

**Health Information and Quality Authority  
Regulation Directorate**

**Monitoring Inspection Report -  
Non-statutory Foster Care Services under  
the Child Care Act 1991 (as amended)**



<b>Name of Agency:</b>	Five Rivers Ireland	
<b>Dates of inspection:</b>	29-31 May 2018	
<b>No. of Fieldwork days:</b>	3	
<b>Lead inspector:</b>	Grace Lynam	
<b>Support inspector(s):</b>	Susan Geary Sabine Buschmann Ruadhan Hogan	
<b>Type of inspection:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Announced</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Unannounced</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Full</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Themed</b>	
<b>Monitoring event number:</b>	<b>0023993</b>	

## About monitoring

The purpose of monitoring is to safeguard vulnerable children of any age who are receiving foster care services. Monitoring provides assurance to the public that children are receiving a service that meets the requirements of quality Standards. This process also seeks to ensure that the wellbeing, welfare and safety of children is promoted and protected. Monitoring also has an important role in driving continuous improvement so that children have better, safer lives.

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is authorised by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs under Section 69 of the Child Care Act, 1991 as amended by Section 26 of the Child Care (Amendment) Act 2011 to inspect services taking care of a child on behalf of the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) including non-statutory providers of foster care.

In order to drive quality and improve safety in the provision of foster care services to children, the HIQA carries out inspections to:

- **Assess** if the service provider has all the elements in place to safeguard children and young people and promote their wellbeing while placed with their service
- **Seek assurances** from service providers that they are **safeguarding children** through the mitigation of serious risks
- **Provide** service providers with the **findings** of inspections so that service providers develop action plans to implement safety and quality improvements
- **Inform** the public and **promote confidence** through the publication of the HIQA's findings.

Monitoring inspections assess continuing compliance with the regulations and Standards, can be announced or unannounced.

This inspection report sets out the findings of a monitoring inspection against the following themes:

<b>Theme 1: Child Centred Services</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Theme 2: Safe and Effective Services</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Theme 3: Health and Development</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Theme 4: Leadership, Governance and Management</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Theme 5: Use of Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Theme 6: Workforce</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## **Inspection Methodology**

As part of this inspection, inspectors met with the relevant professionals involved in Five Rivers Ireland foster care services and with foster carers. Inspectors observed practices and reviewed documentation such as case files, foster carers' assessment files and relevant documentation relating to the areas covered by the theme.

During the inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- safeguarding processes,
- assessment of foster carers,
- supervision and support of foster carers,
- training of foster carers,
- reviews of foster carers,
- recruitment and retention of an appropriate range of foster carers.

The key activities of this inspection involved:

- the analysis of data,
- interviews with the chief executive officer, the operations manager, the principal social worker, the manager of the therapeutic support service and the education officer,
- focus group with eight foster carers,
- focus group with team leaders,
- focus groups with two groups of link workers, one in each office base,
- review of the relevant sections of foster carers' files as they relate to the theme.

## **Acknowledgements**

HIQA wishes to thank the staff and managers of the service for their cooperation with this inspection, and foster carers who participated in focus groups with inspectors.

## Profile of the foster care service

### The Service Provider

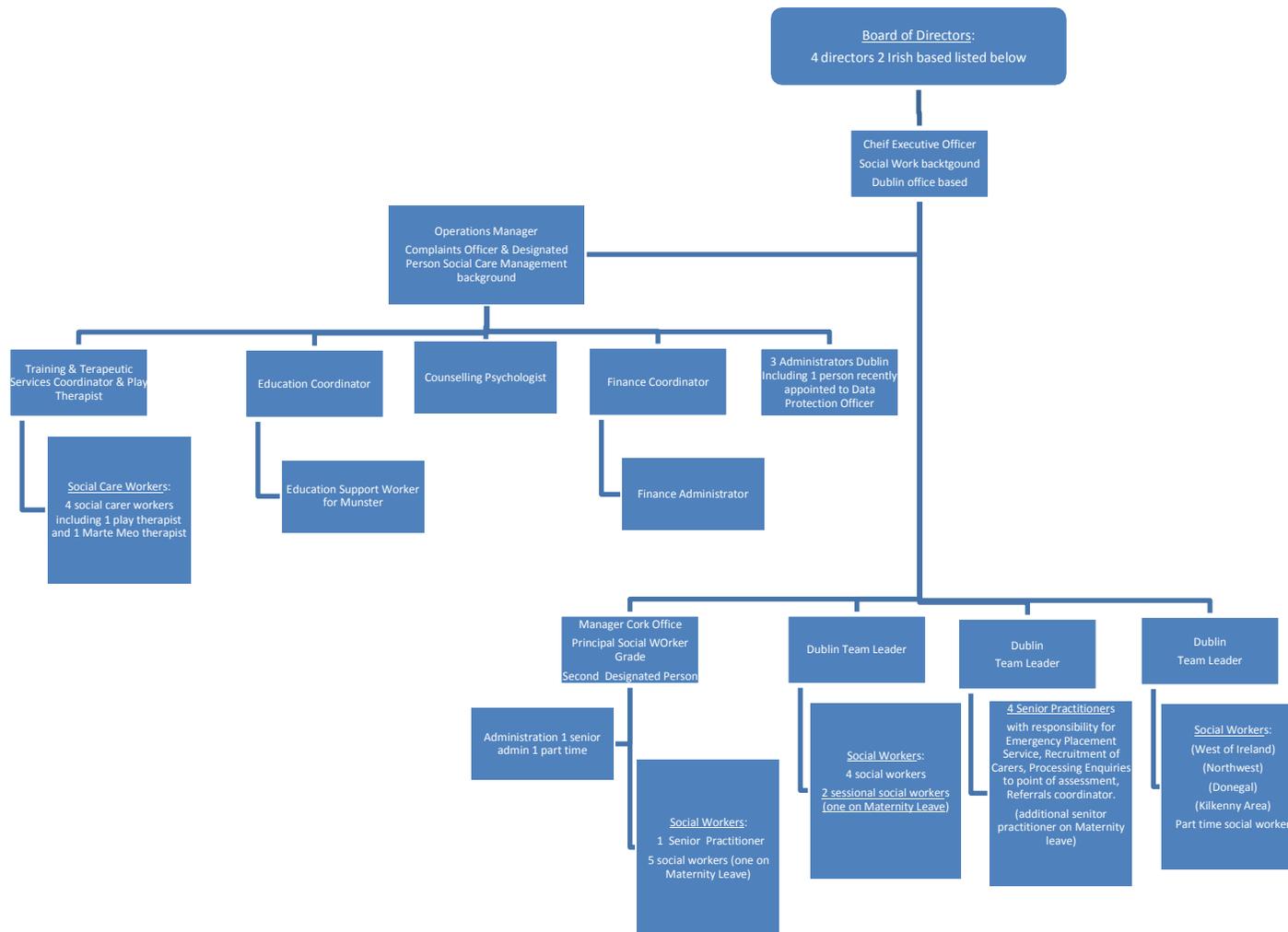
Five Rivers Ireland was set up in 2002 and was the first non-statutory foster care agency in Ireland. The agency provides foster care services across the country including- since 2009- the provision of emergency place of safety (EPS) out-of-hours placements for Tusla. The agency also conducts relative fostering assessments for Tusla.

