

ACTION PLAN

Provider's response to Inspection Report No.	674
Name of Service Area:	Mid West
Service ID:	200-214-328
Date of inspection: DAY/MONTH/YEAR	11 /02/2014
Date of response: DAY/MONTH/YEAR	12/06/2014 (accepted)

REQUIREMENTS

Put in place a plan which addresses all deficits identified in this report including those relating to minor non-compliances not described in requirements below, taking into account the significance of the non compliances, the risks involved in them, when identifying timeframes and individuals responsible for actions.

Review the plan at regular intervals to ensure that progress is being made to address all non compliances.

These requirements set out the actions that should be taken to meet the identified child care regulations and *National Standards for Foster Care 2003*.

Theme 1: Individualised Supports and Care

Moderate non-compliance with Standard 3

The provider is failing to comply with standards in the following respect:

The management of complaints was not carried out in a timely manner. The complaints register did not record sufficient detail regarding the outcome of complaints.

Action 1 required:

Put in place a robust complaints procedure so that all concerns or complaints are listened to and issues raised are addressed in a timely and effective manner in accordance with the policy.

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

Timescale:

Provider's response:

Action 1:

A revised complaints register is being implemented and this will give sufficient detail regarding the tracking and outcome of complaints.

Performance
Manager
Q3 2014

Theme 2: Effective Services

Major non-compliance with Standard 11

Not all children had access to specialist supports in a timely manner.¹

Action 2 required:

Provide access to specialist support services based on assessed needs in a timely manner.

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

Timescale:

Provider's response:

Action 2:

There will be a local research initiative undertaken to clarify and quantify the reasons why foster children are currently awaiting or in need of specialist or therapeutic services in the Mid West Area.

Area Manager
Q3 2014

Following analysis of this data, the Area Manager will convene a series of meetings with the relevant Heads/ Leads in the therapeutic services under the Memorandum of Understanding between CFA/ HSE to try and ensure children in foster care get timely priority access to assessment and therapy. It is recognised that, with such a high number of children waiting therapeutic and specialist mental health assessment and intervention plans, the foster placements will continue to be vulnerable and risk escalation will happen where necessary.

Area Manager
Q3 2014

It is planned that there will be a local procurement process for a panel of private clinical psychologists who can take on mandated assessments and therapy work.

Area Manager
Q3 2014

Resubmit the internal Form B approval request with business case to the national control group to fill the vacant clinical psychology post for children in care. Risk escalation as required.

Area Manager
Q2 2014

¹ This relates to Standard 11 Health and Development. This standard was not addressed in detail during the inspection, however, not all children had timely access to services based on their assessed needs.

Moderate non-compliance with Standards 8/13/14b/15/16**The provider is failing to comply with standards in the following respect:**

There was no effective matching system to place children with suitable foster carers to meet their assessed needs.

A number of children were without an allocated social worker.

The policy on leaving care and aftercare was not fully implemented.

Preparation for leaving care and access to aftercare services was not timely and effective for all young people.

Assessments of relative carers were not timely.

The majority of foster carers had not been reviewed.

Not all foster carers had an allocated fostering link worker.

A wide range of training opportunities were provided to foster carers, however, the uptake was poor.

Action 3 required:

Put an effective matching system in place so that children are placed with suitable foster carers who are able to meet their needs within their approval status.

Action 4 required:

Provide a designated social worker for each child in foster care to supervise the child's placement and to carry out care planning.

Action 5 required:

The CFA Mid West should put in place an effective aftercare service to support all children leaving care.

Action 6 required:

Provide the necessary supports for children to prepare for leaving care and moving towards more independent living in a planned way.

Action 7 required:

Carry out good quality thorough assessments of foster carers

Action 8 required:

Put in place a system to review all foster carers and communicate the findings of the reviews to the foster care committee.

