacity to meet the assessed needs of children or young people.

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

- 8.1. Five Rivers will improve the Matching Policy. This will include reference to the matching tools which exist within the database for recording, improved recording of pre-placement meetings and risk assessment processes.
- 8.2. Five Rivers has begun to hold referrals meetings. These are attended by link social workers, team leaders and a member of the therapeutic team. The purpose of these will be to consider what supports could be made available in the event of a placement being offered.
- 8.3. Five Rivers will provide training to all link workers to ensure that they are very clear about the matching procedures and how these are to be recorded.
- 8.4. Five Rivers will ensure that information provided to foster carers in advance of a placement is evidenced better in the recording system.
- 8.5. Care plans and other reports will be robustly followed up by link social workers and where necessary team leaders. This will be clearly evidenced in recording.

Proposed timescale:

- 30 July 2016
- Commenced 21 June 2016
- 30 July 2016
- 30 June 2016
- 30 June 2016

Person responsible:

- Managing director
- Operations manager and Team manager
- Managing director
- Team leaders and Link social workers
- Team leaders and Link social workers

Standard 14

Requires improvement

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

Assessments of foster carers were not always carried out in a timely manner as outlined in the regulations and standards.

Action required:

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

Foster care applicants participate in a comprehensive assessment of their ability to carry out the fostering task and are formally approved by the health board prior to any child or young person being placed with them.

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:

- 14.1. Team leaders will endeavour to support staff to prioritise assessments.
- 14.2. Improvements have been made to administration supports for link workers carrying out assessments. This includes checklists and support in relation to carrying out checks and obtaining relevant documentation.
- 14.3. Completion of fostering assessments in a timely manner will be included as a performance issue for link social workers. Given that many assessments can be complex, the organisation believes that between 12 and 20 weeks are acceptable timescales for completion of assessments.
- 14.4. Where there are delays, these will be discussed with link workers and applicants and the reasons for the delay clearly identified and recorded on the carers file and in staff supervision records.

Proposed timescale:

- Completed
- Completed
- 31 December 2016
- 31 July 2016

Person responsible:

- Team leaders
- Team leader and Administration team
- Team leaders
- Team leaders

Standard 17

Requires improvement

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

Not all foster carer reviews were conducted as required by the regulations and standards.

Foster Care Committees were not informed of the outcomes of foster carer reviews.

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:

- 17.1. An audit will be undertaken in relation to foster carer reviews. Carers who are behind in their reviews will be identified.
- 17.2. There are a number of reviews currently before Foster Care Committees. Team leaders will ensure that all reviews are sent to the Foster Care Committee.
- 17.3. All outstanding reviews will be undertaken within three months. Any reviews which have not been submitted to the Foster Care Committee will be sent within four weeks.
- 17.4. The diary system will be used to ensure that future reviews are carried out within the required timescale and sent to the Foster Care Committee.

Proposed timescale:

- 30 June 2016
- 30 August 2016
- 30 August 2016
- Immediate

Person responsible:

- Team leader
- Team leaders and Team manager
- Team leaders and Team manager
- Link social workers

Theme 3: Health and Development

Standard 11

Requires improvement

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

There was limited medical information on children's files.

Foster carers were not adequately trained where necessary in the safe administration of medication.

Action required:

Under **Standard 11** you are required to ensure that:

The health and developmental needs of children and young people in foster care are assessed and met. They are given information, guidance and support to make appropriate choices in relation to their health and development.

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

- 11.1. Five Rivers is currently sourcing training for carers in relation to infectious diseases.
- 11.2. An additional module will be added which will cover safe administration of medication. This will be delivered nationally this year.
- 11.3. In relation to children and young people's physical and mental health, the following workshops are currently provided:
 - Eating patterns of children in care
 - Self harm
 - Drugs awareness
 - Safe talk and Assist training
- 11.4. Where a family is required to care for a child with specific medical needs, they receive information in relation to the management of the issues. This includes more specific training in relation to administering special medication, feeding tubes, training in the use of any relevant equipment. This will be better evidenced on carer's files.
- 11.5. First Aid continues to be delivered to all foster carers. This will also be made available to young adults in foster families. A first aid module will also be offered to both birth children and young people in care aged over 12 years.