The foster care service operated out of offices in Dublin and Cork and comprised two directors: a chief executive officer and an operations manager, both based in Dublin. There were two social work teams, one in each office base. There were three team leaders who managed nine social workers in the Dublin office in addition to four senior practitioners and two sessional social workers. The four senior practitioners carried particular responsibilities in relation to emergency placements, recruitment of foster carers, processing enquiries and co-ordinating referrals. The team leaders reported to by the chief executive officer. The agency also had a training and therapeutic service managed by a co-ordinator. The training and therapeutic team was managed by the operations manager and comprised four social care workers. The agency provided additional services to foster carers through an education co-ordinator and a counselling psychologist and was supported by a finance co-ordinator and an administration team.

Five Rivers Ireland had 137 foster care households across the country who provided placements for children in the care of Tusla. Five Rivers Ireland had a service level agreement with Tusla for the provision of the emergency place of safety placements. It did not have a service level agreement for provision of general foster care services.

The organisational chart in Figure 1 on the following page describes the management and team structure as provided by the area.

**Figure 1: Organisational structure of the foster care agency<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Provided by the Foster Care provider

## Summary of inspection Findings

Child and family services in Ireland are delivered by a single dedicated State Agency – the Child and Family Agency - overseen by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013) established the Child and Family Agency with effect from 1 January 2014.

The Child and Family Agency have responsibility for a range of services, including the provision of a range of care placements for children including statutory foster care services.

Children's foster care services may also be provided by non-statutory foster care agencies following agreement with the Child and Family Agency. The Child and Family Agency retain their statutory responsibilities to children placed with these services and approve the foster carers through their foster care committees. The foster care agency is required to adhere with relevant Standards and regulations when providing a service on behalf of the Child and Family Agency. Both services are accountable for the care and well-being of children. This inspection focuses on the specific responsibilities of the service provider under the Standards in providing quality and safe care to children.

Five Rivers Ireland is a private foster care provider and its services are monitored by the Child and Family Agency. At the time of the inspection the most recent monitoring visit from the Child and Family Agency monitoring officer took place in February 2016 when a visit was conducted to verify a self-audit completed by the provider.

This report reflects the findings of the thematic inspection, relating to six standards. These are set out in Section 5 of this inspection report and include safeguarding, assessment and approval, supervision and support, training, reviews of foster carers and recruitment and retention. The provider is required to address a number of recommendations which are set out in an action plan attached to this report.

In this inspection, HIQA found that of the six standards assessed;

- three standards were compliant
- two standards were substantially compliant
- one standard was non-compliant moderate.

This was HIQA's second inspection of this service. An inspection of nineteen standards was conducted in April 2016. At that time the service exceeded three standards, met eight standards and required improvement in eight standards.

This inspection found that the service was well resourced and well managed. There was evidence of good practice in relation to the support provided to foster carers.

Children in foster care were safe. There were good systems in place to ensure that children were safe and protected. An Garda Síochána (police) vetting of foster carers and of significant adults was updated on a three-yearly basis and there was a system in place to alert workers in advance of Garda vetting becoming due for renewal. All foster carers had an allocated link worker and the provider had a high expectation of the support and supervision visits to be provided.

Allegations and complaints were responded to and action was taken to safeguard children. There were some delays in relation to Tusla's investigation of allegations and these delays were not always escalated in a timely manner.

Assessments of prospective foster carers were comprehensive and good quality assessment reports were produced. Management oversight of fostering assessments was good and where there were delays completing fostering assessments the reasons for this were recorded and managed. There was a clear process for the approval of foster carers by the relevant foster care committee and due process was followed when foster carers transferred to Five Rivers Ireland.

There was good practice in relation to the support provided to foster carers. Link workers provided good child-centred support to foster carers through regular home visits and frequent contact. Foster carers and children in care received additional support from the therapeutic team. Respite care was also provided as a support to foster carers and enhanced support services were provided when foster carers were caring for children with complex needs. Foster carers expressed satisfaction at the level of support they required, especially in times of crisis. There were regular events organised by the provider to facilitate informal support between foster carers and there was a dedicated out-of-hours service provided to foster carers.

Documentation of the supervision process required standardisation and improvement as it did not always reflect what supervision was being provided.

Foster carers participated in training prior to their approval and there was a programme of on-going training in place for all foster carers. There was good management oversight of training.

Five Rivers Ireland was actively involved in recruiting and retaining an appropriate range of foster carers. There were effective recruitment strategies in place which were successful in recruiting new foster carers to meet the diverse needs of children who required placements.

The capacity of foster carers to continue to provide high-quality care was reviewed regularly in line with the standards and additional reviews were conducted following allegations and significant changes in foster carers' circumstances. The review process was comprehensive and included updating of all relevant documentation. Review reports were well written and covered all the appropriate topics. Foster carers were positive about the experience of reviews and found them helpful. However, recording of the review process was not consistent; some recommendations were of a general nature and were not always implemented in a timely manner.

Improvement was required in relation to the appropriate, timely and consistent reporting of child protection concerns. In addition, management oversight of the progress of investigations into allegations against foster carers required improvement so that when there were delays these were escalated appropriately.

Following the inspection four individual cases were escalated: one related to outstanding international police checks for two foster carers. The second related to a case where there was no safety plan in place for a child in a placement when it was required.

There were two further cases where formal reporting of child protection concerns had not been made by Five Rivers Ireland staff to Tusla in line with Children First. Assurances were sought that all child protection concerns were appropriately and formally reported to Tulsa in line with Children First.

