



# Inspection Report on

**Foster Care Associates Cymru**

**Foster Care Associates  
North Wales Business Park  
Cae Eithin  
Abergele  
LL22 8LJ**

**Mae'r adroddiad hwn hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg**

**This report is also available in Welsh**

**Date Inspection Completed**

19/09/2024

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## About Foster Care Associates Cymru

Type of care provided	Fostering Service
Registered Provider	Foster Care Associates Limited
Registered places	0
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	7 February 2018
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	This service is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and demonstrates a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.

### Summary

Foster Care Associates Cymru (FCA Cymru) is committed to providing quality care and support to children and foster parents. There is a clear focus upon children achieving individual goals, positive outcomes and ensuring their personal safety, happiness and well-being needs are met. Foster parents and children are supported by an experienced, dedicated, pro-active and understanding staff team. Foster parents have access to regular support groups and advocate on behalf of children. Children are listened to and are encouraged to engage in their care planning. Children have ample opportunities to participate in a full calendar of events and activities which promote and enhance their well-being, confidence, and self-esteem.

Foster parents and staff receive regular supervision and have access to an extensive range of meaningful and specialist training. The views and wishes of foster parents, children, staff and other professionals are consistently sought regarding how the service can be improved upon. The very strong, experienced and consistent senior management team provide highly effective managerial oversight of the service. They are committed to continuous positive improvements and high standards are maintained as part of their quality assurance process. They work in an open and transparent manner which promotes a positive and supportive working culture.

## Well-being

Children are listened to, have regular and meaningful opportunities to express their views and are supported to have control over their daily life choices. Staff told us children's voices "*Are at the forefront of all staff's priorities*" and consider they have a "*Child centred approach*" to supporting children. The service provider is proactive in understanding children's individual needs and has developed various creative and inclusive ways of ensuring children's views, wishes and preferences are obtained.

The service provider has relevant safeguarding and operational policies and procedures in place. Staff and foster parents complete safeguarding training and the service provider submits timely safeguarding referrals to the local authority. Enhanced recruitment checks are completed to ensure they are suitable to work with children who are in a vulnerable position. Children are made aware of the complaints procedure and how to raise a concern. They also have access to an independent advocate.

Children have access to various health and social care services and are encouraged to make healthy lifestyle choices. They are registered with primary health care services and participate in an extensive range of activities of interest to them. The activities are focused upon children achieving positive outcomes and they are encouraged to try new activities to increase their confidence, and self-esteem.

Educational progress is closely monitored and promoted. Children are supported and enabled to reach their full educational potential by attending school and further education colleges. At the time of inspection, all children were in some form of education. Foster parents are aware of children's educational progress as they attend education meetings. FCA Cymru are also accredited as AQA (formally the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance award scheme) facilitators which provides opportunities for children to achieve accredited awards.

The service provider is 'working towards' the provision of an 'active offer' of the Welsh language. Significant, positive changes have been made regarding the Welsh language provision within the service which is supported and promoted by the senior management team. A 'Welsh Strategy' has been developed and key documents, procedures, various leaflets, notices and brochures are bilingual. Welsh speaking children and foster parents are matched with Welsh speaking staff and national cultural events are celebrated. Staff are also encouraged to use Welsh words and phrases in the workplace.

Children's care and support is provided within an environment which promotes their safety. Regular health and safety checks of the service provider's offices are completed and supervising social workers (SSW's) complete regular announced and unannounced visits to foster parents' homes in line with regulations. Children have items of personal importance

to them and have access to various equipment and facilities to encourage and develop their independence and basic living skills.

## Care and Support

A wide range of views and information is carefully considered to determine a suitable placement which can meet the child's needs and achieve their personal outcomes. There is a clear, effective and comprehensive referral, assessment and matching process in place which considers children and foster parents' compatibility. Placement referral information is considered by the well-established referral team who know the foster parents well.

Independent social workers complete most assessments of foster parents. The quality of the assessments viewed were of a consistently high standard. They contained all the required background checks and information to ensure the foster parents' suitability to care for children. The fostering panel consists of members with relevant experience and diverse expertise. They carefully review assessments to ensure potential foster carers are safe, fit, and competent. Their decision-making process is thorough, as reflected in their records and prompt recommendations are shared with the experienced Agency Decision Maker.

Foster parents are appropriately supervised, have access to extensive information, advice and support to meet children's care and support needs. SSW's spend time getting to know foster parents and build positive relationships with them. Foster parents spoke positively about the support provided, describing it as "*Excellent*" and "*Professional*." The service provider ensures placement plans, individual safeguarding risk assessment plans and household safer caring plans are completed. The information is regularly reviewed and tailored to each child's personal needs. Foster parents are committed and focused upon ensuring children experience care within a warm, welcoming and supportive environment. They provide stability and are supported to ensure children are cared for as safely as possible.

Children are listened to, and their views and opinions matter and are respected. They receive information about the service, their rights, and entitlements in age-appropriate formats. A written guide explains the care and support offered and procedures for raising complaints. Foster parents capture children's views and feelings daily, while SSW's engage with them during home visits and annual reviews. Children are consulted with and encouraged to contribute towards further enhancing services being provided. FCA Cymru has developed an innovative 'Language That Cares' strategy which recognises how written communication content is shared with children and the potential impact it has upon them. Their 'Supporting Additional Needs Pledge' recognises some children may also need the use of additional tools to assist with their communication, understanding and processing of information. Children's achievements and foster parents' appreciation are acknowledged through awards within annual celebrations, and they are invited to attend regular regional events.

