

Quarriers Fostering Service Fostering Service

Quarriers Village
Bridge of Weir
PA11 3SX

Telephone: 01387 249888

Type of inspection: Announced (short notice)
Inspection completed on: 1 May 2017

Service provided by:
Quarriers

Service provider number:
SP2003000264

Care service number:
CS2004085352

About the service

Quarriers Fostering Service has been registered since 9 December 2005, and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011. They provide a service for children and young people with disabilities aged from birth to 18 years and their families.

Quarriers have a long experience of supporting children and adults with disabilities and their stated mission is to transform lives. The service provides a person centred model of care to meet the needs of children and young people.

The principle aim of the service is to:

'Improve the lives of children and young people with complex needs and disabilities through the provision of short breaks and permanent placements'.

Quarriers offer two distinctive strands to their fostering service. They have a specialised fostering service for children and young people with complex needs and disabilities based in Glasgow. This service recruits foster carers who want to care permanently for children and young people into adulthood.

They also have the family support service which offers short breaks to children with complex needs and disabilities to support families in Dumfries and Galloway. This service is very well established and has been running since late 1999.

At the time of the inspection, the specialist fostering service reported that they had seven approved foster carers providing permanent care to eight children and young people. The short break service in Dumfries was reported to have 13 foster carers providing short breaks to 17 children. Since the last inspection, the service in Glasgow had approved two linked respite carers. At the time of the inspection, the service in Dumfries was in the process of assessing two foster carer households.

The registered manager for the service is the operational manager who has direct managerial responsibility for both the Glasgow and Dumfries areas.

What people told us

During home visits, we observed and spoke with young people and their foster carers. Although some of these young people had communication difficulties, we could establish through their interactions and the ways in which they engaged, that foster carers respected young people as unique individuals and fully understood their needs.

One young person informed us about the numerous activities he was involved in and the holidays abroad that he had recently experienced for the first time.

Foster carers spoke very highly about the support they received from both staff and managers.

Foster carers told us:

'I find all the staff are dedicated and committed to providing the best care they possibly can for all the children and families. I have a great deal of respect for them.'

'The passport we get prior to the children coming is full of information which helps us prepare properly and gives us a full picture about what the children need.'

'The service contact us after every visit, and we give feedback. They talk to us about the child's needs and give us any information we need to help deal with the child.'

'I find fostering very rewarding and plan for the child coming in a structured way, we have very good communication with his family and I am very well supported to do my job.'

'The fact that there is always someone at the end of the phone who knows us and our young people exceptionally well helps me a lot. For me, I can't think of anything they could improve on they are an excellent service.'

'My young person had to go to hospital with a serious injury, and by the time I got there the manager of the service and my link worker were already there to support us. That meant a lot to me.'

'We get the opportunity to attend various training events, covering the conditions which the young people have. These include conferences and full day sessions that are extremely valuable.'

'Foster carer support group meetings are great, and we feel free to discuss anything about the service and know it will be taken seriously by staff.'

All foster carers we spoke with advised us that they would not hesitate to recommend Quarriers Fostering Service and short break service to potential foster carers.

Birth family members also spoke highly of the service their children were receiving. They told us:

'I don't know what I would do without Quarriers, they have made a huge difference to my child in terms of being happier and more content. We are consistent with boundaries and that is making her life more predictable at home.'

'My child has made a lot of progress, they are looking after him well and the school is fantastic. I go to the foster carers' house for contact, they all make me feel very welcome. I will keep being happy seeing my child making progress.'

'The introductions were excellent, there was no rush for overnights and everything went at our pace. The link worker has been amazing, I can contact her any time and she will speak to me or come and visit. The service have other foster carers that we can use as a contingency plan and that is very reassuring.'

As the findings of 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.

Self assessment

The self assessment was fully completed and there was evidence of the involvement of all staff and consideration of the views of those using the service.

The self assessment was specific about areas for improvement in relation to service user involvement, and we would encourage the service to ensure that these ideas are prioritised and taken forward.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

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

What the service does well

Quarriers short break service is a long-standing and well-established resource which provides an excellent standard of care and support for children with disabilities. The fostering service is still a relatively new service that also provides very high quality permanent care for children and young people with profound disabilities.