In addition, three issues were escalated to the chief executive director of Five Rivers Ireland. During the inspection inspectors identified cases whereby there were significant delays in Tusla's response to allegations and concerns reported to them by Five Rivers Ireland. The actions to address these delays required improvement to ensure that Five Rivers Ireland appropriately escalated all these delays to Tusla in a timely manner and in proportion to the potential risk involved. Secondly, whilst there was some managerial oversight of child protection concerns, this required development to ensure appropriate oversight from receipt of information through to the final outcome stage of the process. The third issue related to the families that provided emergency foster care services for both Five Rivers Ireland's Emergency Placement Service (EPS) as well as fostering for Tusla. Assurances were sought that formal governance arrangements were in place for these families to ensure that all standards and regulations were complied with.

During the inspection some actions were immediately taken to address the identified deficits. Following the inspection a satisfactory written response was received outlining the actions taken by Five Rivers Ireland to address all of the escalated issues and cases.

## Summary of judgments under each Standard

During this inspection, inspectors made judgments against the National Standards for Foster Care. They used four categories that describe how the national standards were met as follows.

We will judge a provider to be compliant, substantially compliant or non-compliant with the regulations and or national standards. These are defined as follows:

- **Compliant:** a judgment of compliant means that no action is required as the provider or person in charge (as appropriate) has fully met the standard and is in full compliance with the relevant regulation.
- **Substantially compliant:** a judgment of substantially compliant means that some action is required by the provider or person in charge (as appropriate) to fully meet a standard or to comply with a regulation.
- **Non-compliant:** a judgment of non-compliance means that substantive action is required by the provider or person in charge (as appropriate) to fully meet a standard or to comply with a regulation.

National Standards for Foster Care (April 2003)	Judgment
<b>Theme 2: Safe and Effective Services</b>	
<b>Standard 10:</b> Safeguarding and child protection	Non-Compliant-moderate
<b>Standard 14:</b> Assessment and approval of foster carers	Compliant
<b>Standard 15:</b> Supervision and support	Substantially compliant
<b>Standard 16:</b> Training	Compliant
<b>Standard 17:</b> Reviews of foster carers	Substantially Compliant
<b>Theme 5: Use of Resources</b>	
<b>Standard 21:</b> Recruitment and retention of an appropriate range of foster carers	Compliant

## Findings and judgments

### **Theme 2: Safe and Effective Services**

Services promote the safety of children by protecting them from abuse and neglect and following policy and procedure in reporting any concerns of abuse and/or neglect to the relevant authorities. Effective services ensure that the systems are in place to promote children's welfare. Assessment and planning is central to the identification of children's care needs. In order to provide the care children require, foster carers are assessed, approved and supported. Each child receives the supports they require to maintain their wellbeing.

### **Standard 10: Safeguarding and child protection**

Children and young people in care are protected from abuse and neglect

#### **Summary of inspection findings under Standard 10**

Children in foster care were protected from abuse and neglect. There were some good systems and safeguarding practices in place to ensure that children were safe and protected. Management oversight of the progress of investigations into allegations against foster carers required improvement so that cases did not drift in the system. Systems in relation to the management of incidents and complaints needed to be enhanced to ensure they captured all complaints correctly.

Five Rivers Ireland had a safeguarding and child protection policy which set out how all employees and foster carers in Five Rivers Ireland should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in accordance with the statutory guidelines and standards. The director of operations was the designated person for child protection as required by the Children First Act, 2015. The policy identified that Five Rivers Ireland staff and foster carers were mandated persons under the Act.

Data provided by the service indicated that there had been five child protection concerns relating to foster carers reported to Tusla in the twelve months prior to the inspection. Due to the fact that foster carers for Five Rivers Ireland reside throughout the country the provider dealt with a number of Tusla social work offices when reporting concerns about children in foster care placements. Inspectors found that all allegations and concerns about foster carers were notified to the appropriate foster care committee and the monitoring officer.

Inspectors reviewed the records of the allegations against foster carers and found that there were no cases where there was any immediate risk to children. The

statutory responsibility for the investigation of allegations lay with Tusla. There were delays in processing some investigations due to discrepancies between Five Rivers Ireland and Tusla's interpretation of what constituted an allegation. Five Rivers Ireland followed the Tusla interim protocol for managing allegations against foster carers and categorised allegations and concerns accordingly, but found they received varying responses from the Tusla social work teams. Strategy meetings did not always take place and there were some delays in progressing allegations through the system. In one case 11 months had elapsed since the allegation was reported.

However, from a review of six allegation files, inspectors found that in one case Five Rivers Ireland staff did not verify with Tusla whether a formal report of the concern was required on Tusla's child protection and welfare report form. Following the inspection a formal report was submitted by Five Rivers Ireland staff to Tusla in line with Children First reporting procedures. The fact that the child protection and welfare report form was not always used may have contributed to the variation in responses received from Tusla.

When Five Rivers Ireland did not receive a timely response to their reports they made efforts to progress the matter through emails from the fostering team leader to the Tusla duty and intake team leader. However, there was no effective system in place whereby management of Five Rivers Ireland escalated these delays to the relevant managers within Tusla for action.

Inspectors brought this to the attention of the designated person and the chief executive officer during the inspection and they prepared a revised escalation policy and procedure for immediate implementation by staff in order to address this issue.

Oversight by Five Rivers Ireland of allegations against foster carers required improvement. Inspectors reviewed the child protection log maintained by the designated liaison person and found it did not provide full oversight of the progress or escalation of concerns and allegations that had been reported to Tusla. The designated liaison person agreed that all the relevant information was not included in the written log. However, all the required information was available and retrievable from a secure database. A revised electronic system was put in place before the inspection had been completed to ensure that the designated liaison person had improved oversight of the progress of concerns and allegations.

Arrangements for safety planning following an allegation required review. Whilst foster carers had generic safe care plans in place for their family, covering topics such as privacy and rules, inspectors found one case where there was no specific safety plan put in place for a child following an allegation against the foster carers, while the matter was being investigated. Inspectors were provided with

assurances that this would be completed as a matter of priority, and, following the inspection, written assurances were provided that a safety plan had been put in place.

Data provided by the service for the inspection indicated that there were seven complaints made against foster carers in the twelve months prior to the inspection. Inspectors reviewed these complaints and found that they were fully discussed with foster carers, investigated and brought to a timely conclusion. There was a complaints log maintained by the operations manager in which the progress and outcome of the complaint was recorded. Complaints were also discussed at management team meetings. This provided oversight of the complaints process. However, inspectors found a complaint about a foster carer that had not been identified as such and it was therefore not recorded in the complaints log.

