

St. Andrew's Children's Society Fostering Service Fostering Service

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Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 14 March 2017

Service provided by:
St. Andrew's Children's Society

Service provider number:
SP2003003803

Care service number:
CS2004080812

About the service

St. Andrew's Children's Society Fostering Service recruits and supports permanent long-term foster carers. Foster carers provide care for children and young people who have been assessed as not being able to live within their families. The service is based in Leith in Edinburgh with an office based in Aberdeen and is managed by a director and service managers who oversee the day-to-day work of the organisation.

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 2005.

What people told us

We spoke with several foster carers who all spoke very highly of the staff team. Foster carers were entirely enthusiastic and supportive of the service and reported that they felt included and respected within the service.

Self assessment

The service submitted a full and comprehensive self-assessment. We spoke with the service about ways that they could continue to develop their self-assessment to make it more outcome focussed.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

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

What the service does well

St. Andrew's Children's Society Fostering Service provides a well-managed fostering service for children and young people who have been assessed as being in need of this service. The service is delivered by a highly skilled staff team based in Edinburgh and Aberdeen. They recruit and support carer families to provide long-term permanent foster placements.

Foster carers consistently informed us that they felt very well supported by the team to carry out their role. We found that carers were very well trained and had access to a comprehensive and responsive training programme. The service worked from a SafeBase model and as such carers were highly skilled in building relationships and understanding children and young people from this perspective. Safer caring training formed a central part of all programmes including foster carers induction programmes. Review forums were timeous and structured well to ensure the quality of the service being provided. Safer caring was further considered within looked after children's processes and we found that the service was quick to challenge standards of care that were not felt to be of good enough quality for children and young people to thrive.

Assessments for potential foster carers were evaluative and well written. Relevant checks were carried out to give assurance that applicants were suitable to foster children. On approval, foster carers worked towards evidence based practice through good quality training and support from the staff team. Robust fostering panel processes reviewed these inputs.

Cases we tracked evidenced some very good outcomes for children in terms of their attendance at school and academic outcomes. One carer told us of the support she had received from her worker to ensure that the school were providing a nurturing environment for her foster child. She reported significant improvements to the child's overall wellbeing at school as a result. The service has worked with education services locally to build and develop positive working relationships and support the children that they work with. The service was considering inclusive and innovative ways of working with local education services to further support looked after children.

Children and young people were very well linked into health services and foster carers reported that health services were accessible. The files indicated that a good multi-agency approach helped to ensure that foster carers were accessing all suitable healthcare provision for children, and also confirmed that children had attended important medical appointments. Where required, the service had directly enhanced the need for mental health support by accessing counselling for a young person. The foster carer caring for this child told us that this had a profoundly positive impact on their wellbeing.

Support meetings were in place for foster carers and they told us that the forums available to them were beneficial and a way of sourcing additional support and camaraderie. However, some foster carers were concerned at the poor attendance recently. All of the foster carers that we spoke with told us of the exceptional skills of the staff team in supporting them. They told us that they felt very highly regarded within the service and respected within their role and that St. Andrew's worked like a family unit.

We found a well trained staff team who were confident about being able to provide the necessary practical and emotional support to foster carers, children and young people. Staff were highly experienced in all areas of fostering. Foster carers spoke positively of the team and we were told consistently about their high level of commitment to providing the best possible service. Where appropriate, staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). Staff were supported to meet the training and development requirements of the SSSC, and they received regular and focused supervision from managers which they reported to be beneficial.

Staff were well supported to access training and were encouraged to undertake training alongside the foster carers they supported. This ensured that training could be used as directly relatable to the foster carers situations and supervision could be used to further enhance the learning from the training. Foster carers told us that they gained a lot from this practice.

What the service could do better

We made a recommendation that the service formalise foster carers supervision. Whilst home visits were timeous and we could see that the focus of these were helpful from case notes this should be formalised to track the child or young person's fostering experience. A formal supervision agreement should be developed between the service and foster carers so that all parties know what to expect.

We suggested that the service may consider developing the structure or format further to take account of:

- Emotional risk and need
- Foster carer training and outcomes identified from the output of this
- SHANARRI
- Outcome focussed work
- Actions identified followed up at next session.

We noted that the service had been through some difficult changes since the last inspection and that this had

had an impact on staff morale across the whole service. It was notable that the quality of the service being provided to service users had not been impacted as a result of this. The service had a plan in place to begin to work towards moving forward positively.

The areas we have identified for improvement did not call into question the overall, very good practice highlighted within this report.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The service should formalise foster carer supervision processes and ensure that there is a supervision agreement in place to support this.

This is in accordance with: The National Care Standards, Foster care and family placement services - Standard 7: Information and advice.

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 Mar 2015	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 4 - Good
12 Mar 2014	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
17 Feb 2012	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 4 - Good
1 Feb 2010	Announced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership Not assessed
17 Dec 2008	Announced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good

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