

FOSTERING RELATIONS  
**PANEL ANNUAL REPORT**  
2017



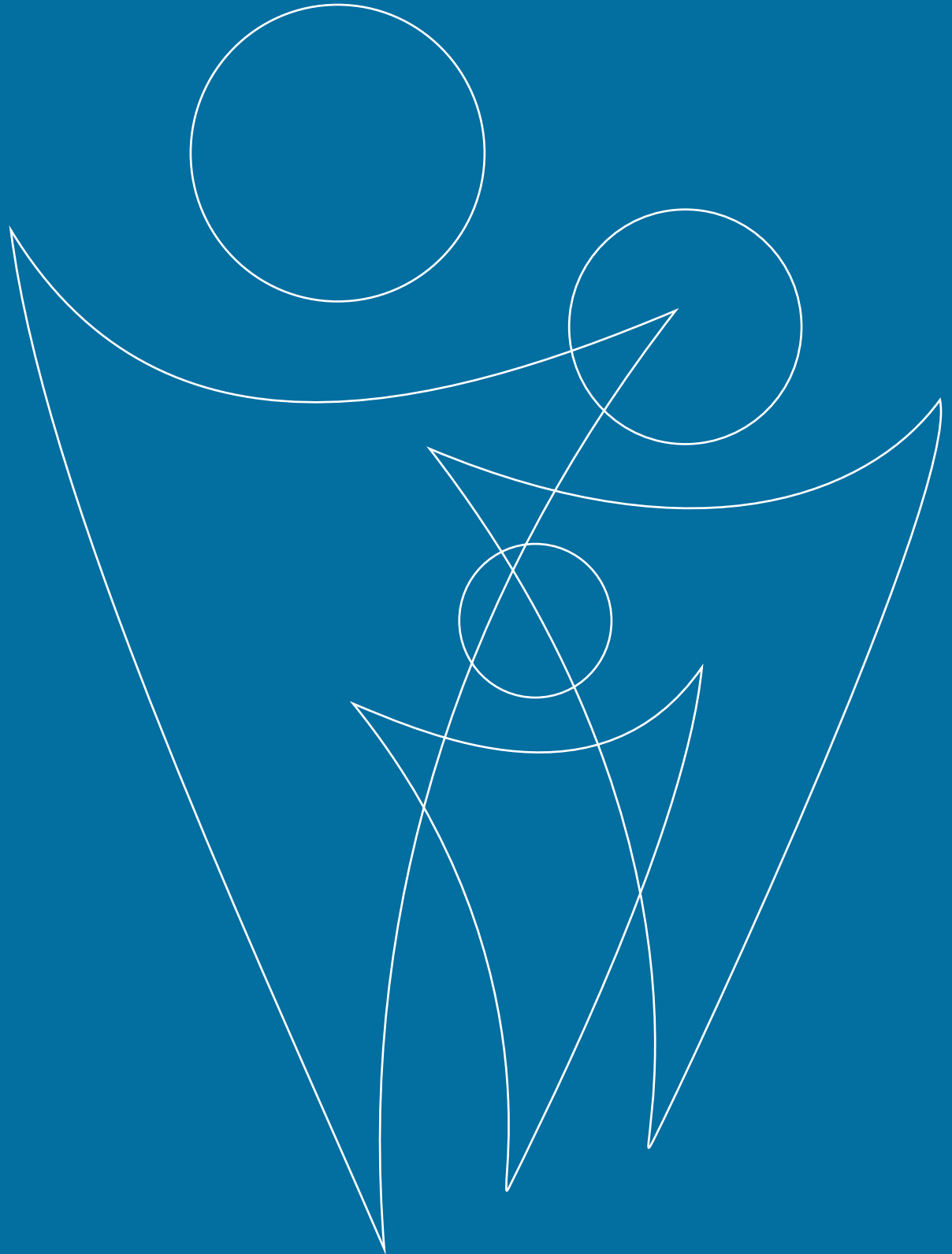
# CONTENTS

- 3 - INTRODUCTION
- 4 - DETAILS OF MEMBERS
- 8 - TERMS OF REFERENCE
- 9 - MEMBERSHIP
- 10 - SUMMARY OF WORK / PANEL  
APPRAISAL
- 11 - CHARMS / CARE  
INSPECTORATE
- 12 - PANEL MEMBERS  
QUESTIONNAIRES
- 13 - FOSTER CARERS  
QUESTIONNAIRES