Good safeguarding practices were in place. Five Rivers Ireland had a safeguarding statement in line with the Children First Act, 2015 and Children First: National Guidance on the Protection and Welfare of Children (Children First 2017). Foster carers had a safe care plan specific to their family which detailed how members of the household would be cared for and kept safe. This included how privacy would be respected, family rules in relation to behaviour and dress code, and use of social media. The foster carers' handbook included information for foster carers on the importance of safe care and of safeguarding all children in their care.

Five Rivers Ireland was proactive in ensuring that all foster carers were trained in child protection. Foster carers completed child protection training in preparation for fostering. In addition to this, Five Rivers Ireland ran their own child protection training event for all foster carers which was updated every three years and covered topics such as safe care practices, managing incidents of children missing from care and understanding and managing behaviour that challenges. Sixty seven individual foster carers required this updated child protection training and all were scheduled to take part in a refresher session.

In December 2017 new legislation was brought in and foster carers required updated training on Children First 2017 as a result. The majority of foster carers had completed an online course on Children First 2017. Nineteen individual foster carers had not completed the online training, and, whilst seven of these did not have placements, all foster carers are required to complete this training. Foster carers were being accommodated in group sessions and through one to one sessions in their homes with the link workers to ensure all foster carers had completed the online module. The chief executive officer maintained oversight of child protection training through an electronic monitoring and oversight system which was kept updated.

Data provided for the inspection indicated that all foster carers had An Garda Síochána (police) vetting. Five Rivers Ireland updated Garda vetting of foster carers and adult members of their households every three years. There were two foster carers for whom Garda vetting was due for renewal but these were being processed. An electronic system had been set up to alert staff three months in advance of the vetting being required to allow time for the renewal to be processed. The chief executive officer maintained oversight of Garda vetting through an electronic monitoring and oversight system and through her supervision with the principal social worker and team leaders.

However, inspectors found one case where appropriate international checks were not contained in the foster carer's file. This was escalated to the chief executive officer of Five Rivers Ireland and written assurances were provided that appropriate actions were in progress to immediately address the issue. This included an audit of all approved carers to ensure there were no other international checks missing and the foster carers was not available for placements whilst the check was being processed. Inspectors identified another case where criminal convictions against an adult living in a foster care household had not been explored to determine whether a risk assessment was indicated. Inspectors brought this to the attention of the principal social worker for fostering during the inspection and assurances were provided that this would be addressed immediately and appropriate actions taken.

Staff were familiar with protected disclosure legislation and told inspectors they were confident in expressing concerns about foster carers or staff should they have any.

There was a system in place to ensure that serious and adverse incidents were promptly notified in writing to Five Rivers Ireland by foster carers using an incident reporting template. These incidents were recorded in an incidents and accidents register maintained by the operations manager. Inspectors found that two incidents were not appropriately reported by link workers to the Child and Family Agency.

Inspectors identified one incident that should have been recorded as a complaint against a foster carer but it was not. Another significant incident involving a child was not formally reported to Tusla by Five Rivers Ireland staff to ensure all relevant information was provided. Incidents that did not meet the threshold for reporting to Tusla for investigation were also recorded on the register. These were appropriately responded to by Five Rivers Ireland.

Some of the foster carers providing emergency placements for Five Rivers Ireland also had children placed from Tusla. Inspectors found that the managerial oversight of these families was not robust. Risk assessments were completed on

children prior to placements being made. However, these risk assessments did not adequately consider the impact of placements on other children already living with the foster family or on the children being placed. Inspectors were concerned about the impact on foster carers of providing multiple placements, over time, to two agencies.

Management oversight by the two agencies was not sufficient as it did not include an overall analysis of the foster carers' capacity to continuously safeguard the different groupings of children they cared for. This issue was escalated to the chief executive officer during the inspection and action was taken to progress the matter immediately. The chief executive officer contacted the relevant principal social workers to discuss a review of the oversight arrangements for these families and also produced a written document outlining a more robust management process.

Following the inspection HIQA received a written response from Five Rivers Ireland outlining an enhanced oversight mechanism between Tusla and Five Rivers Ireland for families providing placements both for Tusla and for the EPS service.

**Judgment: Non-Compliant – moderate**

### **Standard 14a: Assessment and approval of non-relative foster carers**

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<sup>2</sup> prior to any child or young person being placed with them.

#### **Summary of inspection findings under Standard 14**

Comprehensive assessments were carried out of foster carer applicants' ability to carry out the fostering tasks. Information provided for the inspection reflected that the agency had completed 34 assessments in the twelve months prior to the inspection. Twenty eight foster carers had been approved and there were 25 undergoing assessment. There were no applicants for assessment on a waiting list at the time of the inspection.

Inspectors found that there were a number of effective systems in place to ensure that fostering assessments were comprehensive. There were written procedures on the assessment and approval of foster carers and assessing social workers followed the Tusla national framework for fostering assessment reports. There was an assessment plan which outlined the tasks to be completed for an assessment and a specific supervision template used by the team leaders in supervision with the assessing social worker to track the progress of the assessment and whether the timelines were being met.

Fostering assessments were comprehensive and good quality assessment reports were produced. Inspectors sampled seven foster care assessments and found they were comprehensive and contained all the documentation required. These included Garda vetting of foster carers and all relevant adults, health and safety checklists, medicals, references and child protection checks. There was evidence that the assessing social workers visited the applicant's homes and interviewed the applicants several times individually and together. Foster carers own children, their referees and other family members were interviewed where necessary during the assessment process. Records reflected that all applicants had attended foundation training in preparation for fostering.

Assessment reports were well written, detailed and reflective. They clearly evidenced that all aspects of the applicant's lives were considered and discussed in light of their relevance to fostering. Assessment reports contained analyses of how the life

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<sup>2</sup>These services were provided by former health boards at the time the standards were produced. These services are now provided by the Child and Family Agency (Tusla).

experiences of the applicants had helped them to develop skills that would enhance their capacity to foster. The fostering assessment reports were shared with the applicants prior to them being submitted to the foster care committees for their review and comment.

Management oversight of fostering assessments was good. Team leaders conducted a home visit to the foster care applicants during the assessment. The principal social worker and team leaders supervised the assessing social workers. The chief executive officer conducted a quarterly audit of the progress of assessments.

