

Care service inspection report

Fostering Service - Kirkwall

Fostering Service

School Place

Kirkwall

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Type of inspection: Announced (Short Notice)

Inspection completed on: 27 February 2015



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Service provided by:

Orkney Islands Council

Service provider number:

SP2003001951

Care service number:

CS2004082094

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Summary

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection following other regulatory activity. For example, if we have to take enforcement action to make the service improve, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

We gave the service these grades

Quality of Care and Support	5	Very Good
Quality of Staffing	5	Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership	5	Very Good

What the service does well

The staff at the service were regarded by foster carers as supportive and helpful. There are good training opportunities for foster carers to the support groups are valued. The service continues to promote participation from carers, children and young people and is successful in achieving this. Children are benefiting from good quality care from the foster families in Orkney.

What the service could do better

The service is aware of the need to continue to increase the fostering households to ensure all children who would benefit from living in a foster household have that opportunity. Significant progress has been made in this area with the recruitment of three new foster households and the development of the Intensive fostering service (IFS).

What the service has done since the last inspection

The service has developed the Intensive fostering service which is soon to be operational. The service continues to integrate with health and education partners and children are benefiting from multi - agency resources and joint protocols to accessing services.

The service had employed another supervising social worker in recognition of the expansion of the service to include the IFS.

Conclusion

Orkney Islands Council continues to provide a high quality service to children in need of foster care and to foster carers who provide this support.

1 About the service we inspected

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com

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

Requirements and recommendations

If we are concerned about some aspect of a service, or think it could do more to improve, we may make a recommendation or requirement.

- **A recommendation** is a statement that sets out actions the care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service but where failure to do so will not directly result in enforcement. Recommendations are based on the National Care Standards, relevant codes of practice and recognised good practice.

- **A requirement** is a statement which sets out what is required of a care service to comply with the Public Services Reforms (Scotland) Act 2010 and Regulations or Orders made under the Act or a condition of registration. Where there are breaches of the Regulations, Orders or conditions, a requirement must be made. Requirements are legally enforceable at the discretion of the Care Inspectorate.

Orkney Islands Council Fostering Service comprises of a team manager, three supervising social workers. The staff team work also work with the adoption service. The service has also employed a qualified Social Pedagogue to take forward the work of the Fostering Networks 'Head, Heart and Hands programme to which Orkney Island Council has committed. The service also accessed services provided by a social work assistant who is part of the wider family resource service team.

The aims and objectives of the service are stated within the context of Orkney Islands Council's duties towards children and families.

Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of Care and Support - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of Staffing - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of Management and Leadership - Grade 5 - Very Good

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. You can find the most up-to-date grades for this service by visiting our website www.careinspectorate.com or by calling us on 0345 600 9527 or visiting one of our offices.

2 How we inspected this service

The level of inspection we carried out

In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections when we are satisfied that services are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care.

What we did during the inspection

This short notice announced inspection commenced on the 23 February 2014.

During the inspection, we spoke with the following:

- A group of foster carer attending the support group
- Three supervising social workers
- The social work assistant
- The social pedagogy worker
- The manager of the service
- The Principle Social Worker
- Two children's social workers
- The Nurse for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team
- We examined relevant documentation during the inspection some of which included; three foster carers files
- Three children's files
- Staff training and supervision records
- Staff meeting minutes
- Foster carer training records
- Support group minutes
- Panel business meeting minutes.

We looked at other relevant information provided including the service self-assessment.

We took all into account and provided verbal feedback to the fostering and adoption team on the 27 February 2015.

Grading the service against quality themes and statements

We inspect and grade elements of care that we call 'quality themes'. For example, one of the quality themes we might look at is 'Quality of care and support'. Under each quality theme are 'quality statements' which describe what a service should be doing well for that theme. We grade how the service performs against the quality themes and statements.

Details of what we found are in Section 3: The inspection

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

In any year we may decide on specific aspects of care to focus on during our inspections. These are extra checks we make on top of all the normal ones we make during inspection. We do this to gather information about the quality of these aspects of care on a national basis. Where we have examined an inspection focus area we will clearly identify it under the relevant quality statement.

