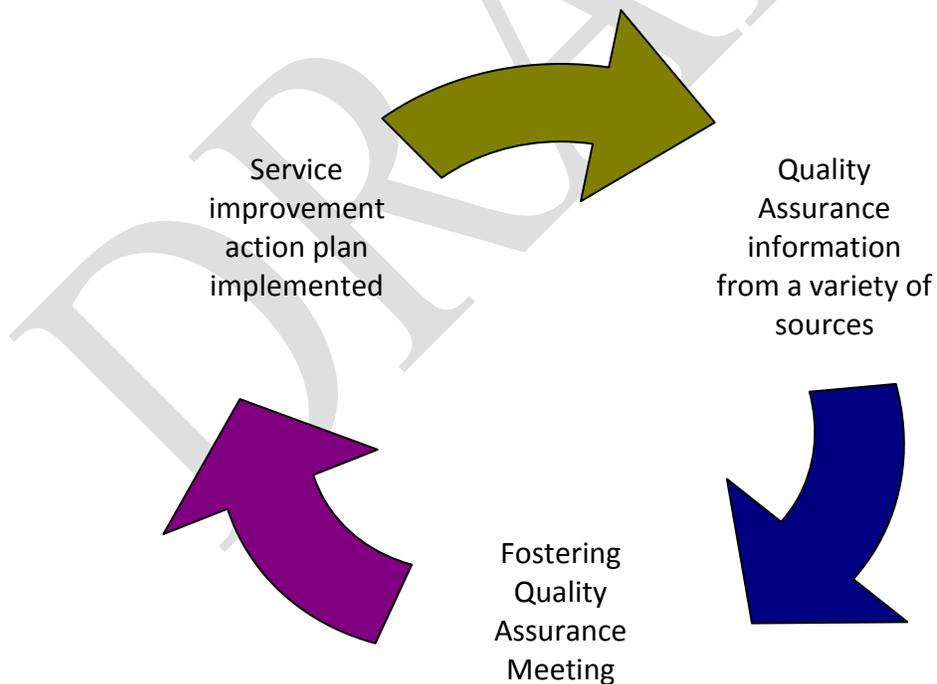


Quality Assurance Framework

Introduction

Information about the quality of the Fostering Service comes from a number of different sources. For example, a key source of information is feedback from fostering families and from children and young people looked after in foster placements. Case audits are another source of information about the quality of the Fostering Service. This framework identifies the various different sources. It also describes the process by which this information is drawn together and the themes identified including what is working well and also what needs improving.



Sources of Quality Assurance Information

Case Audits

There are four types of audit:

- The Self Check Audit is to be completed by the Supervising Social Worker or the FSW during file days. This audit requires a check of both paper files and CareFirst.
- The Supervisor Audit helps to frame the discussion about the work being undertaken in the carer household and ensures management oversight of any documents, decision records, risk assessments etc that need to be in place. The primary source of information in this audit is CareFirst.
- The Quality Audit is done once per year at or before a review (purely from CareFirst) and will give more qualitative information to the services and recordings.
- The Foster Carer Assessment Audit is completed by the Fostering manager who signs off each foster carer assessment before it is presented to the Panel.

In advance of the Fostering Quality Assurance (QA) Meeting the themes from audits will be collated into a brief summary. It is an opportunity to identify good practice as well as areas for improvement. This is *not* to identify issues in individual cases (which should be addressed directly with the practitioner in supervision) but to identify wider organisational themes and issues.

Independent Fostering Reviewing Officer (IFRO) Feedback

For each Foster Carer Review the IFRO consults with looked after children in placement; the children of foster carers; placing social workers; the foster carers and others connected with the placement. The IFRO completes a brief QA form after each review which is sent to the Fostering Social Worker, Manager and foster carers.

Information on the level of satisfaction expressed with the service and any general themes and issues arising is collated and presented to the QA Meeting.