Assessments were not always completed in line with the 16 week timeframe required by the Foster Care (Placement of Children in Foster Care) Regulations, 1995. Inspectors reviewed the quarterly audit spreadsheet maintained by the chief executive officer. This showed that, in 2017, four assessments were conducted in under 16 weeks, eight were completed in 20 weeks and the remainder were in excess of this. Assessments conducted in 2018 were taking between 15 to 35 weeks to complete which was not within the regulatory timeframe. The reasons for the delays were documented in the spreadsheet and included staffing issues and complex issues arising in the assessment which required in-depth discussion and analysis. The chief executive officer maintained oversight of the progress of the assessments through her supervision with the principal social worker and the team leaders.

Foster carers told inspectors that the assessment process included every member of the family and was thorough and well managed.

Five Rivers Ireland also conducted relative fostering assessments for the Mid West service area on behalf of Tusla. The principal social worker maintained oversight of these assessments through supervision with team leaders and the use of an oversight and monitoring tool. Inspectors reviewed this electronic spreadsheet and found that whilst it contained the date of commencement of the assessment and the proposed date for presentation of the report to the foster care committee, it did not reflect the date the assessment was requested by Tusla. It was not possible therefore to ascertain from the record maintained if these assessments had been waiting to be allocated for assessment, and if so for how long. Half of the on-going relative assessments (four out of eight) listed had taken longer than the timeframes set out in the regulations.

There was a clear process for the timely approval of foster carers by the relevant foster care committee. Assessment reports were submitted for approval to the Foster Care Committee for the Tusla service area in which the foster carers resided and in which they would be providing placements.

Information provided for the inspection indicated that four families had transferred in to the service. Inspectors sampled a number of these and found that due diligence was observed which ensured that full information on the foster carers and their fostering history had been provided to Five Rivers Ireland.

Foster carer contracts were in place. Five Rivers Ireland had a system in place whereby there were contracts of care in place with the foster carers to provide general care and, in addition to this; there were specific contracts of care for each child placed with the foster carers.

**Judgment: Compliant**

## **Standard 15: Supervision and Support**

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.

### **Summary of inspection findings under Standard 15**

Foster carers were supervised by a professionally qualified social worker known as a link worker. All foster carers were allocated to a link worker who was responsible for ensuring that the foster carers had access to information, advice and professional support necessary to enable them to provide high quality care.

Good quality support was provided to foster carers. Five Rivers Ireland had a policy which outlined that monthly support and supervision visits to foster carers should be undertaken by the link worker. Inspectors sampled 25 files in relation to support and supervision and found that a high standard of frequent visiting was maintained. Link workers visited foster carers in their homes on a monthly basis and provided good, child-centred support to the foster carers. This was well recorded in the link workers records and focused on the needs of children in placement.

Foster carers also received good support when caring for children with complex needs. Five Rivers Ireland had a therapeutic and training team who provided direct work with children and their foster carers. This included play therapy for children, individual training with foster carers, family therapy sessions and support with parenting. There was also an education officer who provided education support to children and young people as required. In addition there was a psychologist on the team to provide psychology services to support children in placement. Inspectors reviewed files and found good examples of link workers discussing with foster carers how they were implementing the specialist advice and training provided. Social care workers worked directly with children and carers to support placements.

Recording of support and supervision required improvement. Inspectors found, from files sampled, that recording of the link workers support and supervision visits was inconsistent: of 25 files reviewed by inspectors for support and supervision some records were on a formal template while others were contained in case notes. This meant that managers had to search through electronic case notes and the completed electronic supervision template in order to ascertain how many supervision visits a link worker had completed to each family. Audits by the team leaders and the chief executive officer of the regularity and quality of support and supervision involved a manual search of the electronic system for records which

were saved under different titles.

The recording of supervision of foster carers required improvement. Inspectors found that the manner in which supervision was recorded did not identify what supervision was provided of the foster carer. Inspectors found that of the 25 files reviewed seven contained good examples of link workers ensuring that foster carers understood and operated within standards and policies. These records included link workers focusing on the needs of the children in placement. The link workers facilitated foster carers to reflect on their performance and identify different ways of handling difficult situations; they clearly instructed foster carers about the requirement to attend training and gave specific instructions about the requirement for regular written reports from the foster carers. Foster carers who spoke with inspectors were clear about their responsibilities and also knew that the link worker had a role in ensuring the quality of the care they provided.

However, inspectors reviewed supervision records which did not include meetings with the birth children of the foster carers or provide an overview of the experience of the foster family as a whole, especially when they had a number of placements. The documentation of the supervision process did not reflect whether or not consideration was given to all children in a foster care household when new placements were made or when there were difficulties in placements.

Management oversight of the supervision of foster carers required improvement, particularly when placements ended in an unplanned manner. There was evidence of good practice in regard to unplanned endings. This included professionals meetings being conducted to review the appropriateness of the continuing placement of siblings with the foster carers, and link workers reports analysing the reasons for the unplanned ending including clear recommendations. However, inspectors found that team leaders' management of these cases through their supervision with the link workers was inconsistent. Of a sample of four files where placements had ended in an unplanned manner all the issues that contributed to the placement ending had not been identified and progressed. These included the need for disruption reports from the child's social worker and addressing with foster carers particular difficulties which related to them. In addition, of the total of 25 files sampled seven included management oversight by team leaders that did not clearly outline actions or who was responsible for them or did not take an overview of the foster carers provision of care.

As Five Rivers Ireland is a national service their foster carers are located around the country. Five Rivers Ireland did not run support groups for foster carers but provided informal support through a range of various activities and outings for all foster families and their children. In this way, foster carers and their families were

provided with opportunities to meet together and support one another. Social events were also arranged for all foster carers and there was time allotted after training workshops for foster carers to meet and socialise together. Foster carers told inspectors that the support they received was of a high quality especially in times of crisis. They described to inspectors complex situations where the support provided by Five Rivers Ireland was invaluable to their family and to the child in placement.

Five Rivers Ireland provided 24-hour on call support to foster carers through a dedicated telephone number. Link workers were on duty for the on call support service on a rota basis and managers were available to support them. The on call support was usually provided through the telephone call but home visits were also provided as part of the service. Some foster carers told inspectors they did not often use the out-of-hours service but they appreciated the fact that it was available to them should they require additional advice and support out of office working hours. A foster carers' handbook included information on the on-call support available and also provided information on a range of issues relating to foster care to guide and inform them in their role.

When foster carers transferred from Tusla or other private agencies to Five Rivers Ireland due process was followed. A transfer meeting was held and all information pertaining to the foster carer and their fostering history was transferred to Five Rivers Ireland. Four foster care families had transferred in to Five Rivers Ireland in the twelve months prior to the inspection. Inspectors sampled two of these and found that transfer meetings had taken place and, where appropriate, further assessments were conducted and presented to the relevant foster care committee.