Fire safety issues

We do not regulate fire safety. Local fire and rescue services are responsible for checking services. However, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant fire and rescue services so they may consider what action to take. You can find out more about care services' responsibilities for fire safety at www.firelawscotland.org

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at our last inspection

1. Following the last inspection the service received one recommendation which is detailed below.

The service should prioritise the recruitment of additional foster households. This is to meet with National Care Standards for Foster Care and Family Placements Services, Standard 1.2: Informing and Deciding.

This recommendation is: Met. Please see Quality Theme 3, Statement 3.

The annual return

Every year all care services must complete an 'annual return' form to make sure the information we hold is up to date. We also use annual returns to decide how we will inspect the service.

Annual Return Received: Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

Every year all care services must complete a 'self assessment' form telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this assessment is accurate.

The service provided a self assessment which detailed the service strengths and areas for improvement.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

We met with a group of foster carers and one foster carer individually. Foster carers told us that the staff at the service are very supportive and respond promptly to requests for assistance.

Communication with the service was described as being very good and responsive; this included any communication with administrative staff and hours out of support.

We were told that training opportunities were good and gave them additional insights into the needs of the children placed with them.

Foster carers confirmed that they held foster placement agreements for children placed with them and when possible they were provided information about the child prior to placement.

Foster carers stated that the service was growing in strengths and effectiveness over the last 4 - 5 years and it was a great service.

We were advised that sometimes managing attendance at meetings for children could be challenging due to the need to take time off from work. An issue which was raised, and was outside the control of the service was contact agreements made by children's panel members which, in the view of carers, did not reflect the best interests of the child. A support group for birth children of foster carers was suggested as an area for development.

Taking carers' views into account

We did not meet with any birth parents.

3 The inspection

We looked at how the service performs against the following quality themes and statements. Here are the details of what we found.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.

Service strengths

The service had a participation policy which was updated annually. We found that the service valued the views of foster carers and this was reflected in the way action was taken in relation to suggestions received. Examples of this, were providing evening training and lunch time support groups to enable foster carers who worked to attend.

Prior to approval applicants were asked about their experience of the assessment process, the quality of training provided and of attending the fostering panel.

Regular foster carer support group meetings took place. This forum was well attended and foster carers told us this gave the opportunity to share skills, knowledge and plan social events.

The foster home review was another forum for foster carers to give their views about the quality of support and training provided. We found that foster carers were happy with the support provided and the training attended.

Experienced foster carers participated in the preparation groups for those applying to become foster carers. This was valued by applicants as it provided insight into the rewards and challenges of fostering from a carers view point.

Foster carers participated in children's Looked after child care reviews and contributed to decision making. We also found that foster carers contributed to the permanency planning process for children including providing vital information about the child's personality, routine, preferences and needs to the adopters.

Foster carers were involved in staff selection and recently took part in the recruitment of a new social worker to the service.

Throughout the year the service provided social even such as, summer barbeque, Christmas party and Easter events. The planning of these events was jointly organised between foster carers, adopters and the staff.

Engagement with children and young people living 'in care' continued to be promoted with a specialist social pedagogy worker leading on participation events. Orkney Islands Council had recently secured a grant from the Fostering Network to enhance the wellbeing of children. This had used this to provide outdoor and creative activity events. This had provided the opportunity to come together for fun and socialising and build skills and confidence. It is proposed that the artwork created will be used in the newly build children home on the island.

Formal forums, such as, the child's looked after review was also an opportunity for young people to provide their views of the fostering service.

The service also promote the involvement of young people. More recently a young person with a care experience had taken part in the assessment centre interviews for those applying to become intensive support carers.

Areas for improvement

The service was reviewing the foster home review paper work and was intending to re-introduce the foster carers report to the process.

The service was also planning to introduce support forums for birth children of foster carers in recognition of the impact fostering has on the whole family and to follow-up on requests for this provision.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Statement 2

We enable service users to make individual choices and ensure that every service user can be supported to achieve their potential.

Service strengths

Following admission, a six weekly post placement meeting took place which identified the needs of the child, including health, educational, and contact arrangements. Placement agreements were completed and detailed the individual support to be provided and by whom and included the reasons for the placement and likely duration of the child being accommodated.

