

Fostering Relations Ltd Fostering Service

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Type of inspection: Announced (short notice)
Inspection completed on: 30 May 2017

Service provided by:
Fostering Relations Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2007008983

Care service number:
CS2007145923

About the service

Fostering Relations Ltd is a service who provide long and short-term fostering placements to children and young people. The services main office is in Fife, though they also have a satellite office in Glasgow. Carers are generally located in the central belt of Scotland, though are predominantly in the Fife area. Referrals for fostering placements for children come from a number of local authorities.

This service was previously registered with the Care Commission and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

The service is staffed by a manager, team manager, four supervising social workers, two education workers whose role is to ensure young people's educational needs are met, a carer recruitment officer, an office manager and three administration staff.

At the start of the inspection, the service had forty-three households registered to provide care for children and young people.

What people told us

We spoke with three young people during the inspection. They all commented that they were very happy with the care they were receiving. One young person said the service was "amazing".

We also spoke with a total of nine foster carers. They all advised that Fostering Relations was a good service to work for, and that they received a high level of support from their supervising social workers. A number of carers advised that the service was proactive in addressing any care planning issues with local authorities.

Self assessment

The service submitted a self-assessment in June 2016, which detailed perceived strengths and areas for improvement.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Quality of care and support | 5 - Very Good |
| Quality of staffing | not assessed |
| Quality of management and leadership | 5 - Very Good |

What the service does well

We found that all carers we spoke with were highly committed to providing good quality care and, as a result, there were very good examples of positive outcomes for young people. This included carers giving children a sense of belonging through offering nurturing, long-term placements. Some young people had achieved very well educationally and we were aware of two young people who were planning to go to University, which would involve moving away from home but coming back to stay with their carers at holidays and weekends. The service was supporting these arrangements and we felt this was a very good example of promoting continuing care for young people.

While we did note some practice issues with a very small minority of carers, the service was very proactive at addressing any concerns. There had been ten unplanned endings of placements since the start of 2016, but the service always held a meeting, chaired by an independent social work consultant, to identify learning. Outcomes from these meetings were always appropriate and, if any concerns existed about carers, they would be referred for re-training or back to the fostering panel and be suspended from taking placements until this had happened. In this way, the service was promoting very positive safeguarding of young people.

We found that initial assessments on prospective carers were generally comprehensive and of a good standard. Carers advised they felt supported and comfortable talking to their social worker, even if they were discussing difficult life events.

After approval, we found there was a high level of support to carers, with supervising social workers undertaking monthly supervision with carers. Records indicated supervision of carers was robust. The service also operates an on-call system, where carers can contact a worker out of hours if there is any crisis within a placement.

A particular strength of the service is its commitment to ensuring carers and children participate in the running of the service. This includes activity days for all family members, a carers forum and carers support group. The service was aware of the need to make these initiatives as accessible as possible. For instance, the service was in the process of identifying activity groups for younger children as the current groups were more tailored for older children.

We found that a learning culture had been created within the service, and all staff spoke of being highly supported by management. There had been some significant changes in the staff team over the last year, but new staff appeared to be gelling well as a team. There were very good training opportunities for staff and carers alike, providing a theoretical base for their work. There was very regular supervision of staff, with areas for development being robustly addressed. Team meetings took place monthly with clearly agreed action points and lines of responsibility. A team development day had also taken place, which concentrated on three identified areas for improvement with an action plan and review date. This had the benefit of concentrating on achievable targets.

The service has introduced a new computer system for easy recording of relevant information on young people and carers, and this is being utilised effectively by staff.

We found that the fostering panel offered a good quality assurance mechanism to review new assessments and existing foster carers. Panel members were experienced and knowledgeable.

The service had developed "The Journey to Excellence", which was their team improvement plan. This document was very comprehensive and based on feedback from all stakeholders.

We discussed with the service the fact that they are currently only registered to care for young people until they are 18 years old. The service was very aware of the need to provide continuing care, and were seeking advice about how they could provide continuing care beyond 18. They were aware that this may involve registering separately as an adult care service.

What the service could do better

We noted that monthly reports on young people, which are sent to placing social workers, were currently written by the carer, and advised the service that if this exercise was jointly undertaken by the carer and supervising

social worker, this may help make these reports more comprehensive. We also noted that reports are not linked to the wellbeing indicators (safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included) identified in the Scottish Government policy Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). We felt that using these wellbeing indicators within monthly reports may help to develop consistency of assessment for young people.

We also noted that each young person had an outcome tracker in their file, but they had not been repeated, and for these to be effective they need to be done every few months to assess progress of young people over time. Again, these outcomes trackers were not linked to the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators and we gave the service advice that it may be advantageous to do so.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Inspection and grading history

| Date | Type | Gradings |
|-------------|--------------------------|---|
| 25 Jun 2015 | Announced (short notice) | Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 4 - Good |
| 27 Jun 2014 | Unannounced | Care and support 4 - Good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good |
| 26 Sep 2013 | Announced (short notice) | Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good |
| 2 Nov 2012 | Announced | Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 6 - Excellent Management and leadership 6 - Excellent |
| 26 Oct 2010 | Announced | Care and support Not assessed Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 6 - Excellent |
| 9 Dec 2009 | Announced | Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership Not assessed |
| 2 Oct 2008 | Announced | Care and support 4 - Good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good |

| Date | Type | Gradings | |
|------|------|---------------------------|--------------|
| | | Management and leadership | 3 - Adequate |

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