**Judgment: Substantially compliant**

## **Standard 16: Training**

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

### **Summary of inspection findings under Standard 16**

Foster carers participated in the training necessary to equip them with the skills and knowledge required to provide high-quality care. Link workers told inspectors they were constantly supporting and encouraging foster carers to develop new skills. Foster carers for Five Rivers Ireland, as part of their fostering contract, had to attend a minimum of three training events a year. Foster carers were encouraged, in writing, to attend as many training workshops as possible as a support in providing stable care for the child in their care and in compliance with this standard. In addition, there was a requirement to attend child protection training and update this training every three years. At the time of the inspection, there were 19 individual foster carers who had not completed the online Children First module and 67 foster carers who needed to update their child protection training. All foster carers had previously completed some child protection training as part of their preparation for fostering and all were scheduled to attend their updated child protection training.

There was a training co-ordinator whose responsibility it was to organise and co-ordinate all training for foster carers. A training needs analysis had been conducted with foster carers and there was a full programme of training events held at various times and in various locations to facilitate foster carers' attendance. There was an administration system in place to ensure that foster carers attendance at training was recorded and that certificates for training courses were maintained on foster carers' files. Inspectors sampled foster carers files and found good evidence of foster carers' attendance at a variety of training events. These included Children First, children's rights, safe care and adolescence and identity. Records reflected that there was good attendance by foster carers at training events. When foster carers could not attend training there was evidence that some training was provided by Five Rivers Ireland staff in the foster carers own home. Foster carers told inspectors that the training provided was good and they enjoyed attending. They were aware of the requirement to attend at least three training sessions per year. The chief executive officer told inspectors that all foster carers received preparation training for fostering during the assessment process. In addition, all foster carers had to attend Five Rivers Ireland child protection training as well as completing the Tusla online eLearning module on Children First 2017.

Oversight and monitoring systems of training were in place. These included a spreadsheet of attendance and regular audits carried out by the chief executive

officer. Inspectors reviewed these systems and found they were up-to-date and provided good oversight of foster carers training.

**Judgment: Compliant**

**Standard 17: Reviews of foster carers**

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.

**Summary of inspection findings under Standard 17**

Five Rivers Ireland conducted foster care reviews in line with the standards. Foster carers participated in regular comprehensive reviews of their continuing capacity to provide high-quality care. Five Rivers Ireland had conducted 45 foster care reviews in the twelve months prior to the inspection. Information provided for the inspection reflected that there were four foster care reviews outstanding and three of these had been scheduled. The scheduling of the fourth foster care review was on hold due to the particular circumstances of the foster care household and this was appropriate. There were no foster care reviews on a waiting list. The information provided by the service indicated that all the reviews had been notified to the Foster Care Committees for the areas in which the foster carers resided.

Five Rivers Ireland had a written process for foster care reviews which outlined the tasks required for the review. These included updating An Garda Síochána (police) vetting for all adults and those aged 16 or over in the household, medicals and health and safety questionnaires and the completion of a report from the child's social worker, and a link worker report. The link worker report included interviews with children in care, foster carers own children, foster carers and parents of the child in care.

There was a system in place to ensure that reviews took place as often as required and in compliance with the standards. In addition to this, team leaders told inspectors that a foster care review took place following an allegation against a foster carer or when a long term match was being considered. Team leaders told inspectors they maintained oversight of the foster care review process through supervision with the link workers.

Inspectors reviewed the records of seven foster care reviews and found they were comprehensive and of good quality. Foster care review meetings were held in the foster carers homes and were chaired by an appropriate manager. Foster carers and link workers attended the review meeting. All the foster care reviews sampled included the documentation of the views of the children in the placement, their

parents and their social workers in line with the standard. Foster carers told inspectors they reviewed a copy of the link worker's report for the review prior to the meeting taking place and signed a copy of the report prior to the review taking place. They described the review process as a thorough process in which their home was inspected, Garda vetting updated, and the child in their care and their own children were spoken with. Overall, foster carers reported that their review was a positive experience.

Recording of the review process was not consistent in all cases sampled. Foster care review meetings were based on a report compiled by the link worker which was shared with the foster carers prior to the review meeting. Two of the seven records sampled did not reflect that a formal meeting had taken place as required by the standards. There was no separate record of the foster care review meeting but the link workers report was amended following the review to reflect decisions and recommendations made.

Additional reviews were carried out following serious complaints or allegations and findings were communicated to the foster care committee. Information provided for the inspection indicated that two additional foster care reviews had been conducted following an allegation. Inspectors reviewed these files and found that in both cases the review was comprehensive and the appropriate foster care committee was notified.

However, the recommendations made at reviews were not always implemented in a timely manner or did not adequately reflect the areas discussed. For example, in one case the recommendation had been for training to continue in the identified areas but there was no training recorded for the period since the review had taken place. In another file sampled a social worker for a child in care had recommended particular training for foster carers but this had not been included in the link workers report for the review and did not appear as a recommendation of the foster care review. Four out of seven reviews sampled did not have recommendations listed and those that did contained generic recommendations pertaining to approval status and training.

**Judgment: Substantially Compliant**

## **Theme 5: Use of Resources**

Services recruit sufficient foster carers to meet the needs of children in the area. Foster carers stay with the service and continue to offer placements to children.

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

Health boards<sup>3</sup> 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.

#### **Summary of inspection findings under Standard 21**

Five Rivers Ireland was actively involved in recruiting and retaining an appropriate range of foster carers to meet the diverse needs of children who required placements. There were sufficient resources in place to recruit and retain foster carers. Five Rivers Ireland was successfully recruiting and retaining foster carers for their mainstream fostering services. However, whilst the provider was committed to recruitment and had recruitment strategies in place, they encountered difficulties in Mayo, Monaghan and Kerry in recruiting families for the emergency placement service. To address this they used foster families for their EPS service who were already fostering for Tusla in these areas.

Five Rivers Ireland had a number of effective recruitment campaigns in place. Information provided for the inspection indicated that 39 different recruitment events had taken place in the twelve months prior to the inspection. A range of recruitment methods were employed to attract as large a number of applicants as possible. These included newspaper advertisements, internet campaigns, digital advertising, media campaigns, advertisements with voluntary organisations and presence at cultural events.