Regular looked after children reviews were held and plans were progressed effectively to meet the current and future needs of the child. We found that children's care plans were extremely detailed regarding the child's needs and how these would be met and reflected good multi-agency working.

We were told by foster carers that access to mental health services for children was good. The local CAMH team had an agreement that looked after children would be seen for a consultation within two weeks of the referral. Play therapy was also made available to children.

Risk assessments were in place for children who had complex needs or exhibited challenging behaviour. We found foster carers worked well with supervising social workers and social workers in tailoring support accordingly.

Foster carers were providing a nurturing environment and helping children recover from trauma. This was strengthened by regular training by an independent social worker specialising on childhood trauma, loss, attachment and providing a secure base. Individual consultations were also provided to foster families.

We found children were making good progress across many aspects of their lives, such as developing social skills, improved physical and mental health and improved academic performance. The recent activity events for children and young people further enhanced opportunities for new experiences, learning, achievement and esteem building.

The social pedagogy worker continued to contribute to team meetings providing insight and suggesting potential opportunities to maximise child centred practice. The social work assistant continued to provide individual support to young people, offer continuity to contact arrangements and carry-out life story work.

Foster carers supported children maintain contact with birth families when appropriate. Respite was also provided to vulnerable families. This gave children the chance to enjoy a break with activities in a settled home and birth parents the opportunity to rest or address identified issues. We found that foster carers worked hard to overcome any issues with birth parents, were very supportive and understood the reassurance this would give children separated from their parents.

We found foster carers contributed to children's memory boxes by taking photographs and keeping mementos to record their time with them.

The staff at the service completed the assessment of those wishing to become foster carers within a six month timescale. Foster carers told us that the preparation groups were helpful as it gave them insight into the needs of vulnerable children. Training was provided to foster carers which had included; attachment and brain development, managing challenging behaviour and child protection. Some carers had been given the opportunity to attend training and conferences on the mainland.

Foster carers received regular contact with supervising social workers. Foster carers told us they received good support and they valued the advice and guidance offered. We were told that requests for assistance were responded too promptly by the team. This included respite time, training and additional support for children.

Areas for improvement

We found that although children's care plans were detailed they were not always using 'Getting it right for every child' well-being indicators, known as the Shanarri indicators of; safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected, and included. Although this was not the direct responsibility of the fostering service, it was agreed during the inspection feedback that this would be raised with the children's social workers when reviewing and completing the plan.

At the inspection feedback we discussed ways in which the principles of social pedagogy could be embedded in the systems and practice within the fostering service. We were advised that this is of ongoing consideration within the Orkney Island Council service to children.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service.

Service strengths

Based on our findings in relation to Quality Theme 1, Statement 1, we accept that a very good standard had been achieved in relation to this Quality Statement.

Areas for improvement

No additional areas for improvement were identified under this Statement.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Statement 3

We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.

Service strengths

Foster carers told us that the staff team were supportive, professional and approachable. We were told the support and knowledge provided was valued.

We met with the supervising social workers, social pedagogy worker and the social work assistant. Staff told us that team morale was good and support from management continued to be readily available and appreciated.

This year the structure of the team had changed and workers would share both fostering and adoption work to facilitate the development of skills and knowledge in both areas. The development of the intensive fostering service (IFS) had progressed with the assessment almost completed of the first intensive support foster carers. Policy and procedures were being developed and a proposed training plan for the IFS carers was in place.

A new social worker had joined the team bringing knowledge and skills of working families with children with additional support needs. We were told the team were very welcoming, helpful and supportive. We observed that the induction plan was robust and well structured.

Team meetings took place weekly and there has been the opportunity for team development sessions.

Staff members received regular supervision and an annual appraisal. Supervising social workers professionally qualified in social work and were registered with the Scottish Social Service Council.

We found staff kept abreast of latest research and best practice. There was a well-equipped resource library and staff had access to BAAF (British Agency for Adoption and Fostering), made use of the internet to source specific reading materials.

Areas for improvement

The service could consider updating the training plan to take into account the changing roles of worker and the new IFS service and current developments in foster care in Scotland.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service.

