

St. Andrew's Children's Society Fostering Service

Fostering Service

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Leith
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Telephone: 0131 454 3370

Type of inspection:

Announced (short notice)

Completed on:

7 February 2020

Service provided by:

St. Andrew's Children's Society

Service provider number:

SP2003003803

Service no:

CS2004080812

About the service

St. Andrew's Children's Society Fostering Service recruits and supports permanent long-term foster carers. Foster carers provide care for children and young people who have been assessed as not being able to live within their families. The service is based in Leith in Edinburgh with an office based in Aberdeen. It is managed by a director and service managers who oversee the day-to-day work of the organisation.

St. Andrew's Children's Society also operates an adoption service from the same premises. These services share a management structure, staffing, policies, systems and procedures. For the purpose of regulation, we carried out one inspection and reported under each service.

What people told us

We received one completed care standards questionnaire and spoke with two foster carers during this inspection.

The feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive. Foster carers told us about the high level of support they received both from their individual social workers and from the team through training and support groups. Comments included:

'St. Andrew's are a great organisation. Children are the priority always. They are friendly and supportive.'

'We feel part of St. Andrew's very much and are proud to be fostering through them.'

'My social worker is always available for any issues that may arise.'

'We always feel listened to and our views about the service and the young person are valued.'

Self assessment

There was no self assessment requested for this inspection year. We met with managers and reviewed the service development plan and other documentation which supported our assessment of the progress the service has made.

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	5 - Very Good

What the service does well

We found that children were benefiting from nurturing, loving relationships within fostering households and strong positive relationships were supporting positive outcomes. We saw that a range of improved outcomes related to health, education and wellbeing were being significantly improved. Foster carers promoted healthy, active lifestyles with hobbies and interests promoted.

Carers were being provided with a high level of support which was enabling them to increase their confidence in the care they were providing. Regular support groups and training opportunities were provided to carers.

Assessments for potential foster carers and approved foster carers were of a very good standard. They clearly highlighted any potential vulnerabilities and particular strengths of carers. Second opinion visits provided an additional quality assurance system. These visits also enabled potential foster carers to give feedback on the assessment process directly to the management of the service. We saw that foster carers were being reviewed within legislative timescales and that there were procedures in place to ensure that these timescales were adhered to. The foster carer review reports which we sampled all included the views of young people in placement and those of the placing social workers.

Foster families had the opportunity of gaining support from the specific skills of therapeutic workers when required, and we saw clear evidence of this type of support being offered to foster carers during the inspection. Input of this type was helping to increase the likelihood of placements having longer term success.

The skills and knowledge of staff were appreciated by carers, and it was evident that they brought value to the overall service which was helping to improve outcomes for children.

We observed that the service had in place a robust panel which had consistency of membership and a range of skills and background experience. Panel members provided a high level of quality assurance to the service and they told us that the quality of fostering assessments presented to them helped to make an informed decision.

Systems were in place to evidence appropriate checks had been completed prior to an applicant being presented to panel.

Management were described as supportive, approachable and inclusive which was valued and appreciated. We found that regular team meetings were taking place and the staff team felt supported by the provision of development days.

Staff we spoke with advised us that their line manager within the service was very supportive, reliable and responsive to requests for professional advice or guidance. We saw that staff were receiving regular supervision, however, we felt that there could be greater focus on professional development for staff members. The manager of the service was receptive to this suggestion at feedback and will look to introduce a more structured template.

A safer recruitment exercise of one new worker's file evidenced that safer recruitment practices were being followed with checks conducted before commencing employment.

What the service could do better

During feedback, we discussed with the service that it may be useful for them to complete an audit to ensure that foster carer agreements, unannounced visits and any risk assessments were all up-to-date and on file.

We found that there had been limited progress on the recommendation made at the last inspection which stated: 'The service should formalise foster carer supervision processes and ensure that there is a supervision agreement in place to support this.' We have therefore continued this recommendation and asked that the service implements the pro-forma recently created and that it ensures that all staff adhere to this process.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The service should formalise foster carer supervision processes and ensure that there is a supervision agreement in place to support this.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.' (3.14)

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (4.11)

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 should formalise foster carer supervision processes and ensure that there is a supervision agreement in place to support this.

This is in accordance with the National Care Standards, Foster care and family placement services. Standard 7: Information and advice.

This recommendation was made on 14 March 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The service had made some progress on this, however, further work is needed to ensure that this is implemented and adhered to by staff. This recommendation will be continued.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
14 Mar 2017	Unannounced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>Not assessed</div>
25 Mar 2015	Announced (short notice)	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>4 - Good</div>
12 Mar 2014	Announced (short notice)	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>5 - Very good</div>

Date	Type	Gradings	
17 Feb 2012	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed Not assessed 4 - Good
1 Feb 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good Not assessed
17 Dec 2008	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good

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