

Action Plan Update

Please provide an update in relation to the actions listed below. We have removed actions from your action plan where an update is not required at this time. We may seek an update to all actions at a later date.

The non-compliances and corresponding actions have been numbered and some re-ordered for ease of reference

Provider's response to Monitoring Report No:	MON 0020091
Name of Service Area:	Dublin South Central
Date of inspection:	10 th -12 th and 20 th October 2017
Action plan date:	March 12th 2018
Date of 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 2: Safe and Effective Services

Standard 10 – Safeguarding and Child Protection

Major Non- Compliance

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

1. Safeguarding practices were not sufficient and safety plans were not always in place to ensure the immediate safety of children.
2. Allegations and concerns were not always correctly classified, in order to ensure they received the most appropriate response.
3. Not all allegations and concerns were managed in line with Children First (2011), or the interim protocol for managing concerns and allegations of abuse or neglect against foster carers.
4. An Garda Síochána (police) vetting was not in place for all adults and young people over the age of 16 living in foster care households.
5. Some foster carers were not aware of Children First (2011) (now 2017) or safeguarding and not all foster carers received children first training.

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:

Action 1.1

Audits were conducted in January 2018, to ensure that all required documentation was on the files of children in care and foster carer as required. This work will continue with continued auditing by the Principal Social Worker to ensure the required documentation is on file. The area is also in process of recruiting a social work team leader post to provide support to this action.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 1.2

The area will ensure that in cases where assessments are in process, that safety plans are in place and documented to ensure safeguarding of children placed.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 2

The area will ensure that the minutes of the area review of the classification of allegations/serious welfare concerns, all documentation regarding assessments and outcomes are evidenced on both files of children in care files and the foster carers.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 3

A further training workshop will be organised to take place in March 2018 by the Area Manager to ensure that all Principal Social Workers and Social Work Team Leaders are aware of their obligations under the agency's interim policy relating to allegations against foster carers. New staff will also be advised of this policy at induction. This workshop with Principal Social Workers and Social Work Team Leaders will examine the classification of concerns received and also review the necessity for safety plans to be implemented and held on file.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 4

Since the HIQA inspection in October 2017, a system has been put in place to track vetting for anyone over 16 years old in foster carer households. Vetting applications have been sent to all identified over 16's and adults in foster carer households in the area and vetting is in process of being completed. The tracking system will be monitored on a monthly basis and will be supervised by the Principal Social Worker for fostering.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 5

The area will continue to hold further Children First training workshops throughout 2018 as part of the foster carer training calendar. The newly approved social care leader post for fostering will coordinate this training schedule when appointed to post.

Insert update here:

Please include the number of foster carers who have received this training to date.

Update on timescale

Standard 14b: Assessment and approval of relative foster carers
Major Non-compliance

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

1. The area had not been successful at bringing 30 of the relative assessments outstanding at the time of the 2016 inspection to a conclusion.

NB: In the March 2019 inspection HIQA was advised that seven of these were outstanding in March 2019. Provide update on these 7 relative assessments. 2. Children remained with foster carers that had been assessed as unsuitable carers due to concerns and risks. 3. The procedures in place to ensure that emergency placements with relative foster carers were safe were not always sufficient and there were delays in child protection and Garda checks.

4. Not all relative foster carer's assessments were completed in a timely manner.

Action required:

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

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

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

Area Response

Action 1

The Area Manager and Principal Social worker will continue to meet regularly to review progress on each of these remaining relative assessments. The fostering Principal Social Worker is also meeting the fostering Team Leaders weekly to review each assessment and outstanding documentation to ensure that the above timeframes will be met.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 2.1

The Area has since commissioned comprehensive psychological assessments for a small number of relative placements which were previously assessed as not suitable. This work has commenced and the psychological reviews will specifically look at the capacity and strengths of these placements to meet the children's needs and also the possible impact

on children if they were to be removed. Interim letters/ reports have been requested by the end of March 2018 to present to the Foster care committee.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 2.2

Further safeguarding visits to all children, placed with relatives, who have not received approval to date, will be completed by the end of March 2018 and on a monthly basis (or more if required) until approval is received from the Foster Care Committee.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 3

The Area has a tracking system of all Area checks completed in respect of all emergency placements and also for Garda vetting for emergency placements. This is in place and is monitored monthly by the Principal Social Worker.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 4

The Area has commissioned a private fostering service to ensure that any new relative assessment is completed within the timeframes as per the national fostering standards.

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

The Principal Social Worker and fostering Team Leaders have factored in the necessity to review and provide quality assurance feedback to all commissioned private fostering relative assessments prior to submission to the Foster Care Committee.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale:

Standard 15: Supervision and support
Major Non-compliance

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

1. The frequency of home visits to foster carers was not always adequate or in line with national policy.
2. There was no programme of support groups for foster carers provided by the area.
3. Not all foster carer's received adequate support from their link worker or the duty system.

