

SWIIS Foster Care - Scotland Fostering Service

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Type of inspection: Announced (short notice)
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Service provided by:
SWIIS Foster Care Scotland Limited

Service provider number:
SP2004007005

Care service number:
CS2004080882

About the service

Swiis Foster Care Scotland is part of Swiis (UK) Ltd. The service is managed by a director and team of managers providing a foster care service in Scotland for local authorities placing children and young people from 0 to 18 years.

There is a strong emphasis within the service on the provision of high quality foster care placements, which may include education support and therapeutic support, depending on needs.

Social workers, education workers, resource workers, therapists, review, panel and administrative staff make up the multi-disciplinary teams supporting foster families and children and young people in placement and the wider service.

In the annual return the service gave us in February 2016 the service told us they had 220 approved carers offering temporary, permanent and short breaks care. A total of 229 children were currently using the service.

The aim of the service, as stated in the statement of purpose 2014 says:

"We offer each child and young person a placement that meets his or her assessed needs and promotes the best possible outcomes through positive experiences and appropriate levels of support."

As the findings in this inspection are based on a sample of children and young people, inspectors cannot assure the quality of experience for every single child receiving a service.

What people told us

We asked children if they felt safe and respected by those who care for them and who they might speak to if they felt worried or scared. The children spoke in detail about this and said

"I speak to mum and dad if I feel upset or sad"

"They treat you like their own son"

"I feel safe because they (foster carers) are responsible. Sometimes parents do silly things"

"My children's rights worker helps me with change"

"I feel comfortable telling my friends about my life"

"I call my foster carer mum - she's like my mum, my mama mia. I'm her little monkey"

We asked groups of young people what would make foster care better. Some could not think of anything. One said it was "perfect" as it is and another suggested:

"It would be better if we could meet up more with more foster families. Its better for keeping in touch and for making new friends.

Foster carers told us:

"The support from my link-worker is excellent can't fault it I also have a good relationship with the other support workers relating to all the children's needs. In fact I did have breakdown, my link-worker and the staff in the office knew and were all happy to help me in any way they could. Can't fault the service re a child's needs if we require it and they can provide it within their remit, you will get it."

"I would say this is good as they try to match each child to the right family/placement. There is training on offer all the time of different topics and if you wish particular training they will access it for you. I'm unsure about child sexual exploitation as I have not had training on this subject but I did miss some training sessions owing to other commitments so it could have been covered at one of these sessions and totally unaware if there is a policy on this or not."

" If staff know something you can bet we do to and if there are to be changes to any part of the plan before a LAC meeting we are always informed before hand to so you are not taken aback when they crop up at the meetings. So yes fully informed I would say from Swiis not so much from the Local Authorities though."

"I receive a questionnaire through the post sometimes other times they will ask you at group meetings - Monthly supervisions and the odd email or call so I would say we have plenty of opportunity to raise and pass our opinions to the management and the office of Swiis."

"What I like about the service is there is no need to feel alone as there is always someone around to assist you in any way they can from the manager down. Can't think of anything they are so good at all they do for me I would give them top marks a Gold star."

"The fact there is always someone at the end of the phone helps me a lot as I know I can contact and speak to someone no matter what the issue is. For me I can't think of anything they can improve on and thus I will give them a Gold Star top of the shop for me they are."

Staff members told us:

"I feel valued as a staff member of Swiis".

"I have been and am being fully supported by my team manager and the organization to further my training and career".

"Over the past few years there has been positive change in the ethos and the direction of the Dundee team. I feel much more confident in my managers ability to support me, I feel he has created a learning culture, where it is safe to learn from mistakes. The standards of care, support, recording and evidenced based practice is improving greatly. The vision of the team is clearer and we are all working towards high quality provision for carers, young people and staff. I am currently proud to be part of the Dundee team."

"I joined Swiis in 2009 as an education support worker then progressed to an education worker. I feel very supported and provided with many learning opportunities. I am encouraged to attend learning events to support my practice".

"I am well supported by my line manager and team colleagues. I believe that we provide a high quality service and that we strive to always put the needs of children first".