There had been 99 applications for fostering out of which 28 had proceeded to an assessment. Five foster carers had left the service voluntarily in the twelve months prior to the inspection. When foster carers ceased fostering exit interviews were conducted to gain information to improve the service. Inspectors reviewed the exit interviews and found that foster carers stopped fostering for personal reasons such as ageing out and family bereavement. Overall, when transfers in to the service and new approvals were considered, Five Rivers Ireland had recruited 28 new foster

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<sup>3</sup>These services were provided by former health boards at the time the standards were produced. These services are now provided by the Child and Family Agency (Tusla).

carers in the last twelve months. In 2016, at the time of the last inspection, Five Rivers Ireland had 103 foster carers. There were currently 137 foster care households in the service.

There was an efficient system in place to ensure that all enquiries about fostering were followed up and monitored. The principal social worker described the procedure which included screening by a link social worker and a home visit. The prospective applicants were discussed at a team meeting and a decision made about their suitability. Applicants were then allocated to an assessing social worker for assessment.

Foster carers were retained through the high levels of support they received. This included:

- monthly home visits by their allocated link workers,
- coffee mornings,
- the out-of-hours service,
- additional support in times of crisis,
- the support and assistance of the therapeutic team including the education officer and psychologist and through
- activities for fostering families that acknowledged their contribution to children and to the service in providing foster care placements.

In addition to this, Five Rivers Ireland conducted a survey of their foster carers' views of the service on a three-yearly basis. The information this survey provided was used to inform their recruitment strategy and drive improvements in the service. The most recent survey had been carried out in April 2017. Key recommendations from this report included revisiting the structure of support groups, providing support and training for birth children of foster carers and exploring creative respite options.

Foster carers who spoke with inspectors were very complimentary of the support they received from Five Rivers Ireland and it was clear that they viewed this as contributing to their continuing to foster.

**Judgment: Compliant**

## Appendix 1

<b>National Standards for Foster Care (April 2003)</b>
<b>Theme 1: Child Centred Services</b>
<b>Standard 1: Positive sense of identity</b> Children and young people are provided with foster care services that promote a positive sense of identity for them.
<b>Standard 2: Family and friends</b> Children and young people in foster care are encouraged and facilitated to maintain and develop family relationships and friendships.
<b>Standard 3: Children's Rights</b> 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.
<b>Standard 4: Valuing diversity</b> 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.  <i>Child Care (Placement of Children in Foster Care) Regulations, 1995</i> <i>Part III Article 8 Religion</i>
<b>Standard 25: Representations and complaints</b> Health boards have policies and procedures designed to ensure that children and young people, their families, foster carers and others with a bona fide interest in their welfare can make effective representations, including complaints, about any aspect of the fostering service, whether provided directly by a health board or by a non-statutory agency.

## Theme 2: Safe and Effective Services

### **Standard 8: Matching carers with children and young people**

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

***Child Care (Placement of Children in Foster Care) Regulations, 1995***  
*Part III, Article 7: Capacity of foster parents to meet the needs of child*

### **Standard 9: A safe and positive environment**

Foster carers' homes provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for the children or young people.

### **Standard 10: Safeguarding and child protection**

Children and young people in foster care are protected from abuse and neglect.

### **Standard 13: Preparation for leaving care and adult life**

Children and young people in foster care are helped to develop the skills, knowledge and competence necessary for adult living. They are given support and guidance to help them attain independence on leaving care.

### **Standard 14a: Assessment and approval of non-relative foster carers**

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.

***Child Care (Placement of Children in Foster Care) Regulations, 1995***  
*Part III, Article 5 Assessment of foster parents*  
*Part III, Article 9 Contract*

### **Standard 15: Supervision and support**

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.

### **Standard 16: Training**

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

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

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.

**Standard 22: Special Foster care**

Health boards provide for a special foster care service for children and young people with serious behavioural difficulties.

**Theme 3: Health and Development**

**Standard 11: Health and development**

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.

***Child Care (Placement of Children in Foster Care) Regulations, 1995***

*Part III, Article 6 Assessment of circumstances of child*

*Part IV, Article 16 (2)(d) Duties of foster parents*

**Standard 12: Education**

The educational needs of children and young people in foster care are given high priority and they are encouraged to attain their full potential. Education is understood to include the development of social and life skills.

## **Theme 4: Leadership, Governance and Management**

### **Standard 18: Effective policies**

Health boards have up-to-date effective policies and plans in place to promote the provision of high quality foster care for children and young people who require it.

#### ***Child Care (Placement of Children in Foster Care) Regulations, 1995***

*Part III, Article 5(1) Assessment of foster carers*

### **Standard 19: Management and monitoring of foster care agency**

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

#### ***Child Care (Placement of Children in Foster Care) Regulations, 1995***

*Part IV, Article 12 Maintenance of register*

*Part IV, Article 17 Supervision and visiting of children*

## **Theme 5: Use of Resources**

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

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.

## **Theme 6: Workforce**

### **Standard 20: Training and Qualifications**

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.

# Action plan

Please note that this action plan has been completed by the provider and accepted by HIQA.

HIQA has not made any amendments to the provider's comments and commitments in this action plan.

<b>Provider's response to monitoring report number:</b>	0023993
<b>Name of Provider:</b>	Five Rivers
<b>Date of inspection:</b>	29-31 May 2018
<b>Date of response:</b>	15 August 2018

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

**Judgment: Non compliant - Moderate**

**The provider is failing to meet the national standards in the following respect:**

Five Rivers Ireland staff did not always follow the correct reporting procedures to report concerns to Tusla, as required, in line with Children First.

There was no effective system in place to escalate delays in progressing allegations against foster carers to Tusla.

The child protection log did not contain all the information required to provide full oversight of the progress of concerns reported to Tusla.

Arrangements for safety planning following an allegation or a serious concern required review.

Management oversight by the two agencies of the foster carers providing both emergency placements for Five Rivers EPS service and placements for Tusla was not sufficient. It did not include an overall analysis of the foster carers' capacity to continuously safeguard the different groupings of children they cared for.

