

Care Visions Fostering Fostering Service

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Type of inspection:

Announced (short notice)

Completed on:

23 May 2018

Service provided by:

Care Visions Fostering Ltd

Service provider number:

SP2010011158

Service no:

CS2004080447

About the service

CareVisions Fostering Service has been registered since November 2005, and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011. The service is a not for profit organisation.

CareVisions provides care placements in a family setting for children who have been assessed as in need of this service. The service Head Quarters is based in Lockerbie with staff located in Stirling providing support to carers in Central Scotland.

Children are placed by local authorities who retain statutory responsibility for their welfare, and the service works closely with these placing local authorities. At the time of this inspection 110 approved foster carers households were supported by the service, and 144 children were placed with foster carers, on either an interim, long term or permanent basis.

The service aim to:

Provide a service that is focused on meeting the needs of young people in care and helping them fulfil their potential.

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What people told us

We met with three foster carers in a group setting, and carried out four home visits to meet with carers and children. We were limited in relation to the number of children we could speak with during visits due to their young age, or due to sensitivities in some cases, however we were able to observe the interaction between carers and children. We also had access to documentary evidence of other feedback provided to the service. The majority of feedback was very positive with an emphasis on the support provided by supervising social workers and the relationships developed by these staff with carers and young people.

Foster Carers Commented:

'We have excellent training, it is really beneficial and provides good insight into the needs of the children we look after'

'Communication with our worker is really good, always at the end of a phone or you can talk with another member of staff who will be able to help'

'The matching of children is very good, and this improves outcomes for children'

'We would like to get more opportunities to build on our relationships with the residential staff through joint training it could help us get a better understanding of our roles'

'Carevisions offer excellent support and I have never experienced any issues with the service since joining in 2010'

'Communication, support, training are really excellent, how they take care of you and are always available to support you'

'We found the ending supervision helpful after we had to submit notice on a placement'

'We are regularly kept up to date, we know who to contact for support and we find the training very informative'

'The support we get from our supervising social worker is invaluable and she is always available when needed'

'The TCIF training helped shift my understanding of my role as a foster carer'

As the findings of this inspection are based on a sample of young people, Inspectors cannot assure the quality of experience for every single foster carer or child receiving a service.

Self assessment

A self assessment was not requested for this inspection year, however, the registered manager provided an fostering service review and evidence of recent work and practice highlights.

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

Regular preparation groups were held for prospective applicants, and feedback to the service demonstrated that these were valued by those who had attended. Experienced foster carers, and care experienced young people contributed to discussions, and this enabled a realistic picture to be presented about the rewards and challenges of fostering from their unique perspective. The on-going training plan for approved foster carers was also of very good quality and foster carers informed us that they could request any specific training that might help them meet the needs of vulnerable children and that this would be responded to.

Assessments for potential foster carers, approved foster carers and carers wishing to pursue caring for young people permanently, were generally of a very good standard. They clearly highlighted any potential vulnerabilities and particular strengths of carers, and second opinion visits had been re-established as an additional quality assurance system. These visits also enable potential foster carers to give feedback on the assessment process directly to the management of the service. Foster carer review reports, included the views of young people in placement and in addition any birth children. These were completed in a more engaging and purposeful manner than we noted at the last Inspection.

Changes to any foster carer registration were considered at the fostering panel and appropriately endorsed by the agency decision maker. The panel chair informed us that a robust system was in place to ensure that foster carers were returned to panel within a four week period once temporary approvals had been granted. We confirmed this during the Inspection, and welcomed this level of good practice.

Foster carers that we spoke with were focussed on providing positive, caring environments for children and understood that to do this they needed to build positive attachments with those they care for.

For many children purposeful activity such as sport, drama and musical pursuits was part of their daily routines. This meant that children had the opportunity to participate in local community resources, and establish meaningful friendships. As a result, children and young people were having their needs met and were achieving good outcomes.