# INTRODUCTION

This report will focus on three areas as prescribed by Standard 12/6 National Care Standards foster care and family placement services (2005)

- Details of Members
- Terms of Reference
- Summary of work



# DETAILS OF MEMBERS

## **LIZ COWLING - AGENCY DECISION MAKER**

I am a qualified social worker who has experience of working in the public and private sectors. I started my social work career in residential work as a residential worker and eventually an Office in Charge of a children unit. After qualifying as a social worker I became a social worker in a child protection team, eventually moving on to the management of this team. I have worked with the National Fostering Agency since 2001 during this time I have undertaken a range of positions from SSW, Placement Manager, Registered Manager and Quality Assurance Director all of which has helped me to have a comprehensive understanding of fostering and the regulations and legislation that governs us.

## **MAIREAD FAGAN (CHAIR)**

I have worked with children and young people for 10 years. I started my career as a Residential Worker in children's units in the Republic of Ireland before moving to Glasgow to train as a Social Worker. I have been a qualified Social Worker for 8 years and for the first 4/5 years worked with children and young people in an area team setting for the Local Authority. This involved working with children and young people who were looked after and accommodated, children and young people on the child protection register and children and young people who were looked after through Section 70 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. More recently, I have been working with children under the age of 5 years, in a multidisciplinary team comprised of Health, Social Work and Education staff.

Fostering Relations is the first fostering panel I have been involved with however, in my personal life, my parents have been foster carers for 25 years and I grew up within this household so am fully aware of the responsibilities and limitless support that foster carers are expected to provide for the children and young people in their care. I appreciate that this is a very difficult job and have great admiration for those who chose to become foster carers, offering safe and nurturing environments for the most vulnerable of children.

## **VICKY MARSHALL (CHAIR)**

I have been working with young people, children and families for over 12 years. My current role as Community Learning and Development Worker (schools) involves supporting families who demonstrate often complex family and parenting needs. This position requires a sensitive approach

and negotiating difficult and chaotic family relationships and behaviours. I am currently working on a project where I provide intensive one to one support to parents, foster/kinship carers to allow them to help their child achieve their social, educational, emotional and cognitive developmental milestones.

My other previous relevant experience includes the role of Chair, for over 10 years, on the Glasgow Children's Panel. My role there involved engaging with vulnerable children and their parents/carers, whilst making difficult decisions about the welfare of children at risk from harm. This experience allowed me to develop an understanding of the issues that face troubled and challenging families and the importance of a child's secure attachment. I also frequently had to liaise with foster carers and have gained an understanding of the legal context surrounding foster placements.

I have been a panel member with Fostering Relations for nearly four years and more recently took on the role of Vice Chair. I thoroughly enjoy being a panel member and feel privileged to be able to ensure the needs and welfare of children are met through foster carers providing a safe, nurturing and secure family placement. In addition, I want to ensure that every child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential within a nurturing fostering placement.