**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. During the inspection and within the first week of the on site inspection concluding the CEO and Operations Manager had met with both the Cork and Dublin based teams to refresh people in relation to the procedures to follow for recording and reporting serious concerns, child protection concerns, complaints and allegations. When there is a decision made that a concern doesn't meet the threshold for reporting as a concern of abuse this decision is recorded and the reason why is tracked by the CEO and Operations Manager. In all instances the procedures that are followed are clearly recorded and Tusla child's social worker and team leader are notified in writing.
2. On day two of the inspection the Operations Manager circulated procedures for escalation where there are delays in processing serious concerns, allegations, disclosures and complaints. This was circulated to all team members and has been implemented with immediate effect. The new tracking system is in place to ensure that these procedures are followed.
3. In relation to arrangements for safety planning, the procedures are in place to ensure safety plans are in place when there is an allegation or concern about foster carers. A review has taken place of all current issues and there are no families without a safety plan. The policy states that a safety plan for children in care should be drawn up in conjunction with the child's social worker and that it should be signed off. Five Rivers Ireland is using the escalation procedure now to ensure that there are no delays in forming safety plans for children who are living in a foster family where there is an ongoing concern or allegation being dealt with. In instances where there is a delay in relation to getting the child's social worker to be part of safety planning an Interim Safety Plan should be put in place by the fostering link social worker following discussion with their team manager and the designated Officer for child protection. This has been actioned and is tracked in the monthly meetings between the Operations Manager and the CEO
4. the CEO and Operations manager developed a new tracking system to ensure that all child protection concerns, serious concerns, complaints and disclosures are tracked in the one system. Follow up is logged each month until the matter has been concluded with all steps in relation to policy and procedures complied with including safety planning, notifications

to relevant bodies and the outcomes and recommendations are tracked. The tracking system is brought to managers meetings and is being used to assist managers with tracking these. All steps in relation to any issue are recorded along with reference to the secure location where any reports or relevant information is stored. These meetings are minuted.

5. During the inspection the CEO developed a working agreement to be used between Tusla and Five Rivers Ireland where there are foster carers who are being supported and supervised by both agencies. These have been implemented for all carers for whom this applies. This sets out risk assessment issues, training, reporting procedures, procedure for both link workers to be part of foster carer reviews and written agreement to notify the other agency in the event of increasing challenges or any concerns about the families as foster carers. This has already been implemented.

Proposed timescale:	Person responsible:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This has occurred and will be an ongoing process as part of induction for new workers and will be revisited regularly in team meetings and during training.</li> <li>2. This has been done and will require ongoing implementation.</li> <li>3. This has been implemented and will be ongoing.</li> <li>4. Completed and Ongoing.</li> <li>5. Completed and for ongoing review.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Operations manager and team leaders.</li> <li>2. Operations manager and CEO to track and review with managers at managers meetings.</li> <li>3. Team Leaders and Link social workers with oversight and tracking from Operations Manager.</li> <li>4. Operations Manager and CEO.</li> <li>5. Developed by CEO. Agreements overseen by Team Leaders for both agencies and signed off by PSW or Director of each organisation.</li> </ol>

**Standard 14a – Assessment and approval of non-relative foster carers**

**Judgment: Substantially compliant**

**The provider is failing to meet the national standards in the following respect:**

Assessments were not always completed within the regulatory timeframes.

**Action required:**

Under **Standard 14a** 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.

1. There is a comprehensive tracking system in place to audit fostering assessments and to track the timeframes for completion.
2. Delays are tracked and the reasons for these are written down, monitored and included in the concluding assessment report for the Foster Care Committee.
3. It remains essential that significant issues that arise are dealt with fully and that the quality or integrity of an assessment is not compromised in order to meet the 16 week time frame.
4. Team leaders have received training in relation to supervising staff around assessments. This was completed in 2017 with a further training being put in place in September 2018.
5. Supervision recording forms have been devised and implemented by the team leaders to assist with supervising staff through assessments and tracking potential delays.

Proposed timescale:	Person responsible:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Completed and ongoing</li> <li>2. Completed and ongoing</li> <li>3. This is reviewed during supervision.</li> <li>4. Training booked for 18/9/2018</li> <li>5. Implemented and ongoing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CEO and team leaders</li> <li>2. Team Leaders and CEO</li> <li>3. Team leaders and assessing social workers with oversight from CEO.</li> <li>4. Team Leaders.</li> <li>5. Team Leaders with oversight from CEO</li> </ol>

## Standard 15: Supervision and Support

**Judgment : Substantially Compliant**

**The provider is failing to meet the national standard in the following respect:**

Recording of the supervision of foster carers did not always identify what supervision was provided to the foster carers. Supervision and support templates were not always completed.

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\* These services were provided by former health boards at the time the standards were produced. These services are now provided by the Child and Family Agency (Tusla).

Management oversight of the supervision of foster carers did not always clearly outline actions or who was responsible for them, or did not take an overview of the foster carers' overall provision of care.

Management of unplanned endings was inconsistent and all the issues that contributed to the placement ending had not been identified and progressed.

**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 review of current foster care supervision and support write ups is underway. Team leaders will engage with individual link workers to assist with improvement of recording.
2. In addition to the monthly supervision/support visit forms that the link workers currently A new form has been compiled which is more comprehensive and covers all aspects of compliance with the National Standards for Foster Care. This is to be completed with foster carers every 6 months at a minimum and more often where there is a change of circumstances. This will be signed off by team leaders as well as the link social worker and foster carers.
3. There has been a case management tool in place for Five Rivers management since 2016. Using this as a guide the frequency of supervision/link work visits are monitored. Since May 2018 managers have engaged in reviewing supervision records from link workers supervision visits with foster carers. Managers meetings are being used to track reviews and disruption reports. In addition recommendations from reviews are tracked. There is an audit in place to ensure that the correct notifications are in place.

<b>Proposed timescale:</b>	<b>Person responsible:</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For completion September 2018</li> <li>2. Completed with all carers to have first bi annual supervision completed by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018 (allowing for carers who are on holidays ect).</li> <li>3. Completed and ongoing.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Team leaders and PSW Cork with oversight from CEO</li> <li>2. Link workers overseen by Team Leaders.</li> <li>3. Team Leaders and PSW.</li> </ol>

**Standard 17: Reviews**

**Judgment: Substantially Compliant**

**The provider is failing to meet the national standard in the following respect:**

The quality of the recording of the review process was inconsistent in cases sampled.

Recommendations made at reviews were not always implemented in a timely manner.

Recommendations were generic and did not always adequately reflect the areas discussed at the review.

**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. There is a system in place to track foster carer reviews and to ensure that they have taken place in a timely manner. This has been expanded to include tracking of FCC letters and recommendations from reviews to ensure that they are implemented. Managers meetings are used as a forum to review this.
2. Improvements have been made to the forms used for completing reviews. This enables better transparency and recording of recommendations that are more specific as well as outcomes.

<b>Proposed timescale:</b>	<b>Person responsible:</b>
1. Implemented on 31st July and ongoing	Team Managers and CEO
2. Implemented and ongoing	Team leaders and PSW overseen by CEO