What distinguishes both these services is the level of experience, expertise and skill that the carers bring to the fostering task. The majority of foster carers in both services have either personal or professional experience of caring for individuals with disabilities. In addition to this enhanced level of knowledge, the amount of personal commitment and dedication shown by the foster carers to the children in their care was exemplary. This had led to some excellent outcomes for young people. For example, in terms of their health and wellbeing, increased confidence and self-esteem and children now experiencing long-term safe and nurturing family environments.

Children and young people's potential was maximised despite their complex needs, and their personal aspirations were strongly encouraged. For example, opportunities were being given to travel and visit new countries, and any long-term interests were being actively sustained. All of which helped young people increase their confidence and feel a sense of achievement. In one case, a young person had been intensively supported by the service to take part in a new sporting activity which led to the young person being chosen to represent their country at a national level. This outstanding achievement was appropriately celebrated by the service.

Young people were exceeding limitations that others had imposed on them in terms of their ability and were thriving in placement making excellent progress in terms of their mobility and health. It was clear that the confidence and insight demonstrated by foster carers in relation to disability issues, had enabled young people to try out new experiences, whilst at the same time being cautious of perceived risk. This well-balanced approach had clearly helped to promote development and wellbeing.

There was significant evidence of young people's views being sought through advocacy services. It was highlighted within the cases we tracked, that foster carers were also excellent advocates for the young people in their care and would strongly support children's rights with some very good outcomes evident. A very good example of this was a young person's view being supported and expressed at medical appointments leading to suitable access to services.

Young people were supported to become involved and accepted in the local community by participating in various forums including local disability groups that helped to build purposeful contacts and social relationships. There was clear evidence of foster carers respecting the religious and cultural needs of the young people in their care by celebrating traditions and festivals however different from their own.

This insightful approach to respecting and recognising diversity, will undoubtedly have benefits in terms of young people's identity as they grow older.

Cases we tracked evidenced young people being fully integrated into the immediate and extended foster family with appropriate and nurturing environments being provided. We saw some excellent outcomes for young people, particularly for those who had remained in residential establishments for long periods of their life. Thoughtful and considered matching processes allowed these young people to move onto family settings, where they were able to be included and socialise in ways previously not available to them. This resulted in opportunities being given to significantly increase their quality of life and overcome barriers.

Placing social workers and other professionals confirmed the proficient approach of foster carers:

'From working closely with the carers, it would appear to me that they have had lots of extensive training as they show lots of insight and knowledge, particularly in relation to the young person's significant level of need. I would also note that communication between the carers, link worker and myself is particularly effective.'

'If I could clone the foster carers that would be ideal. I sit on a carer panel, and we just don't have carers coming forward who are willing or able to take on children with this level of disability. It sets Quarriers apart from other agencies in my opinion.'

'The persistence and dedication of the carers are clear, xxx is recognised as a child first and having additional needs second and they have promoted the child's rights to have his voice heard through advocacy services.'

Foster carers were very well supported to carry out their role effectively by the staff group who assisted them. There was a strong, stable and rights based culture within the service, and an experienced staff and management team who were highly knowledgeable in all areas of the needs of disabled children and young people.

In terms of recruitment, informal networks appeared to be an extremely successful way of identifying and retaining suitable foster carers, respite carers and short breaks carers. It was clear that staff were very proud of the work they carried out and the service was forward thinking in term of staff recruitment and succession planning. There was clear evidence of the overall service's strong commitment to continue to value its staff, and to maintain the highest possible support to foster carers and children.

Staff and management engaged successfully at all levels with external partners resulting in respectful and trusting professional relationships being established. In addition to this, their shared child-centred values were crucial to supporting embedded partnership working which benefited children in the longer term. The unassuming and natural confidence of both staff and foster carers gave reassurance to placing agencies as highlighted above.

A placing social worker commented:

'Communication with link worker, has been excellent. She attends all appropriate appointments and visits and communicates the views of the carers effectively.'

Staff informed us that they had very good opportunities for internal and external quality training that supported them to carry out their role, and that they had very good opportunities for ongoing managerial support. Supervision and appraisal processes were given appropriate priority and were valued by managers and staff. As a result, morale and peer support within both services were reported to be very good.

Supervising social workers commented:

'We are very like minded as a staff group and our manager is confident in us, we are very lucky and well supported.'

'We have been instrumental in obtaining opportunities for young people, we have secured funding to give children flight experience and go karting, they really benefit from different senses being stimulated.'