## **DAVID FORSYTH (CHAIR)**

My name is David Forsyth and I am married with two grown up children. Perhaps unusually for a Panel Member, my background is not social work or education but before I retired early four years ago, I was a chemist and spent all of my working career within the petrochemical business based in Grangemouth. Hopefully this gave me lots of experience in working with teams, problem solving skills and understanding of what people need to do the best job they can - all matters relevant to Panel work I hope you agree. However I do have some other elements to my background that hopefully contribute towards good Panel membership. My two daughters were adopted by us as babies and so we have had experience of the care system through that. I was also a Children's Panel Member for 12 years and then for 8 years a member of the Children's Panel Advisory Committee. As chair of this latter group, our committee over-saw Children's Panel Members' performance and played a leading role in recruitment of new Panel members for Stirling, Falkirk and Clackmannanshire.

helping my sister with her small engineering firm and when I have spare time, like to cycle, hill walk and ski in the winter. I am also a very average bridge player. We also have a caravan in Pitlochry which allows me to enjoy my hobbies

## **MICHAHAILA DOWNIE (INDEPENDENT PANEL MEMBER)**

I started my career working with children and young people in various residential settings. I began working as a support worker whilst studying for my psychology degree, working my way up to more senior levels. I supported some young people to move either into foster care and would work with them and their foster carers or if they were older into independent living.

I then worked as a service manager and then area manager with adults with disabilities, although my specialism is autism and learning disabilities.

I have also volunteered as a befriender to a couple of teenagers in foster care, both are now young women at university and whilst we have all moved to different parts of the country we still have a close bond and see each other frequently. By being a befriender I gained an insight into the foster care system that I never would have had solely through my work, as it was a very personal experience, seen through the eyes of the young people and their foster carers who I also have a close relationship with.

I hope my experience and knowledge gained will be able to help children, young people and foster carers as I understand how important foster placements are.

## **JILL GAWISH (INDEPENDENT PANEL MEMBER)**

I have worked with children and young people in a variety of settings – as a play leader in an after-school club; A nursery nurse in a nursery; a project leader in a through care setting for 16-18 year olds; a volunteer guider for rainbows and brownies; a volunteer befriender for a young carer's project and a volunteer helper in a club for children with special needs.

I have been working for CHILDREN 1st since 2005. During this time I have set up a befriending project for vulnerable 7-16 year olds. I have also directly supported young people age 14-19 (who are not engaged in education, training or employment) and their families through individual work, group work, family support, family group conferences and

matching with volunteer mentors. I currently work in the Argyle and Bute area as an advocate on behalf of children and young people who are on the child protection register and those in foster care. Many of the children I have worked with have been through the care system and as a result I have always had an interest in fostering.

## **LORNA KELLY (INDEPENDENT PANEL MEMBER)**

I have a BA Degree in Social Work and work full time for a large Local Authority in a team that carries out parenting capacity assessments and makes recommendations about the permanent care needs of looked after children. I have also worked in the early intervention team where pre birth child protection assessments were the focus of work. Prior to this I gained several years experience in a Children & Families team providing services in an area of high deprivation and disadvantage.

My work involves managing and planning for looked after children and the complex issues that affect their lives. I have been involved in planning for children's futures and supporting them and their carers in managing transitions and the issues surrounding a different placement settings including permanency.

I have additional roles of an independent panel member for Fostering Relations as well as being a fostering assessor for two other organisations where I am involved in preparing prospective foster carers for the fostering role and presenting at panel.

I have a post graduate qualification from Strathclyde University 'Securing Children's Future's' which has a particular focus on using research to inform decision making and improve outcomes for looked after children. Fostering is an area that I have a keen interest in as I have seen the difference that good placements can make to children's daily life and longer-term outcomes.

As a panel member with Fostering Relations, I hope I can influence outcomes for looked after children by being involved in the decision making process of registration of foster carers.

## **CHERYL LEGGETT (INDEPENDENT PANEL MEMBER)**

As a teenager, I was placed in voluntary foster care. It became apparent very quickly that I had a very positive experience compared to a lot of young people I met, having been placed with a family which perfectly met my needs. Even before leaving care, I began campaigning for my local authority, trying to raise awareness of the issues children and young people in foster care face, as well as encouraging more foster carers to come forward.