Action 9 required: Provide a link social worker for foster carers, information on roles, responsibilities and expectations in relation to contracts between all parties.	
Action 10 required: Put in place high quality supports and training for foster parents and relative carers.	
Please state the actions you have taken or are planning to take with timescales:	Timescale:
Provider's response: <u>Action 3:</u> A matching matrix has been developed to inform placement matching at the point of request. In addition to this, a matching report template has been developed to ensure that children requiring long-term placement are placed with appropriate families which will be examined by the Foster Care Committee under the National Foster Care Committee Policy, Procedures and Best Practice Guidance document. A placement meeting format, previously developed within the Mid West as part of the National Care Planning Project (NCP), is also available to staff, and can be used for placement meetings where action to address gaps in meeting specific needs or complex care plans can be examined further. Plans are underway for a national placement planning format developed for residential care to be used for fostering placements.	Fostering Manager, Foster Care Team Leaders Q3 2014 Principal Social Worker Duty Intake, Child Protection and Children in care Teams Q4 2014 Fostering Manager, Foster Care Team Leaders Q4 2014

<p><u>Action 4:</u></p> <p>Mid West Area Management meetings discuss vacancy management on a monthly basis and Principal Social Workers review on an ongoing basis any capacity to re-assign staffing resources.</p> <p>Submit and resubmit the internal Form B approval requests with business cases to the national control group to fill vacant children in care social work posts. Risk escalation will happen where necessary.</p>	<p>Area Manager, Regional Service Director and Child and Family Agency Control Group Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p><u>Action 5:</u></p> <p>The policy on leaving care and Aftercare will be fully implemented in line with the Implementation Plan.</p> <p>CFA Mid West is in a position to implement the roll of aftercare implementation plan within estimated Quarter 3 time scales. Some of the overall policy has been implemented since 2011 including use of new Aftercare plans.</p> <p>A briefing for foster carers took place in September 2013 organised with the Irish Foster Care Association (IFCA) which included information about the Aftercare Policy and Implementation Plan. A further meeting regarding the Aftercare Policy and implementation plan was held between IFCA representatives and CFA managers in March 2014.</p> <p>Training and information to be provided with Children in Care Social Workers, Fostering Workers, Aftercare staff regionally, young people in Aftercare and any other identified parties.</p>	<p>Principal Social Workers Children in Care Teams Q2 and Q3 2014</p> <p>Q3</p> <p>Children in Care Managers and Aftercare Team Leader Q2 and Q3 2014</p>
<p><u>Action 6:</u></p> <p>The vacant social care leader post in Aftercare was filled on April 7th 2014 following a three year delay due to cost containment. As a result there is no longer an unallocated waiting list in Limerick or North Tipperary. There are 2 young people on the waiting list in Clare who are due to be allocated shortly.</p>	<p>Principal Social Workers Children in Care Teams May 2014</p>

<p>An accommodation project between Aftercare and Focus Ireland was launched in August 2013 with the first young person moving into this. This project has staff support 7 days a week. To date 4 units are full with 6 young people and 3 of their children placed. The plan is to have 10 units.</p> <p><u>Action 7:</u></p> <p>A new assessment framework is to be implemented nationally in September 2015 . Assessment reports will continue to be monitored as part of the governance role of the Foster care committees. A business case is being prepared in relation to providing of resources to process assessment reports in a timely manner.</p> <p><u>Action 8:</u></p> <p>There is an Excel Datasheet which identifies and monitors foster carers who are due reviews. Reviews, where there are likely to be a change of approval status, to be submitted to the FCC.</p> <p>It will not be possible to improve compliance with the Standard in relation to reviewing all carers until the staffing resource improves. Priority is to support exiting foster carers and recruit new carers in order to relieve existing carers and meet the ongoing demand for foster care placements. This strategy has been developed to try to reduce placement breakdown and focus link work support where it is most acutely needed.</p> <p>Gaps in the reviewing process will be escalated in the Risk Register where key deficits are identified. A priority remains to prioritise reviews for foster carers where there have been complaints or allegations made against them.</p>	<p>Q3 2014</p> <p>Foster Care Committees and Fostering Manager Q2 and Q3 2014</p> <p>Foster Care Manager Area Manager Regional Service Director and Child and Family Agency Control Group Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Q2 2014</p>
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<p><u>Action 9:</u></p> <p>It will not be possible to improve compliance with the Standard in relation to providing a comprehensive link social worker service to every carer until the staffing resource improves. Vacancy levels in the link social work service remain very significant (currently 50% staffing capacity in Limerick, 72% in North Tipperary and 80% in Clare).</p> <p>We continue to prioritise work areas and support is offered to those carers without a link worker through the Fostering Duty Service. When the current vacancies are filled we should be in a position to offer a named link worker role to every foster carer.</p> <p>Submit and resubmit internal Form B approval requests with business cases to the national control group to fill vacant link social work posts. Risk escalation will happen when vacancy levels can evidence proportionate placement deficits.</p>	<p>Fostering Manager and Foster Care Team Leaders Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p><u>Action 10:</u></p> <p>Following a review of attendance and participation levels with the 2013 foster care training programme, the fostering teams are going to implement the training needs analysis process with foster carers and have a more targeted approach to training. Training on Children First, 2011 will be a compulsory part of each foster carer's training plan.</p>	<p>Fostering Manager and Foster Care Team Leaders Q3 and Q4 2014</p>

