

The Irish Foster Care Association Welcomes the Publication of the HIQA Regulation Overview Report

Wednesday 3rd May 2017: The Irish Foster Care Association (IFCA) welcomes the HIQA Regulation Overview Report published and particularly the review of children's services that it conducted. IFCA is pleased that the majority of children in alternative care reported that they felt safe, were well supported by their carer or social care staff, were listened to and that they had someone to talk to. However, the report highlighted gaps in children being allocated a social worker and further challenges in terms of care planning, complaint management, safeguarding, aftercare planning and providing placements for children from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds.

IFCA also notes that the report highlighted that support to carers across foster care services required improvement including each carer being allocated a link social worker to support the foster carer, delays in the assessment and approval of relative foster carers and inadequate safeguarding and child protection practice in some residential centres and foster care services.

IFCA's CEO, Catherine Bond commented: "The safety of children in alternative care should be the paramount concern for all involved. Regular inspections and reports such as HIQA's today are welcome and essential to ensure there is ongoing monitoring and improvement of services to children in alternative care in Ireland. Findings from today's report reflect issues that have continually been identified in IFCA's annual and mid-year support service reviews. IFCA believes the implementation of national policies across many areas raised in the report and the publications and dissemination of these policies across all those working in alternative care in Ireland will go a long way to supporting both children, carers and social workers working in this area."

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Notes to Editors

The Irish Foster Care Association is the representative body for foster care in Ireland. Child-centred and rights-based, IFCA promotes excellence in foster care so that children have the best chances in life. We aim to accomplish this by providing information, support, and learning opportunities for all those involved in foster care through our direct work in Advocacy, Branch Development, Support, and Learning and Development. We are an independent, membership-led organisation. IFCA's National Support Helpline runs every week day from 11.00am - 3.00pm and can be contacted at 01 458 5123.