

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 November 2012

Covering Report for

THE OFSTED INSPECTION OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this covering report is to introduce the Fostering Service Report on the outcome of the OFSTED Inspection of Fostering Services undertaken in March 2012 and the subsequent Action Plan attached at Annex A.

2.0 Recommendation

Members of the Committee are asked to note and comment on the contents of the Fostering Service Report, the accompanying Action Plan and the Ofsted Inspection Report attached at Annex A.

3.0 Background

County Councillor Tony Hall Executive and Lead Member for Children and Young Peoples Service suggested to the Chairman that it may be useful if the outcome of the OFSTED Inspection of Fostering Services undertaken in March 2012 was considered by the Committee at their next meeting.

Your Chairman agreed to add this to the November Agenda and suggested that it would be helpful to inform Members of the Committee that the attached report was presented to Executive Members in July together with an Action Plan which responded and met the OFSTED recommendations in full.

The following recommendations were made by OFSTED:

- Obtain the information specified in schedule 3 relating to X and other members of X's household and family (breach of regulation 26 (2) (a))
- Ensure that health assessments take place once every six months in the case of children aged under 5 and at least every 12 months in the case of children aged 5 and over (The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2:Care Planning , Placement and Case Review (2010) Paragraph 2.6)
- Ensure that the fostering panel and decision maker make timely , quality and appropriate recommendations/decisions in line with the overriding objective to promote the welfare of children in foster care (NMS 14)
- Inform the foster carer by notice in writing that s/he is exempted from the usual fostering limit and consider how it will review any exemption to the usual fostering limit (Volume 4, statutory guidance, paragraphs 5.49 – 5.50)

- Improve procedures for monitoring the activities of the service and ensure the managers regularly monitor all records kept by the service to ensure compliance with the service's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. Take immediate action to address any issues raised by this monitoring (NMS 25.2)
- Appoint a nominated officer or officers with authority to grant temporary approval of foster carers by a process which complies with Regulation (2) of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations. (Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, paragraph 5.12)

The Fostering Service in response to the recommendations developed an Action Plan which details the actions required to meet each of the recommendations in full. A summary of the actions listed are:

- panel process has been reviewed and tightened
- work continues to increase the number of children who have fully completed health assessments within timescale
- systems have been revised to monitor that panel minutes are approved within the timescale
- systems have been revised to ensure foster carers are informed in writing when they are subject of an Exemption
- exemptions are now included in the quarterly monitoring process
- review of the nominated officer arrangements for temporary approvals.

Members may wish to enquire what the current position is in relation to the actions listed above and whether full implementation has been achieved.

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Background Documents:	None
Annexes:	Fostering Service Report and accompanying Action Plan; Ofsted Inspection Report on North Yorkshire County Council Fostering Service