I left my foster family to study at university in Glasgow at the age of 18, and began working with the Fostering Network Scotland and the Scottish Through care and Aftercare Forum. I volunteered with these charities for over 11 years, and was involved in a number of campaigns including the annual Fostercare Fortnight drive to recruit more foster carers, and to change legislation, policy and practice in relation to young people leaving care.

I now work for the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare

Forum dealing with membership for the charity. Through my work I am in contact with a number of professionals who work with young people who are preparing to leave, or have already left, care in Scotland.

With my own personal experience, and having met lots of young people through my voluntary work, I have a good understanding of the kinds of issues children and young people face when they are in care, their needs and wants, and how their experiences (even from a very young age) can impact them in later life. This has given me a drive and passion to make a difference for children and young people in and leaving care.

## **CAROLANN LOUDEN (INDEPENDENT PANEL MEMBER)**

I have worked with children and young people for about 26 years, I spent many of these in Youth work working within community education and youth information & advice. I later moved to social work and firstly worked in a young person's homeless project, I then moved onto Residential childcare in local children's homes. I worked there for 13 years. I have just taken a career break recently. I have been a Foster Carer for 10 years and have had 2 boys for 9 ½ of those, I still have the youngest who is 17 and my oldest has moved on to through care. I have in recent months provided respite care to 2 girls and have only a few weeks ago taken another full-time placement.

I have been a Fostering panel member for another

organisation for about 1 ½ years now, I really enjoy this work and look forward to continuing it with Fostering Relations.

I have a real commitment to Fostering work and would say that it has definitely changed my life and the lives of the young people I have looked after.

## **ERIC MCQUEEN (INDEPENDENT PANEL MEMBER)**

I have been working in residential care for one of Scotland's oldest charities for 18 years looking after young people between the ages 12-18 years old who display a complex mix of social, emotional, educational and behavioural problems. Firstly as a sessional worker for 12 months and then as a full time Child & Youthcare worker for 6 years where I was keyworker to numerous young people looking after their welfare and working with their families before gaining promotion to my current role as Night Service Manager/ Duty Manager.

My current role involves line management of eight members of staff within two units on our campus and in one resource within the community where young people are supported and prepared for moving on into their own accommodation. Also oversee the running of the school and community based resources throughout the night while providing staff with advice and assistance where necessary. My position requires me to have good knowledge of the young people who reside in Kibble as I am the first port of call in the event of any situations that arise.

During my 18 years working with young people and families it has provided me with knowledge and understanding of the issues that many young people have experienced while living within the family home before being received into care. Therefore I believe I would be able to use my experience, knowledge and skills as a Fostering Relations panel member to help improve the lives of children and young people and hopefully provide carers with knowledge and advice that maybe helpful in their role.

## **CARRIE-ANNE REID (INDEPENDENT PANEL MEMBER)**

I am a serving Police Officer with Police Scotland with over 9 years' service. As I am sure you are aware child protection is very much a consideration in everything we do already as police officers. I feel that with my training and experience I am able to consider the information provided in each case presented and make the right decision and that my experience, assessments and considerations compliments

the mix of independent panel members that I have sat with. I am trained in Joint Investigative Interviewing and have carried out a number of these with children. From a personal perspective it gives me a great sense of pride to be part of the panel and to be able to contribute to a process that can change and improve the lives of children and foster carers alike.

## **RICHARD WAITE (INDEPENDENT PANEL MEMBER)**

Richard started in this field 28 years ago when he founded a residential service for vulnerable children and adults using innovative approaches to outdoor education and groupwork. He moved to the mainstream as a child and family social worker, managed two local authority children's homes in Fife and then ran a Barnardo's child and parent support project for children with offending behaviour.

Richard now works as an independent social worker, trainer and consultant with a specialism in intensive work with parents during children's rehabilitation. Richard trains foster carers, social workers, early years, health and education professionals in approaches to caring for children affected by attachment deficits and trauma as well as other aspects of caring for children and young people. Richard's training for Fostering Relations has included child protection, safer caring and permanence. Richard is also a Safeguarder for Children's Hearings, principal Child Care Consultant for the Lilius Graham Trust (a residential parent and child assessment centre) and an associate trainer and consultant with Kate Cairns Associates. Richard is married with two grown-up children and lives near Stirling.