"Swiis Glasgow office is a very supportive team to staff, carers and young people. We all have different roles and some do cross over, you never feel alone and everyone works well together. I have worked in other places so can draw on a lot of experience and I am glad to be working in a strong caring and supportive team. I enjoy the monthly supervision and the fact that you are asked for your opinions and they are listened to."

"I have sourced a lot of training for myself and my line manager and training department have been very supportive".

"Our team is now like a well oiled machine and everybody is working for each other. Our line manager has definitely been a huge reason for this by guiding the team to a more professional and focused approach".

Self assessment

The self assessment contained full information about the service, contained stakeholder views and was submitted on time.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	6 - Excellent
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

We sampled information and assessed quality of care and support as excellent.

We found outstanding award and accreditation programmes in place for children, young people and children who foster, led to improved education, life skills and life opportunities for those taking part. The service had been awarded the highest levels of Investors in People and Investors in Young People Awards in recognition of excellent practice in this area.

We saw examples of successful advocacy work on behalf of individual children. This led to some excellent outcomes for young people who for example, were being supported into further education, or were enabled to live with carers and siblings that they chose to live with. Person centred and creative programmes of education resulted in education achievements and personal development for some young people who had previously had little formal education for prolonged periods of time.

Therapeutic support for foster carers and young people continued to be prioritised. Consultancy work between therapists, staff and carers meant there was greater capacity in the service for therapeutic and psychological understanding. We saw examples where this supported family relationships, reduced self harming, raised sense of safety, self-esteem, confidence and well-being for children and young people.

We discussed some areas for improvement including that the service could offer more weekend training and support for second carers. Carers told us there could be better use of web-based systems. For example, daily logs and incident reports could be electronically recorded and uploaded while policies, procedures and events could be better accessed by all carers.

Some young people said they wanted the service to email them directly about opportunities open to them. They also told us they would like to meet more with other families across the teams. Young people said this supported them to keep friends and have fun with their carers.

Foster carers told us more co-working by staff in different teams would be supportive. For example, when children moved between placements staff could arrange more opportunities for those families to spend time together.

We encouraged the service to continue with development and improvement plans including in the area of child sexual exploitation. We asked the service to ensure greater awareness of vulnerability indicators and to ensure all possible protective measures were in place.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 6 - excellent

Quality of staffing

This quality theme was not assessed.

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

We sampled information and assessed quality of management and leadership as very good.

We noted a strong, stable and rights based culture with experienced staff and management teams who worked

to a progressive and co productive agenda with young people, carers, families and stakeholders.

Quality assurance practice and systems meant regular reporting and consideration of outcomes which resulted in learning and improvement. For example, the service tracked children and young people with permanence plans and were alerting placing authorities to delays. The destinations of young people were monitored and this was being used to look at longer term outcomes for young people and to plan based on needs.

Managers enabled adaptive leadership. Staff, foster carers and young people were encouraged to take on development work and senior staff members were well supported to act up in the absence of managers.

Staff continued to inspire innovative practice. For example, some had created DVDs to support improved communication and understanding with a child with complex needs about changes in placement in plans. This showed that managers were listening to staff and families and were willing to support creative thinking and practice.

Managers also supported reflective and critical practice very well. During our visit we joined a team of staff and managers in a reflective reading group. Research based information had been shared within the team and the discussion demonstrated how much everyone was committed to achieving greater learning and understanding in order to provide the best service possible for children and foster families.

We encouraged the service to continue with improvement plans set out in the self assessment. Following discussion with carers and a review of records, we suggested some other improvements including making sure consultation meetings take place with carers as planned.

Some foster carers were not aware of new rights for young people to choose to continue live with their foster families for longer. We suggested the service could raise awareness and consult with carers and young people to support developments in this area.

To ensure consistent and accurate recording and sharing of information and views, we encouraged the service to continue with regular quality audits.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

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

There are no outstanding recommendations.

Complaints

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

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
20 Feb 2015	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 5 - Very good

Date	Type	Gradings	
17 Feb 2014	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 4 - Good
31 Jan 2013	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good
15 Oct 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed Not assessed 5 - Very good
23 Feb 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good Not assessed
23 Oct 2008	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good

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