

## Stirling Council - Fostering Service

### Fostering Service

Children's Services - Social Work  
Stirling Council  
Municipal Buildings  
8-10 Corn Exchange Road  
Stirling  
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Telephone: 01786 471177

Type of inspection: Announced (short notice)  
Inspection completed on: 23 May 2017

**Service provided by:**  
Stirling Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002689

**Care service number:**  
CS2005089728

## About the service

Stirling Council provides fostering service for children and young people who have been assessed as being in need of this. The service is based in Stirling and recruits and supports carer families to provide a range of fostering placements.

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

## What people told us

We spoke to foster carers within their homes, at events and within a focus group. Foster carers consistently told us of the high quality supports they received from the service.

## Self assessment

The service provided a comprehensive self-assessment document.

## 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

Stirling Council provides a well-managed, high quality 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 and effective staff team based in Stirling. The service recruits and supports carer families to provide a range of high quality fostering placements.

Foster carers consistently informed us that they felt very well supported by the staff team to carry out their role. We found that carers were very well trained and had access to a comprehensive and responsive training program. We found carers were highly skilled and knowledgeable in building relationships and understanding children and young people from this perspective. Safer caring training formed a central part of all programmes and was regularly reviewed within foster carer's supervision sessions and annual reviews. 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 with considered conclusions. 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 regular monthly supervision. 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

some positive academic outcomes. The service was looking at inclusive and innovative ways to continue to improve their links with local education services to further support looked after children and reported that relations between social work and education were progressing and developing.

Children and young people were very well linked into health services and foster carers reported that health services were very accessible. Foster carers and staff also reported that the LAAC nurse was accessible and supportive when needed. We found some high quality inputs from the CAMH team for children and foster carers who were already receiving a service from them. The files indicated that a strong 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.

Support meetings were in place for foster carers and they told us that the forums available to them were highly beneficial and a way of sourcing additional support and camaraderie. 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, respected and well considered within their role.

We found a highly motivated and 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 all knowledgeable and 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. They were all 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 a their manager which they reported to be very beneficial. All staff members told us that they felt well supported and fully respected in their roles. We felt that this reflected the high level of motivation and commitment from the team.

Staff very were well supported to access training and were encouraged to undertake training alongside the foster carers they supported. This ensured that training was 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

Stirling Council has recently separated from their joint arrangement with Clackmannanshire Council and, as such, the strategic vision and development plans need time to be embedded and developed. We did find cases where some children's plans were delayed or decision making not clear during the inspection process due to the impact of the recent separation. However, we felt confidently reassured that both staff and management at Stirling Council were aware of these instances and supporting the improvement of these situations to the best of their abilities.

We spoke with the team about ways they could consider continuing to develop foster carer profiles to better demonstrate their knowledge and skills as they learn and develop. We discussed ways that this could be developed to demonstrate more sophisticated matching.

Foster carers supervision was timeous and we could see that it was helpful. 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.

The fostering panel raised the issue of de-briefing and peer discussions and support. We fed this back to the service for their consideration.

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: 0

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
16 Jul 2015	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
19 Jun 2014	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
18 Sep 2013	Announced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
29 Sep 2011	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
12 Jan 2011	Announced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
19 Feb 2009	Announced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good

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