

## **Revised Answers - Question 4.9(ii)**

### **(ii) Practice**

There is little evidence or information on Scottish Borders Council's historical adherence in practice to its policy/procedures in relation to record keeping about foster care. The following answers therefore primarily relate to current practice.

#### **a) Did the local authority adhere in practice to its policy/procedures in relation to record keeping?**

Unless otherwise stated, the local authority did adhere in practice to its policies and procedures listed below (with minor exceptions due to particular circumstances or staff oversight). Other than in staff supervision, there was no systematic auditing of record keeping in case files until 27/08/2014.

#### **b) Did the local authority check adherence in practice to its policies and/or procedures in relation to record keeping by foster carers?**

Yes – this was checked by the Supervising Social Worker. Formal guidance in relation to record keeping by foster carers was implemented in 2016.

#### **c) Did the local authority adhere in practice/check adherence in practice to its policy/procedures in relation to record keeping on the following:**

Unless otherwise stated, the local authority did adhere in practice to its policies and procedures in relation to record keeping listed below (with minor exceptions due to particular circumstances or staff oversight - from our review of cases, these did not knowingly result in a failure to protect children or significantly disadvantage children young people or foster carers.). Again, there is little evidence or information on Scottish Borders Council's historical adherence in practice to its policy/procedures in relation to record keeping about foster care.

- i. Children in foster care**
- ii. Foster carers**
- iii. Visits to children and foster carers**
- iv. Complaints**
- v. Investigations (both internal and external)**
- vi. Discipline**
- vii. Responding to requests from former children in foster care for information/records**

**viii. Other issues relevant to foster care**

**d) How was adherence demonstrated?**

Adherence can be demonstrated by recording in individual case files (of foster carers, children and young people); Care Inspection reports; and, complaints investigations and documentation.

**e) Were relevant records kept demonstrating adherence?**

See statement at the beginning of 4.9(ii).

**f) Have such records been retained?**

See statement at the beginning of 4.9(ii).

Scottish Borders Council have complied with file retention regulations over time.

**g) If policy/procedure was not adhered to in practice, why not?**

See 4.9(ii)(a).

**h) Did the local authority undertake any review or analysis of its records to establish what abuse or alleged abuse of children cared for in foster care may have taken place?**

No collective review or analysis of records to establish what abuse or alleged abuse of children cared for in Scottish Borders Council foster care may have taken place has occurred. Review and analysis has taken place on an individual case basis however.

**i) If so, when did the reviews take place, what documentation is available, and what were the findings?**

See above 4.9(ii)(i).

**j) How have the outcomes of investigations been used to improve systems, learn lessons?**

See 2.1(h), 4.7 and 4.8.

**k) What changes have been made?**

See 2.1(h), 4.7 and 4.8.

**l) How are these monitored?**

As well as standard reviews of policy and procedure, Children and Families Social Work practice is monitored and scrutinised on an on-going basis. Quality assurance mechanisms are in place and reported on to both the multi-agency Children and Young People's Leadership Group and the Child Protection Quality Assurance Sub-Group.

**m) Did the local authority afford former children in care access to records relating to their time in foster care?**

Yes, when requested – see 4.9(i)(d)(vii). There is little evidence or information on Scottish Borders Council's historical approach to former children in care accessing records relating to their time in foster care.

**n) If so, how was that facilitated?**

Currently, this occurs in two ways. Young people can make a Subject Access Request and receive a redacted copy of their case file or they can be supported to go through their file by a social worker. Often, following the completion of a Subject Access Request, applicants are offered the support of a social worker when reviewing their file.

**o) If not, why not?**

See 4.9(ii)(m).

**Present**

**p) With reference to the present position, are the answers to any of the above questions different?**

See above 4.9.

**q) If so, please give details.**

**r) Please provide details of the types of any records currently held relating to the children in foster care in respect of the following:**

**i. Children in foster care**

Case file held on Mosaic (Scottish Borders Council's electronic case file system) – this comprehensively records all case notes, chronology, assessments, documents, minutes, etc. associated with the child's case.

**ii. Staff with responsibilities for foster care**

Human Resources staff files and monthly staff supervision notes.

**iii. Foster carers**

Case file held on Mosaic (Scottish Borders Council's electronic case file system) – this comprehensively records all case notes, chronology, documents, assessments, minutes, Fostering Panel minutes, etc. associated with the child's case.

**iv. Complaints**

Complaints against foster carers are recorded on their individual file, recorded centrally (and retained for three years) and, sent to the Care Inspectorate as Notifiable Incidents.

External complaints are recorded by the Complaints Team in Scottish Borders Council.

**v. Investigations (both internal and external)**

Investigations against foster carers are recorded on their individual case file. External investigations may be retained, where relevant, by the Child Protection Committee.

**vi. Responding to requests from former children in foster care for information/records**

Recorded by the Data Protection Team.