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:

Area Response

Action 1

As per action one, additional posts (Social Work Team Leader and Social Care Leader) have been approved for the fostering service in order to increase resources available. The frequency of formally recorded supervision and support visits for all carers will be a minimum of every 6 months. Visits by also be arranged by duty fostering service to foster carers who do not have an allocated link social worker.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 2

Support groups for foster carers will be established in area by Quarter 3 2018. The Social Care Leader post approved by the Regional Service Director for the fostering service will specifically develop these support groups. Recruitment process for this post to take place during first Quarter 2018.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 3

The Area is to review the quality of its social work supervision and support visits to its foster carers, both allocated and unallocated. The Area Manager and Principal Social Worker for fostering will seek assistance from Tusla's regional Workforce Learning Development unit to provide training in respect of the quality of the fostering service's support and training to foster carers. This action will take place by June 2018.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Standard 17: Reviews of foster carers

Major Non-compliance

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

1. Reviews were not always carried out when there was an allegation made against the foster carers.
2. Reviews were not comprehensive and were not in line with National Standards.
3. The foster care committee was not notified of all standard reviews of foster carers in line with Standards.
4. The foster care committee was not notified of all reviews following a serious welfare concern or allegation.
5. Foster carers did not receive a copy of their review report when it was completed.

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:

Area Response

Action 1

The Area will prioritise all foster carers for review where a founded allegation or serious welfare concern has taken place. No additional children will be placed until a foster care review takes place and is submitted to the foster care committee.

Additional safeguarding visits will also take place to children placed in foster placements where confirmed allegations or serious concerns have taken place. Additionally, any child

who has retracted an allegation or concern whilst placed in foster care will receive additional safeguarding visits.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 2

A training/quality assurance workshop will be held for the fostering service by the end of April 2018 to ensure that the standard of foster care reviews is of a comprehensive nature as well as ensuring reports are quality checked prior to presentation to the Foster Care Committee.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 3

The Area will ensure that all foster care reviews which take place are notified to the Foster Care Committee.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 4

The Foster care committee is to be notified by the area of all reviews which take place following a serious concern or allegation. In particular where there is a founded allegation or serious welfare concern these reviews will be prioritised for presentation to the Foster Care Committee. This will be done retrospectively for all such reviews which have taken place during 2017 as well as 2018.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 5

The fostering Team Leaders will ensure that all foster carers receive a copy of their review report when completed. Foster carers who have had a review during 2017 and also into 2018 will receive, as a standard practice and also as a courtesy, a copy of their review report.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Theme 4: Leadership, Governance and Management

Standard 23: The Foster Care Committee

Major Non-compliance

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

1. The foster care committee did not have sufficient oversight of the foster care service.
2. The majority of notifications of allegations and serious incidents reviewed were not made to the foster care committee in line with policy.
3. Disruption reports were not notified to the foster care committee.
4. There was no system in place to track notification of breaches to the foster care committee.

Action required:

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

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

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

Area Response

Action 1

A new additional 0.5 Principal Social Worker post has been approved for the Foster Care Committee. This will mean that this post will be directly line managed by the Area Manager and be part of the wider area management team. This will support better coordination, information sharing and governance. This post will be filled by May 2018

Insert update here:

Update on timescale:

Action 2

Since 2015, the area has a database for all allegations and serious welfare concerns received in respect of foster care placements.

The fostering Team Leaders will ensure that all documentation in relation to each of the meetings which reviewed allegations will be submitted to the Foster Care Committee.

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

The area has established a quarterly governance meeting to ensure that any allegations or serious welfare concern relating to a foster carer are reviewed by the management team.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 3

The Principal Social Worker for the area will review all disruptions which have taken place since 2016 to ensure that reports are submitted to the Foster Care Committee in respect of each disruption.

A review of all disruptions which have taken place since 2016 will be undertaken by the Principal Social Worker with the fostering Team Leaders to ensure that disruption reports are submitted to the Foster Care Committee during the second half of 2018 (from June to December 2018). An additional social work Team Leader post for fostering is being recruited to specifically address this action under the action plan.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

4. The Principal Social Worker for fostering for the Area is to establish a tracking system to notify all breaches to the Foster Care Committee. A review of all breaches is to take place and notified to FCC by end of May 2018.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Theme 5: Use of Resources

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

Major Non-compliance

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

1. The recruitment and retention strategy was not effective.
2. Twenty-six foster care households were providing placements outside of their approval status.
3. The number of unrelated children living in seven foster care households exceeded the maximum number set by the National Standards.
4. Exit interviews remained absent, contrary to the service's 2016 inspection action plan.

Action required:

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

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

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

Area Response

Action 1.1

The area has a written recruitment and retention strategy. A fostering forum for new communities is in place and have held three meetings to date and will continue to meet during 2018.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

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

Action 1.2

A fostering recruitment campaign is in the process of taking place both at local and regional level to coincide with the Irish Foster Care Association (IFCA) fostering awareness fortnight.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 1.3

A national working group will be established to facilitate the development of a national plan relating to recruitment of foster carers. The first meeting of this group is scheduled for March 2018 and will be chaired by the DML Service Director. Dublin South Central, as part of the local fostering recruitment campaign, will be posting leaflets to approximately 30,000 households, in addition to on-going local newspaper adverts for the coming 12 month period.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 2

The identified 26 foster households offering placements outside their approval status will be reviewed by the area Principal Social Worker to ensure that the Foster Care Committee is aware of this information. In addition a review of their approval status will take place as part of the on-going process of foster care reviews in the area.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 3

A review will take place of the 7 foster placements identified in the inspection whereby the number of children placed exceeds National standards. Findings of this review will be brought to the Area Manager by the Principal Social Worker for discussion of a plan to address this breach of standards.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale

Action 4

Exit interviews with foster carers are in process of taking place. The Area Manager has provided a questionnaire and analysis report template Principal Social Worker for completion of these exit interviews for all foster carers who ceased fostering during 2016 and 2017. This is currently being actioned.

Insert update here:

Update on timescale