Proposed timescale:

- December 2016
- December 2016
- April 2017 (to be rolled out nationally)
- 12 July 2016
- April 2017

Person responsible:

- Training coordinator
- Training coordinator
- Training coordinator
- Team leader and Link workers
- Training coordinator

Theme 4: Leadership, Governance and Management

Standard 19

Requires improvement

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

The Emergency Placement of Safety service (EPS) required more robust coordination to ensure its effectiveness.

Risk management systems were not sufficiently developed.

Case supervision records did not clearly record actions agreed, timeframes and persons responsible.

Actions agreed at staff meetings were not routinely monitored to ensure follow up.

Action required:

Under **Standard 19** you are required to ensure that:

Health boards have effective structures in place for the management and monitoring of foster care services.

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

- 19.1. At the time of inspection, Five Rivers had advertised internally for a senior practitioner to oversee the delivery of the Emergency Placement Services. This position has been filled and the candidate commenced their role on 1 June 2016.
- 19.2. The senior practitioner has compiled a comprehensive pack for all on-call social workers to inform and guide them through the referral process. This has been completed and will be circulated to the team immediately.
- 19.3. The senior practitioner will have oversight of trends and issues arising within the service and will be reporting to directors in relation to these issues.
- 19.4. The directors will oversee the development of a robust Risk Management Policy across the organisation. Risk Management will be added as a standard agenda item to the management meetings and the team meetings to ensure that all staff are aware of and understand the importance of the Risk Management Policy. Written guidance will be provided in relation to the risk rating (RAG) system that is in place to monitor the stability of placements.
- 19.5. All staff and managers have received training in supervision and a new supervision policy has been developed. The supervision forms will be revised to better evidence agreed actions and review of same from previous supervisions.
- 19.6. Minutes of team meetings have been revised to ensure that there is better evidence and review of actions agreed at team meetings.

Proposed timescale:

- Completed 1 June 2016
- 15 July 2016
- 1 June 2016
- 30 July 2016

Person responsible:

- Managing director and Operations manager
- Senior practitioner
- Senior practitioner

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 July 2016 • 15 June 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations manager • Team leaders • Senior administrators
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Theme 6: Workforce

Standard 20

Requires improvement

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

Appropriate professional registration for one member of staff was not in place.

Induction programmes were not clearly recorded on staff files.

There was no robust performance management or development system in place.

Action required:

Under **Standard 20** you are required to ensure that:

Health boards ensure that the staff employed to work with children and young people, their families and foster carers are professionally qualified and suitably trained.

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

- 20.1. The issue in relation to the professional registration of one staff member is being addressed. We are awaiting outcome from CORU in relation to the review of all documentation. This is at the final stages and an outcome is expected within weeks. Interim measures recommended by HIQA are in place to supervise and monitor the workload of this individual and to ensure that they have the relevant support until this issue is resolved. Five Rivers is in liaison with CORU in relation to this matter.
- 20.2. One team leader has developed an induction pack for link social workers. A pack is also being developed for all staff members. Staff members and managers will be required to sign that they have received full induction within one month of commencing employment. This will be recorded on their personnel files.
- 20.3. The managing director has developed a Performance Management System. This includes an individual performance plan for each staff member and annual appraisal form.
- 20.4. Specific training was identified for all managers in relation to managing people and performance management. This is DIT accredited. Two managers have attended this training in May 2016 and other managers will be attending these in July and August respectively.

Proposed timescale:

- 31 August 2016
- 30 July 2016
- 31 October 2016
- 31 October 2016

Person responsible:

- Team leader
- Team leaders
- Managing director
- All managers