Children have access to various health services and opportunities to participate in various activities to maintain their ongoing health, development and well-being. They are registered with local primary health care providers and receive prompt medical care and treatment

when required. Children are encouraged to make healthy lifestyle choices, and their physical and emotional health well-being needs are considered. Therapeutic support is available for children who have experienced significant neglect or trauma before entering care. Foster parents and staff praised the quality of the service provider's therapeutic provision and training and the access to extensive therapeutic learning resources. Children's independent and basic life skills are enhanced through their participation within creative and innovative practical and skill-based workshops and projects. They are empowered to facilitate workshops which enables them with opportunities to share their skills and knowledge with their peers.

## Environment

Foster parents' homes are assessed during the recruitment stage to ensure they are suitable and safe to support children to maximise their independence and achieve a sense of well-being. SSW's complete announced and unannounced visits to foster parents' homes, providing an opportunity to assess the environments' suitability. Health and safety standards within foster parents' homes are regularly considered and reviewed. Whenever potential risks are identified, they are discussed, and risk assessments and action plans are devised. Discussions with staff and foster parents highlighted children's bedrooms contain items of personal interest and importance to the child. Children can also take personal items with them during short break stays.

FCA Cymru operates from two offices, one based in Abergele, North Wales and the other in Bridgend, South Wales. As part of the inspection, we inspected the office based in Abergele and saw it is suitable and fit for purpose. The office was secure upon our arrival, and our identification was checked. The office premises contains a reception area, a large meeting/training room, a family room, a therapy room and two separate office spaces for the manager and fostering service manager. The main office space is a large open plan room which provides ample space for staff to carry out their daily administrative duties. It consists of 18 separate desks and a kitchen/dining area. There is suitable space within the premises to provide privacy for formal meetings and the supervision of staff. Toilets are in the premises' main lobby/entrance area and are easily accessible with a key fob. Rooms viewed were clean, well maintained and presentable. The office is welcoming and warmly decorated. Various walls consist of colourful posters, stickers, photographs of activities and events and children's artwork.

Procedures are in place to ensure confidential and sensitive information regarding children, foster parents and staff is stored and shared securely. Regular health and safety checks of the premises ensure it remains safe for staff, foster parents, children and visitors. The service provider has access to local contractors that complete checks relating to the testing of electrical equipment and fire safety. They also have a designated person based within the office to carry out additional health and safety checks and audits.

## Leadership and Management



There are excellent governance and management oversight arrangements in place to support the smooth operation of the service. The service provider has a clear and strong senior management structure in place, consisting of experienced, dedicated, and competent individuals. They work in a highly effective manner and are exemplary in bringing areas of their local and national organisation together to share important information, best practice and lessons learnt to make positive changes. The process of sharing information is purposeful, effective and provides an additional layer of oversight which further strengthens the governance structure. The RI has a clear oversight of operational matters, visits the service on a regular basis and complete a three-monthly report. The quality assurance process monitors, evaluates and reviews the standards and quality of care provided. A detailed six-monthly quality of care review report is completed and there are clear consultation processes in place. The service provider has creative methods in obtaining the views of others and the service is provided in accordance with their Statement of Purpose.

There are clear safeguarding and whistleblowing policies and robust reporting processes. The safety, happiness and protection of children is paramount to the service provider. There are clear processes and guidance to ensure people understand and know their responsibilities in highlighting and reporting safeguarding concerns. Staff and foster parents complete safeguarding training and the senior management team have oversight of each safeguarding event.

Robust safe recruitment processes are in place for foster parents and staff working at the service. Foster parents recruited by the service are thoroughly assessed and background checks are completed. At the time of inspection, the staff team consisted of 27 people with one staff vacancy, which the service provider was actively recruiting for. Employment references are verified, the service provider completes enhanced staff recruitment checks, and newly employed staff complete the service provider's induction programme. Staff are registered with Social Care Wales (the social care staff regulator for Wales) when required.

Comprehensive training opportunities are available to assist foster parents and ensure they are skilled to meet children's needs and deliver positive outcomes. The service provider is creative in the way training is provided and delivered and arrange for guest speakers to deliver innovative training workshops. The service provider is currently looking at ways in which they can improve the training provision to ensure all mandatory training topics are completed by foster parents within expected timescales.

Staff and foster parents receive consistent supervision and feel valued. They spoke positively about how support is provided and described the management team as "*Approachable*", "*Compassionate*" and "*Considerate*." The service provider has various provisions in place to support staff's well-being which the staff appreciate and value. The staff team exhibit enthusiasm and dedication in their roles, demonstrating an excellent understanding of the needs of both children and foster parents. In addition to support from staff, foster parents have access to numerous supportive provisions arranged by the

service provider such as experienced and dedicated foster parent representatives for extra support and guidance.

### Summary of Non-Compliance

Status	What each means
<b>New</b>	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
<b>Reviewed</b>	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
<b>Not Achieved</b>	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
<b>Achieved</b>	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people's well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

### Priority Action Notice(s)

Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

### Area(s) for Improvement

Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this	N/A

	inspection	
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**Date Published** 17/12/2024