Service strengths

Based on our findings in relation to Quality Theme 1, Statement 1, we accept that a very good standard had been achieved in relation to this Quality Statement.

Areas for improvement

No additional areas for improvement were identified under this statement.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Statement 4

We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide

Service strengths

The manager met regularly with the locality management and the head of service to discuss specific cases and also to agree strategy in meeting the needs and promoting good outcomes for Orkney Islands vulnerable children. This had led to identifying a need for an intensive fostering service. It is anticipated that this service when fully operationally will reduce the need for children to leave the islands for care resources, and give scope for more children to experience living in a family setting as opposed to residential care. The development of this service was coordinated by a dedicated project manager and we found that set targets had been achieved. This included bench marking with other agencies, financial costing, draft foster carers agreement and proposed training programme.

The manager, principal social worker and panel chair had met to agree an improvement agenda for the panel which has an action plan to be followed up.

The manager had compiled a report of the work and achievements of the service during 2014 and development agenda for the year ahead. This detailed the developments and progress made by the service and reflected the findings of the inspection, which are detailed throughout this report.

We found that assessments of applicants contained an analysis of the applicant strengths and motivation to become foster carers. Foster carers told us that assessing workers helped them identify the type of fostering they wished to provide whether temporary or permanent and of their skills. Mandatory checks were conducted to ensure their suitability as carers and reviewed as required.

We found unannounced visits were carried out to foster homes and a recording of the findings recorded. We found that additional unannounced visits were used when additional support was required.

The fostering and permanence panel members were robust in the reaching their recommendations. The panel chair was independent of the organisation and was knowledgeable of fostering and adoption, the needs of vulnerable children and the qualities required to be a good foster carer. This meant that only when completely satisfied as the suitability of the applicant did the panel make their recommendation to the agency decision maker. Panel minutes detailed as to how the recommendation was reached and of any additional tasks to be carried out.

The panel comprised of members who also had insight into the needs of vulnerable children and young people and the qualities needed to be a good foster carer.

The panel was used for matters requiring advice, for example, we found that the panel were consulted and updated regarding the development of the IFS.

There was a disruption procedure for staff to follow in the event of a foster placement breakdown.

There was a complaint procedure and foster carers were aware of how to access this. Notifications were made to the care inspectorate as required.

Areas for improvement

The service was due to re issue annual questionnaires to foster carers to inform the participation and development service. The service will be continuing to progress the service improvement action plan and the panel improvement action plan.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

4 Other information

Complaints

No complaints have been upheld, or partially upheld, since the last inspection.

Enforcements

We have taken no enforcement action against this care service since the last inspection.

Additional Information

None.

Action Plan

Failure to submit an appropriate action plan within the required timescale, including any agreed extension, where requirements and recommendations have been made, will result in the Care Inspectorate re-grading a Quality Statement within the Quality of Management and Leadership Theme (or for childminders, Quality of Staffing Theme) as unsatisfactory (1). This will result in the Quality Theme being re-graded as unsatisfactory (1).

5 Summary of grades

Quality of Care and Support - 5 - Very Good	
Statement 1	5 - Very Good
Statement 2	5 - Very Good
Quality of Staffing - 5 - Very Good	
Statement 1	5 - Very Good
Statement 3	5 - Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership - 5 - Very Good	
Statement 1	5 - Very Good
Statement 4	5 - Very Good

6 Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
13 Mar 2014	Announced	Care and support 4 - Good Staffing 5 - Very Good Management and Leadership 5 - Very Good
8 Mar 2012	Announced	Care and support 5 - Very Good Staffing 5 - Very Good Management and Leadership 5 - Very Good
18 Aug 2010	Announced	Care and support 4 - Good Staffing 4 - Good Management and Leadership 4 - Good
7 Oct 2009	Announced	Care and support 4 - Good Staffing 3 - Adequate Management and Leadership 3 - Adequate
12 Nov 2008	Announced	Care and support 3 - Adequate Staffing 4 - Good

Inspection report continued

		Management and Leadership 3 - Adequate
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All inspections and grades before 1 April 2011 are those reported by the former regulator of care services, the Care Commission.

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