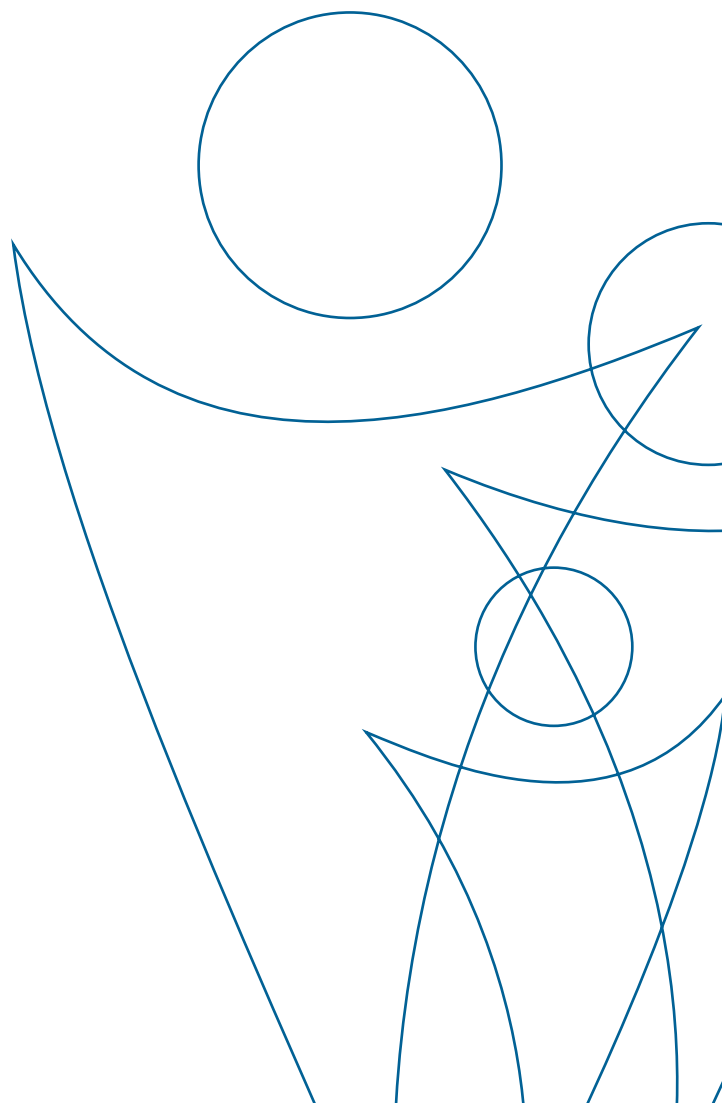
Qualifications:

- Certificate in Child Protection Studies, University of Dundee 2002
- Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work, University of Stirling 1997
- BA (Hons) Philosophy and Politics, University of Southampton 1985

## **HEATHER WATSON (INDEPENDENT PANEL MEMBER)**

Having raised four children (two of whom were adopted) my connection with the fostering panel team and the carers is close to my heart.

My early career was in nursing where I specialised in communicable diseases. Many of our patients were children and young adults. Once my own children were set on their school career paths, I returned to education and retrained as a Secondary school teacher, a job which continues to give me joy, yet presents daily challenges.





# TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Panel is appointed and operates in accordance with the regulations:

## **THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2009**

Fostering Relations must be satisfied that the numbers, qualifications and experience of individual members of the Panel enable it to efficiently discharge its functions.

## **THE KEY FUNCTIONS OF THE FOSTERING PANEL ARE:**

To consider any person referred as a prospective foster carer and to make recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker of the person's suitability to become a foster carer.