Children's aspirations were encouraged by foster carers, and wherever agreement could be reached opportunities were provided to maintain and build upon positive relationships with family and friends. We noted some very sensitive work being undertaken to ensure that children were fully supported by their carers during contact with birth parents, and it was encouraging to hear that some carers had developed appropriate relationships with these parents. This approach can help children and young people make sense of their history and foster carers have a crucial role to play in this.

All children and young people placed within the service were in an educational placement, and foster carers were being very well supported by the education services manager. An example of this would be support to attend school meetings for children and young people, and a dedicated weekly help-desk where any general concerns could be discussed or advice and guidance given. This approach helps to build carers confidence and improved their knowledge and understanding on education matters, and in turn improve outcomes for children.

There had been some changes to management and staffing since the last Inspection. This included the introduction of two operational manager roles, and this had created a change in the supervisory relationship for staff, which they felt was overall beneficial. These managers also informed us that they had received a high level of support from senior managers, and that training was now in place to help them further develop supervisory skills.

Staff presented to us as being committed and child centred in their approach. New workers added to the considerable skill set of the existing staff group, and staff were encouraged to pursue development opportunities such as post qualifying awards in practice teaching and child protection. Staff told us that they were able to participate in good quality training that was relevant to their role. We were informed that although there had been some unsettling changes within the service, peer support remained positive and staff were able to feedback their views to managers through team meetings and development days.

Care visions staff and managers acknowledge that high levels of therapeutic support are integral to helping children recover from adversity and negative life experiences. Putting this theory into practice can be challenging at times, however we were encouraged to find that this ethos generally informed all aspects of the services' work practice. As a result, we identified some very good outcomes for children including, young children responding well to routines and boundaries, some children returning to birth family, and children making very good progress in terms of their overall health and emotional wellbeing. Children we observed during home visits were in stable, nurturing homes and experiencing caring, warm secure relationships.

What the service could do better

The recruitment of foster carers remains a key priority for the service, and a marketing and advertising campaign to improve recruitment is currently underway. The service intends to make use of social media and also continue to heavily involve foster carers. We will look at this area during the next service Inspection.

Although we acknowledge that regular supervision of carers is always carried out, we found that there was a lack of consistency for both carers attending on a regular basis if this was a two carer household. In addition, for some of the cases we tracked the same difficulties were also noted when carers were attending training. We suggested to Managers at feedback that the service should review their policies and procedures in these areas.

During case tracking we noted that the case recordings did not reflect the level of support offered to the foster carer following the child moving on. Managers told us that they would review this case, and provide any further support necessary. We would also ask the service to look at further training for carers in this area, and provide staff with guidance about what should be expected in terms of support/appropriate interventions. We will look at this area during the next service Inspection.

The service intend to allocate assessments for potential foster carers within their own teams and to no longer use external assessors. This should promote continuity of worker for the potential carers once they are approved. However, managers need to ensure that staff have both workload capacity and the skills required to carry out this task effectively. We will look at this area during the next service Inspection.

We were informed by foster carers, that there had been some instances where they had not been provided with adequate information about children prior to them being placed. We also found this in some of the cases we tracked. This will form a recommendation (1)

When we raised any areas of concern about practice, the service took this seriously and where necessary provided suitable explanations. Suggestions about improvements received from foster carers were also shared with Managers during the Inspection and at feedback. Managers demonstrated commitment to act promptly on areas identified.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. When a child is being considered for matching through the referral process, the service must ensure that it has all the necessary information required to enable sound decision making prior to placing a child.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resource" (HSCS 4.23).

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
13 May 2016	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 4 - Good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 4 - Good
2 Sep 2015	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 4 - Good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 4 - Good
12 May 2015	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 2 - Weak Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
22 May 2014	Announced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
13 Jun 2013	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 4 - Good
6 Jul 2012	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 4 - Good
14 Oct 2010	Announced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 4 - Good
10 Sep 2009	Announced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
26 Sep 2008	Announced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good

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