

Argyll and Bute Council Fostering Services Fostering Service

Social Work Service Centre
Soroba Road
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Telephone: 01631 572925

Type of inspection:

Announced (short notice)

Completed on:

13 June 2019

Service provided by:

Argyll and Bute Council

Service provider number:

SP2003003373

Service no:

CS2004082341

About the service

Argyll and Bute Council provides a fostering service for children and young people who have been assessed as being in need of foster care. The service headquarters is based in Dunoon with the family placement team members based in Helensburgh, Dunoon and Lochgilphead with staff supporting fostering households throughout the entirety of Argyll and Bute.

The family placement team comprises of a practice lead and six supervising social workers. The team recruit, assess and support foster carers and share time working within Argyll and Bute Adoption Services. At the time of the inspection there were 36 children and young people living in 35 registered fostering households.

As the findings in this inspection are based on a sample of children and young people, we cannot assure the quality of service received by every single child in the area in need of care and protection.

This service has been registered since 2005. The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.gov.scot.

What people told us

During this inspection we talked to four foster carers through both home visits and telephone calls and we received one completed care standards questionnaire. We did not meet with any young people during this inspection due to geographical challenges and the sensitivities of the individuals. Feedback from carers was generally positive with some of the comments as follows:

"I get a lot of support from my social worker and love seeing the small changes I am making to the young person in my care"

"We can see an improvement in the decision making for young people who can't live at home"

"We access a lot of training on our own but know that there are support groups and training provided by Argyll and Bute"

"We get regular supervision and any queries we have are always responded to quickly"

"The positive relationship I have with my worker has helped us work together for the benefit of the young people who come to live with me"

"I attend the foster carer days which I find are really useful sources of information and also give me a chance to catch up with other carers"

"I really enjoy what I do"

"I can see huge differences in the young people"

"We received a lot of support from another carer which was invaluable"

Self assessment

There was no self-assessment requested for this inspection year. We took into account the information provided within the service's annual return and within the service development plan which was comprehensive and linked to the Health and Social Care Standards. We also met with the manager of the service which supported our evidence.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Quality of care and support | 5 - Very Good |
| Quality of staffing | not assessed |
| Quality of management and leadership | 4 - Good |

What the service does well

We found that young people were being kept safe, healthy and nurtured and there was ample evidence of positive outcomes. Young people were being provided with routines, boundaries and new experiences which was helping them recover from their experiences. We saw carers investing in supporting young people to understand their life stories and develop self esteem and confidence. Young people were keeping active through attending a number of clubs such as gymnastics, swimming, football, scouts and brownies.

Young people's health needs were being met through initial assessments within 28 days of being accommodated and we saw evidence that the mental health status of the young people was being discussed at the 72 hour reviews. There was evidence of routine reviews of young people's mental health and wellbeing and also consideration of immunisation status, smoking, alcohol and substance usage.

Carers spoke respectfully of birth family and we heard of carers remaining in contact with young people who have moved on to adopters/home and value being placed on the young person's identity and story being held.

Carers had regular contact with their supervising social worker and monthly supervision was evidenced through signed supervision records. Young people were seen to be having regular contact with the Who Cares? Scotland worker which was ensuring that their views were being sought and heard. Carers had access to the Fostering Network for additional support if required.

Carer reviews were being held within timescales and reports reflected that systems were in place to evidence appropriate checks had been completed therefore keeping young people safe.

We found detailed and sensitively written household and individual safer caring plans in all cases we sampled. Carer reports for looked after reviews were detailed and evidenced nurture and knowledge of young people.

We heard that the manager of the service attends a variety of multidisciplinary forums and during our inspection we saw that a considerable level of work is being undertaken with Celcis in relation to permanence and care excellence (PACE) programme. This will help improve outcomes by timely decision making about where a child or young person will live on a permanent basis.

The panel consisted of a good mix of skill and there was a consistency of membership and experience which improved the quality assurance of practice, assessments and decision making. Feedback had been

requested and analysed which showed us that the service valued the participation and views of those who attended panel.