To determine the specific nature of the fostering task to be undertaken by the foster carer

To review any foster carer where:

- alternative of use is proposed
- termination of use is proposed
- there are any other circumstances in relation to a foster carer which may affect his/ her continued use as a carer
- it is the carer(s) first annual review
- to consider and make recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker on fostering matters and advise on any matter referred to it.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY FUNCTIONS OF THE FOSTERING PANEL**

- To give interim advice to assessing social workers who may request an opportunity to avail the Panel of information that may/ may not require consideration in the progression of the assessment.
- To receive feedback/ information about the work of the agency and the progress of placements
- Individual members may also be requested to attend other relevant meetings.





# MEMBERSHIP

The Panel pool shall consist of up to ten members, which includes both men and women. The Panel shall include:

- Chairperson
- Medical Adviser (cannot make up the quorum)
- Foster carer
- Service user representative
- Education Service representative
- Independent members
- Social worker (s)
- Fostering Relations representative (s) – up to two.
- Legal representative (cannot make up the quorum)

Each member of the Panel should possess such knowledge, skill or experience as will enable him or her to make an authoritative contribution to the assessment task.

Each member of the Panel will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure Scotland check. A reference will be sought from the local authority in which the member resides. Two personal references will be requested.

The Panel will have a balanced representation of people who have professional and personal experience/ knowledge relevant to family placement.

Members shall be appointed for three years but may be re-appointed for a second period of three years.

Meetings of the panel shall generally be convened on a monthly basis though it is anticipated that there will be a build up to this frequency as the agency develops.

The agency shall set the agenda for meetings and hold responsibility for sending out the appropriate papers timeously.

## QUORUM

The meeting shall be quorate when any three members are present. Where possible, this should always include one man and one woman.

## PARTICIPATION

The Chairperson shall invite all persons to contribute to the discussion, but only the Panel members present shall be responsible for the recommendation. If members are unable to make a unanimous recommendation, the matter shall be decided by a vote of members present.

## MINUTES

Minutes of each meeting shall be prepared by the panel administrator within seven days. The minute shall record the panel's discussion and its exact recommendation and reasons for these. The Panel Chair requires to sign the minute as an accurate reflection of the panel discussion. On receipt of the Chair's agreed minute, the minute shall then be e mailed to the attendant Panel members. Any comments must be made directly to the Chair within 24 hours.

## DECISION MAKING

The Panel shall convey its recommendation in the minute to the Agency Decision maker within two weeks of the Panel.

## RE-CONSIDERATION PROCEDURE

Applicants can ask for a review of the decision by writing to the Agency decision maker within twenty eight days. The Agency Decision maker may make arrangements to convene a review Panel who will consider the matter and make a recommendation to the Agency Decision maker who will notify the applicants of the decision.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Members shall be expected to treat written and verbal information with the utmost confidence, in accordance with the terms of their appointment. Information of a particularly private nature may be discussed before non members are asked to join the meeting. All papers shall be returned at the end of the Panel meeting.

## TRAINING

Fostering relations recognises its responsibilities to facilitate appropriate ongoing training to all Panel members. Training needs of Panel members will be identified through consultation between Panel and Chair. It is expected that Panel members will attend at least an annual training event.

## FEEES

Panel members will be paid a fee for serving on the Panel. This fee reflects the time and work involved in preparing for and attendance at Panel meetings. Panel members are expected to contribute fully in the consideration of any business presented to the Fostering Panel. The fee will be inclusive of the reading and consideration of all reports relative to the agenda of the day and travelling expenses.