Theme 5: Leadership, Governance and Management

Moderate non-compliance with Standards 19/21/24

The provider is failing to comply with standards in the following respect:

The area did not have robust risk management plans in place.

There was no regular or formal monitoring of statutory and non-statutory foster care services.

The area did not have sufficient resources to meet the needs of all children requiring a service.

There was an insufficient staff resource in place to meet the needs of the service.

The area did not have an effective strategy for the ongoing recruitment and retention of foster carers.

Action 11 required:

Ensure that there are systems and processes in place to identify, analyse, prioritise and eliminate or minimise organisational risk relating to the service.

Action 12 required:

Carry out regular reviews of the quality and safety of care and support in the service and ensure that services are provided in accordance with the standards.

Action 13 required:

Put in place a robust system in order to deploy and monitor the use of resources, with sufficient flexibility to reallocate resources if required.

Action 14 required:

Put in place effective recruitment and retention strategies to maintain an appropriate range of foster carers.

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

Timescale:

Provider's response:

Action 11:

The CFA Mid West Area supported by the West Regional Quality Assurance Manager and Mid West Performance Manager have been reviewing our risk management approach to ensure appropriate usage of the risk management register.

Area Manager,
Performance
Manager
Q2 and Q3 2014

<p>Renewed Training in Managing Risk Register for all service managers has commenced. Also, risk register and tracking of risk management plans will become core agenda items for the Mid West Service Managers monthly meetings.</p>	<p>Q2 and Q3 2014</p>
<p><u>Action 12:</u></p> <p>The Local Mid West Inspector/ Monitor has taken up her role and position since early 2014. She initially concentrated on the residential care area and will now take on internal audits/ monitoring role for statutory and non-statutory foster care services.</p>	<p>Area Manager, Performance Manager, Inspection and Monitoring Officer Q3 2014</p>
<p><u>Action 13:</u></p> <p>See Action 5 in relation to timely access to therapeutic resources.</p> <p>Local Area Management and regional performance management meetings take place on a monthly basis with all relevant managers. There will be a robust focus at these meetings to review allocation of staffing resources, potential for any staffing redeployments and where necessary focus on risk escalation to Service Director and Chief Operations Officer where critical posts have remained vacant.</p>	<p>Area Manager</p> <p>Ongoing throughout 2014 and 2015</p>
<p><u>Action 14:</u></p> <p>An immediate short term business case will be made to deploy specific resources to assess foster care applicants who are awaiting assessment. A longer term sustainable recruitment strategy will be dependent on national/regional direction and staffing resources.</p> <p>An analysis of disruptions and the annual review of foster care services has included dispatch of semi-structured questionnaires to foster carers to engage them in providing formal feedback about the service. This report which is due for completion by the end of May will inform the Mid West retention strategy.</p> <p>Dependant on resources, there will be a renewed focus to ensure that exit interviews, foster carer reviews, link support and informal supports systems are in place.</p>	<p>Fostering Manager, Area Manager Q2 2014</p> <p>Q2 2014</p> <p>Ongoing</p>