Staff commented that there is good moral within the team and they told us that they are having monthly supervision and felt well supported by their line manager. A few staff voiced a frustration with the impact of budget cuts on the availability of staff training, however, we were able to see that several of the staff had undertaken training such as 'Securing Children' Futures' which enabled them to be informed in their support to carers and young people.

We looked at child protection procedures and practice and were satisfied that there were procedures and practice in place to ensure service users are protected.

What the service could do better

We discussed with the service that it would be helpful to have more clarity about what training and workshops are available to carers. We felt that the service could complete an audit of carer training records to ensure that all carers have met mandatory training requirements.

We found mixed views and understanding of the requirements for carers to complete recordings on young people. We asked the service to review the dissemination of this information and to consider enhancing the recordings by using the SHANARRI (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible; and included) wellbeing indicators from Getting It Right For Every child (GIRFEC).

During feedback we discussed with the service that that it would be helpful for unannounced visits to be recorded on an agreed pro forma.

Whilst in general assessments were well written and provided detailed analysis, we found that some assessments and reports did not appear to have been adequately quality assured. We discussed issues such as the language used and the lack of a clear action plan and analysis in a re-assessment. At feedback we also discussed how second opinion visits could be further strengthened in relation to independence with managers, who were receptive to this advice.

Staff reported that they were receiving regular supervision, however, the service were not following their service policy and procedures and there was no written record of supervision sessions signed by both parties. (Recommendation 1)

We were concerned to identify a number of incidents which should have been notified to the Care Inspectorate. We asked the service to review the guidance on notifications. (Recommendation 2)

We have asked the service to include the above areas for development within their overall improvement plan, and we will examine outcomes during the next service Inspection.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. The service should review their supervision policy and procedures and ensure that staff supervision records taken by the supervisor are signed by both parties and shared.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard which states 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (4.11)

2. The service should ensure that they access the up to date Care Inspectorate guidance on notifications and notify us in accordance with this guidance.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard which states 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice (4.11) and 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (3.20).

This is also to comply with the Public Reform Act 2010 Section 52(6).

Complaints

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

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

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

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

The service provider should monitor the progress and continually evaluate the effectiveness of proposed and on going changes to mental health services for children and children's access to these services.

National Care Standards foster care and family placement services – Standard 2: providing good quality care.

This recommendation was made on 25 May 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The service are continuing to monitor the provision of mental health services for children. One of the current staff team has a mental health background and is offering support to carers and children whilst formal services are secured.

Recommendation 2

The service should seek to progress the family and friends policy, procedures and practice.

National Care Standards foster care and family placement services – Standard 2: providing good quality care.

This recommendation was made on 25 May 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The service have progressed this and at the time of the current inspection agreement had been reached to now implement a family assessment policy and procedure.

Inspection and grading history

| Date | Type | Gradings |
|-------------|--------------------------|--|
| 25 May 2017 | Announced (short notice) | Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership Not assessed |
| 26 Nov 2015 | Announced (short notice) | Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 5 - Very good |

| Date | Type | Gradings |
|-------------|--------------------------|--|
| 18 Sep 2014 | Announced (short notice) | Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership |
| | | 4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good |
| 23 Oct 2013 | Announced (short notice) | Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership |
| | | 4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good |
| 22 Nov 2012 | Announced (short notice) | Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership |
| | | 4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good |
| 21 Sep 2011 | Announced (short notice) | Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership |
| | | 3 - Adequate Not assessed Not assessed 3 - Adequate |
| 1 Mar 2011 | Announced | Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership |
| | | 3 - Adequate Not assessed Not assessed 3 - Adequate |
| 22 Nov 2010 | Announced | Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership |
| | | 3 - Adequate Not assessed Not assessed 2 - Weak |
| 28 Jul 2009 | Announced | Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership |
| | | 3 - Adequate Not assessed 4 - Good 3 - Adequate |
| 25 Jul 2008 | | Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership |
| | | 3 - Adequate Not assessed 3 - Adequate 3 - Adequate |

| Date | Type | Gradings |
|------|------|----------|
| | | |

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