'We have very individualised methods of communicating with young people from drawing and feelings cards to being trained in Makaton.'

'My job is very rewarding, and my manager is available to offer guidance and supervision. He is very knowledgeable and I have learned a lot.'

We found assessments for potential foster carers to be rigorous and very well written. They provided a clear picture of the strengths of the prospective foster carers along with a detailed analysis of their life experience and how this could benefit disabled young people. The competency framework within the assessments was used to identify areas where support may be required and outlined how these should be met. Relevant checks were always carried out to give assurance that applicants were suitable to foster children.

Staff were confidently able to provide the necessary practical and emotional support to young people and foster carers, and used appropriate external supports when this was required, an example of this would be bereavement counselling. Foster carers informed us that communication at all levels of the service was open and transparent.

What the service could do better

In one case we tracked, steps had not been taken to carry out a risk assessment regarding non-related children sharing a bedroom during short breaks. This is against the service's policy and is not considered best practice. This will form recommendation 1.

We noted some inconsistencies within the files we examined regarding core records, recording templates and recording styles. Management intend to carry out an audit to improve this area and ensure that paperwork is standardised and systematic. We will look at this area during the next service inspection.

We were satisfied that the commitment to improvement was evident in the discussion with staff and managers and the various meetings they were involved in. However, we would suggest that the service takes forward the development of a 'SMART' improvement plan incorporating findings from this inspection and areas for development identified in the self assessment. This would help ensure that progress was monitored and improvements were sustained. We would also ask that the improvement plan is progressed collaboratively with both services and includes the views of foster carers and young people where appropriate. We will look at this area during the next service inspection.

The areas for improvement we have identified did not call into question the overall excellent and very good practice highlighted within this report. In addition, the service demonstrated commitment to act promptly on areas for development we identified during feedback.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. When determining the exceptional circumstances of a foster child sharing a bedroom, the specific needs of each child should always be taken into consideration. The provision of privacy and adequate personal space should also be considered and subject to risk assessment. Any risk assessment should be regularly reviewed.

National Care Standards Foster Care and Family Placement Services: Standard 2 (2) - Promoting good quality care.

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								
1 Jul 2015	Announced (short notice)	<table> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment</td> <td>Not assessed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staffing</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management and leadership</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	5 - Very good	Environment	Not assessed	Staffing	5 - Very good	Management and leadership	5 - Very good
Care and support	5 - Very good									
Environment	Not assessed									
Staffing	5 - Very good									
Management and leadership	5 - Very good									
19 Mar 2014	Announced (short notice)	<table> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment</td> <td>Not assessed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staffing</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management and leadership</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	5 - Very good	Environment	Not assessed	Staffing	5 - Very good	Management and leadership	5 - Very good
Care and support	5 - Very good									
Environment	Not assessed									
Staffing	5 - Very good									
Management and leadership	5 - Very good									
14 Jan 2013	Announced (short notice)	<table> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment</td> <td>Not assessed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staffing</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management and leadership</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	5 - Very good	Environment	Not assessed	Staffing	5 - Very good	Management and leadership	5 - Very good
Care and support	5 - Very good									
Environment	Not assessed									
Staffing	5 - Very good									
Management and leadership	5 - Very good									
21 Dec 2010	Announced	<table> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment</td> <td>Not assessed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staffing</td> <td>Not assessed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management and leadership</td> <td>Not assessed</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	5 - Very good	Environment	Not assessed	Staffing	Not assessed	Management and leadership	Not assessed
Care and support	5 - Very good									
Environment	Not assessed									
Staffing	Not assessed									
Management and leadership	Not assessed									
19 Mar 2010	Announced	<table> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment</td> <td>Not assessed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staffing</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management and leadership</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	5 - Very good	Environment	Not assessed	Staffing	5 - Very good	Management and leadership	5 - Very good
Care and support	5 - Very good									
Environment	Not assessed									
Staffing	5 - Very good									
Management and leadership	5 - Very good									
17 Feb 2009	Announced	<table> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment</td> <td>Not assessed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staffing</td> <td>4 - Good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management and leadership</td> <td>4 - Good</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	5 - Very good	Environment	Not assessed	Staffing	4 - Good	Management and leadership	4 - Good
Care and support	5 - Very good									
Environment	Not assessed									
Staffing	4 - Good									
Management and leadership	4 - Good									

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.