# SUMMARY OF WORK

## BREAKDOWN OF PANELS & INDEPENDENT REVIEWS

### (INCLUDING UP TO DECEMBER 2016)

- 14 PANELS HELD IN 2016 – 12 IN DALGETY BAY & 2 IN HILLINGTON
- 15 INDEPENDENT REVIEWS – 12 IN DALGETY BAY & 3 IN HILLINGTON
- PLACEMENT DISRUPTION MEETINGS - 4
- 40 ITEMS TAKEN TO PANEL
- FOSTER CARER ANNUAL REVIEW - 19
- FOSTER CARER ANNUAL REVIEW/PERMANENT ASSESSMENTS - 3
- PERMANENT ASSESSMENTS - 1
- APPROVAL CHANGE - 5
- PROSPECTIVE FOSTER CARERS - 8
- CARERS CELEBRATING 5 YEARS WITH FOSTERING RELATIONS - 5
- CARER RESIGNATION - 2
- CARER DEREGISTRATION - 1

# PANEL UPDATES

PANEL AND INDEPENDENT REVIEWS HAVE BEEN ARRANGED UP TO MARCH 2018 (SUBJECT TO CHANGE).

THE PANEL ALLOCATION AVERAGE IS 5 PANELS PER YEAR.

SANDRA MANNING HAS RETIRED AS A PANEL MEMBER HAVING JOINED FOSTERING RELATIONS IN 2008.

CHARMS HAS BEEN USED TO DISTRIBUTE PANEL PAPERWORK FOR 2016. THERE HAVE BEEN ISSUES WITH THE PORTAL ALTHOUGH THE MAJORITY OF PANEL MEMBERS HAVE SEEN THIS INTRODUCTION AS A POSITIVE.

THE NEXT STEP FOR CHARMS IS TO OPEN SYSTEM ACCOUNTS FOR EACH PANEL MEMBER. THIS WILL ALLOW MEMBERS TO ACCESS THE PAPERWORK ON THE CHARMS SYSTEM.

FROM MARCH 2016 THE PANEL MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE WAS CHANGED TO REFLECT EACH PANEL ITEM. THIS WAS TO ALLOW THE FEEDBACK FROM PANEL MEMBERS TO BE USED BY FOSTERING RELATIONS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE PURPOSES ON REPORTS SUBMITTED TO PANEL.



# PANEL MEMBERS QUESTIONNAIRES

## HILLINGTON PANELS HELD: 2 - QUESTIONNAIRES COMPLETED: 20

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Requires Improvement
CALIBRE OF REPORTS PRESENTED	5	6	0	0
CALIBRE OF PRESENTATION	4	7	0	0
MEMBERSHIP MEETS THE STANDARD REQUIRED (STANDARD 12)	7	4	0	0
PREPARATION TIME	5	6	0	0
APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED	5	6	0	0

### COMMENTS:

Excellent presentation & excellent quality of reports, so much clarity in reports – thank you as this makes it easier for panel members.

AFCR reports very good – a few mistakes on Permanence Form F

## DALGETY BAY PANELS HELD: 11 - QUESTIONNAIRES COMPLETED: 85

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Requires Improvement
CALIBRE OF REPORTS PRESENTED	53	26	6	0
CALIBRE OF PRESENTATION	72	13	0	0
MEMBERSHIP MEETS THE STANDARD REQUIRED (STANDARD 12)	71	14	2	0
PREPARATION TIME	71	14	0	0
APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED	72	13	0	0

### COMMENTS:

Paperwork such as Unannounced Visit, H&S missing

Very good explanation of current situation & carers needs by SSW

Charms system used & worked well

# FOSTER CARERS QUESTIONNAIRES

Question	Response
Did you receive an invite to panel & did the panel commence at the pre-arranged time?	10 carers said yes 0 carers said no
Are there any comments you would like to make about the venue for panel?	Positive comments received such as: Perfectly happy with panel and venue to.
Were you informed who the panel members were and their role?	10 carers said yes 0 carers said no
Was the purpose/process of the meeting fully explained to you and all points/issues you felt to be important and an opportunity to ask any questions?	10 carers said yes 0 carers said no
Are there any improvements we can make?	10 carers said no Comments: None – support I received was outstanding and cannot thank Laura & Penny enough.



#### Contact

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