

Foster Care Associates Scotland Fostering Service

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Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
5 May 2023

Service provided by:
Core Assets Scotland Limited trading
as Foster Care Associates Scotland

Service provider number:
SP2004941314

Service no:
CS2004083526

About the service

Foster Care Associates Scotland has been registered since December 2005, and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011. The independent agency provides a fostering service for children and young people aged 0-18 years and their families who are assessed as in need of this resource. The agency recruits, trains and supports fostering families to meet the needs of children from local authorities across Scotland.

About the inspection

This was an announced inspection which took place in April 2023. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection information about the service was reviewed. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with people using the service and their carers
- spoke with staff and management
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Additionally, we received and reviewed survey responses from 3 young people, 28 carers, 13 staff and 21 external professionals.

Key messages

Relationships between, children, young people, caregivers and staff were robust and positive.

Children and young people were respected by carers and staff, with individual needs, and interests supported.

Management actions to assure quality of service provision were robust.

Carers were well trained and supported.

Additional provider services in relation to education, vocation and therapeutic support impacted positively on children, and young people's outcomes.

There was a clear culture of ambition and of celebrating success which was led by staff and carers.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support people's wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

An evaluation of very good was made for this key question. It was assessed that there were major strengths in supporting positive outcomes. There were very few areas for improvement and those that did exist were assessed as having minimal impact on people's experiences and outcomes.

Children and young people living with caregiver families experienced affectionate, respectful, and secure care. They were included in wider family activities which supported their ability to foster lifelong connections. Carers and staff held positive, proactive, and enabling attitudes and approaches to supporting children and young people. This ensured that children and young people had access to the supports they needed when they needed them. The wider provider family was seen to be inclusive and proactive in encouraging carers, children and young people to participate and be connected. Offering person-centred services to young people to meet their individual needs such as tutoring, support with accessing training or employment or one to one support or therapy.

Staff were actively involved in carers, children and young people's lives and were seen as knowledgeable and supportive. They visited regularly and carers felt that they were easily contactable, and that support was always on hand. This meant that carers experienced ongoing support which directly impacted on children and young people's care.

Children and young people were informed of their rights through a number of the provider's publications. We received some survey responses from children and young people that indicated that they did not know what their plan was. However, this was offset by statements from young people and carers which suggested that all children and young people felt able to speak to their carer or the visiting supervising social worker.

Care was personalised to the children and young people with decisions about support taking into account individual strengths and choices. The provider, staff and carers supported ongoing relationships and contact with others including parents where appropriate. There were helpful provider documents and policy on brother and sister relationships, the content of which was evident in discussions with staff, reflected in care plans and a key component of matching.

Caregivers and staff were supported to develop and learn. The provider training resources for carers and staff were varied in content and appeared to be relevant, with reports that specific input from the therapy team was helpful in increasing understanding around trauma, attachment and other relevant mental health diagnoses. The training offered was seen to have directly informed carers' approaches which were trauma informed and social workers' planning, meaning that children and young people's care benefitted from the learning.

Staff advocated strongly for children and young people's access to mental health services and multidisciplinary connections across children's services was positive. This meant that children and young people had been able to access assessments from specialist services and that staff felt confident that these same services could be accessed for other children and young people. The provider's own therapeutic staff offered a wide range of training, support and one to one care to carers, children and young people. The use of team parenting, a therapeutically informed systemic approach to multiagency working was a particularly good example of the provider's relational approach to care and care planning, which built upon resilience within the systems. As this continues to develop the provider should ensure a consistency of the approach and consider incorporating recording of desired outcomes from meetings, to ensure that children and young people are supported towards positive destinations.

Children and young people experienced care with caregivers who were committed to supporting their emotional wellbeing and development. The support that they provided was enhanced by regular visits, reviews and supervision by the staff group. There were, however, examples where additional support could have been provided by the service to ensure that drift and delays in planning were addressed, and that decision making in relation to securing permanent living situations for children and young people occurred in timeframes that benefitted the child or young person.

The assessment of caregiver families and the subsequent preparation and training provided was of a high standard and comprehensive. Panels and caregiver reviews were occurring regularly, but would benefit from the required attendance of carers at all of their panel meetings. Positively this has been raised by the panel chair and is being acted upon by the provider. The panel process, decision making and review for members were all found to be robust. It was, however, thought that the panel may benefit from recruitment that included individuals from either health, or education backgrounds to increase the professional diversity. This would mean that decision making was appraised through a number of different professional lenses.

How well is our care and support planned?**5 - Very Good**

An evaluation of very good was made for this key question. It was assessed that there were major strengths in supporting positive outcomes. There were very few areas for improvement and those that did exist were assessed as having minimal impact on people's experiences and outcomes.

The service has robust systems for tracking and evaluating the outcomes of children and young people using the fostering, and adult placement services. Service tracking of complaints and child protection concerns was good, but would be improved by greater adherence to the providers own process around complaints investigation itself even when conducted by external.

The quality assurance process and direct provision of service is good. Assessments and care plans for children and young people using the service were also of a high quality. They would however benefit from greater emphasis on goals or tasks and setting timeframes for completion, possibly through greater use of SMART processes. The documentation provided by the service was of a high standard. There were however some adjustments which would benefit the service, and directly children and young people, such as further inclusion of carers own children as part of the annual review process if they live in the family home. The full completion of proforma documents such as carer supervision forms. Additionally the service notifications to the care inspectorate didn't fully match their own recordings, and there were instances when the timeframes for notifications were outside that recommended in the guidance.

Complaints

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

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Children, young people, adults and their caregiver families experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 Children, young people and adults get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
1.3 Children, young people and adults' health and wellbeing benefits from the care and support they experience	5 - Very Good
1.4 Children, young people, adults and their caregiver families get the service that is right for them	5 - Very Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects the outcomes and wishes of children, young people and adults	5 - Very Good

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