Foster Panel feedback

The Fostering Panels provide quality assurance feedback to Hull Fostering Team on the quality of reports being presented to the Panel. Panel members complete the **Foster**

Panel Papers QA Form. Copies are sent to the Fostering Manager in each case and the IFRO.

There is also an evaluation form for Fostering Social Workers and Foster Carers to provide their feedback on their experience of attending the Panel (the **Foster Panel Evaluation Form**).

The feedback from the Fostering Panel is collated into a report which is presented to the QA Meeting by the Fostering Panel Clerk.

Views of Fostering Team Staff

The Fostering Development Group is a group of staff from the mainstream Fostering Team; the Family and Friends Team and the Short Breaks Scheme meet monthly to undertake development work. As well as undertaking development work the group may flag up issues to present to the QA Meeting as and when they arise.

Foster Carer views

The **Foster Carer Consultation Group** meets regularly. Feedback from the Foster Carer Consultation Group may be sought as and when it is needed on any particular issue or when issues are raised by the group. For example, the group have raised awareness of needs for particular training and support. The group also actively contributes to developing processes and practice within the Fostering Team including sitting on interview panels for new members of staff / Fostering Panel members.

Foster Carers are also consulted as part of the Foster Carer Review Process. Their views are collated and reported to the QA Meeting.

Foster Carer exit interviews

A month after any foster carer resigns, they are offered an exit interview. The outcome of these is recorded on CareFirst. The views of resigning foster carers, including positives, any barriers and the foster carer's reasons for resigning are collated and presented to the Quality Assurance Meeting.

Views of children and young people who are fostered

- Consultations with looked after children for Foster Carer Reviews are collated and presented to the QA Meeting
- **Kids in Care Council (Young Voices Influencing Care).** RAPP worker attends the QA Meeting and feeds back the views of this group of looked after children.

Views of children who foster

The Children Who Foster group is a group of children and young people who are the sons and daughters of foster carers. The group meets four times a year during school holidays at events facilitated by the Fostering Team. The group are actively involved in the Fostering Team, contributing to presentations to prospective foster carers. They also identify if as a group, they require additional support or training, which is then put in place.

Children in foster caring families are also consulted as part of the Foster Carer Review Process. Their views are collated and reported to the QA Meeting.

Performance data

Performance data is summarised and presented to the Fostering QA Meeting by the QA Officer.

Complaints

A summary of themes from complaints relating to fostering will be presented to the Fostering QA Meeting.

Fostering Quality Assurance Meeting

The Fostering Quality Assurance (QA) Meeting provides the forum to:

- Bring together the themes and trends identified in the above reports relating to good practice and to areas where there is a need to improve service quality.
- Formulate an action plan which addresses service gaps or deterioration in performance or quality as well as maintaining and extending examples of good practice.
- Monitor the actions identified to improve services.

The Fostering QA Meeting provides a bi-monthly forum to undertake a review of the Fostering Service on the basis the quality assurance information described above. The QA Officer collates the information from the sources above for the Meeting.

The themes identified in the reports from the above sources will be discussed at the meeting. An action plan will be produced which addresses service gaps or deterioration in quality as well as good practice and how to maintain and extend it. The action plan will provide a standardised way to address these issues, providing appropriate direction to staff.

The action plan will identify where additional guidance, training, briefings or other forms of staff development are needed to ensure that service standards are maintained or improved.

The QA Meeting will be attended by Fostering Team Managers; Senior Fostering Social Workers; Integrated Service Manager; Independent Fostering and Reviewing Officer; RAPP Officer; Short Breaks Team Manager; Family and Friends Team Manager and QA Officer.

Implementation of action plan and feedback to staff

Feedback from the QA Meeting can provide staff with consistent and appropriate messages about the priorities of the Fostering Team.

Areas for development will feed into the Fostering Development Group and the Foster Carer Consultation Group. Key areas for improvement should be identified to staff at Team Meetings and areas of good practice should be highlighted and followed up by the Team Managers / Senior Fostering Social Workers in supervision.

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