

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE - 22 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT ON: CARE INSPECTION REPORTS ON ADOPTION AND FOSTERING SERVICES

REPORT BY: LAURA BANNERMAN, HEAD OF SERVICE, STRATEGY, INTEGRATION, PERFORMANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

REPORT NO: 41-2016

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report advises Committee members of the outcome of the inspections undertaken by the Care Inspectorate in September 2015. It also advises Committee of the proposed actions by the Fostering and Adoption Services in relation to recommendations arising from these inspections.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the contents of the inspection reports (Appendices 1 and 2); and
- 2.2 Notes the actions in respect of the Inspection of Fostering Services as outlined in paragraphs 4.16 and 4.17 of this report; and
- 2.3 Notes that in respect of the Inspection of Adoption Services no requirements or recommendations were made by the Inspectors.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 The Care Inspectorate undertook announced, low intensity inspections of both the Fostering and Adoption Services during September 2015.
- 4.2 The Services achieved the following grades:

Adoption Service

Date	Quality of Care and Support	Quality of Environment	Quality of Staffing	Quality of Management and Leadership
17 September 2015	4 – Good	Not assessed	4 – Good	4 - Good
14 August 2014	4 – Good	Not Assessed	4 – Good	4 - Good

- 4.3 The Inspection of the adoption service involved meetings with adopters, staff, managers, adoption panel members, placing social workers and panel advisers. The

report on the Adoption Service noted that assessments were completed to a “high standard and ensured coherent matching decisions”. In terms of family finding, inspectors assessed the family finding role within the team as an “invaluable element of the work of the service”, leading to good outcomes for children. The recruitment and assessment of carers was shown to ensure that “adopters were prepared for the experience of adoption”, this included the delivery of preparation groups and other learning opportunities.”

- 4.4 The level of support for adopters was viewed as very good. Three adoptive families were spoken with and they were all very happy with the quality of the service. Developments have been made in supporting and communicating with adopters through the use of a new Facebook page, alongside existing methods of email, newsletters and support groups – highlighting “great efforts to encourage participation.”
- 4.5 Inspectors found the team to be enthusiastic with a shared sense of purpose and commitment to the service. The enthusiasm and skills of the team were linked to low sickness levels and staff accessing professional development opportunities and this has led to a strengthened training programme for adopters with an increase in attendance of adopters at training.
- 4.6 Inspectors found that the Adoption Service continues to effectively recruit, assess and prepare adopters to provide permanent placements for children. Planning for children has improved in the past 12 months and the service has a coherent strategy to ensure that children have the best chance to achieve permanence with as little unnecessary delay as possible.
- 4.7 For the Adoption Service, no requirements or recommendations were made.

Fostering Service

Date	Quality of Care and Support	Quality of Environment	Quality of Staffing	Quality of Management and Leadership
4 September 2015	4 – Good	Not Assessed	5 – Very Good	4 - Good
3 April 2015	4 – Good	Not Assessed	4 – Good	4 - Good
14 August 2014	3 – Adequate	Not assessed	3 - Adequate	3 - Adequate

- 4.8 The inspectors met with foster carers (current, retired and deregistered), young people, managers, staff members and observed a foster panel, a foster care recall group and a resource allocation panel.
- 4.9 The Report on the Fostering Service found that children and young people were being supported to achieve positive outcomes in education, leading to greater stability at home with their foster carers and an increased sense of achievement. One young person said: “I go to school now. Before I came here I didn’t go to school for over a year. Now I go every day and I have even started enjoying it!”
- 4.10 Current foster carers confirmed they had good working relationships with staff who visited regularly. There was “evidence of high quality discussion between staff and foster carers about foster carer involvement in the development of the service”. There was further evidence that the “service listened carefully to these suggestions (from foster carers) and took action to use them.”
One foster carer commented: “I am often asked if there is anything that can be done better, in my supervisions, at my panel and when children have their reviews. I can honestly say I have never had any complaints.”

- 4.11 Comments from young people included: “We get to write a report about our foster carers. I think that’s a good thing because we can say if they do a good job and if their worker does a good job, it shows they care about my views.”
- 4.12 Foster carers continued to access training and use their learning to look after children more effectively. Awareness of child sexual exploitation was being raised and plans were in place for training staff, panel members and foster carers on this important issue.
- 4.13 The service continued to build on existing quality assurance systems to monitor, evaluate and improve the service and was engaged in national policy drivers such as the fostering review, integration and continuing care.
- 4.14 Inspectors found that the Fostering Service remains committed to providing high quality foster care and that the outcomes for children, young people and foster carers were very good. However, there was dissatisfaction from a small number of deregistered carers and this was taken into account in the overall evaluation. It was however noted that recommendations for deregistration were made for sound practice reasons and panel processes adhered to the regulations governing them.
- 4.15 For the Fostering Service there were no requirements but two recommendations were made:
- The Manager must ensure that children are placed with Foster Carers who are appropriately skilled and experienced and who have been approved by the agency decision maker to meet their needs.
 - The service should ensure that each year the agency reviews the performance and quality of care provided and that review meetings are chaired by someone who can form an independent judgement.
- 4.16 The first recommendation was made on the basis that, on one occasion, a child was placed temporarily with a carer within the approved age range. Subsequently, the child had a birthday taking her out with the agreed age range. A system is in place to amend carer’s approval when a situation like this arises and an emergency extension is sought through an Agency Decision Maker. This was not followed on this one occasion. Managers will ensure this system is followed in the future through regular placement audits ensuring age appropriate placements and timeous emergency extension applications as required.
- 4.17 In terms of the second recommendation inspectors found that although statutory reviews were being carried out within the timescales annual reviews were not always being completed. Managers are ensuring that administrative processes reflect this recommendation. The Service does have a number of independent chairs and will review whether additional capacity is required. Positively, inspectors noted that “the panel we observed and the minutes of the previous panels which we read confirmed the independent nature of the panel membership. Appeal panels convened ensured that a completely different set of panel members was asked to review information heard at the previous panel.”

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached to this report.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Executive Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services were consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

Laura Bannerman
Head of Service
Strategy, Integration, Performance and Support Services

26 January 2016

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

Part 1: Description/Consultation

Is this a Rapid Equality Impact Assessment (RIAT)?		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is this a Full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Date of Assessment:	13/01/2016	Committee Report Number:	41-2016
Title of document being assessed:		Care Inspectorate Reports on Adoption & Fostering Services	
1. This is a new policy, procedure, strategy or practice being assessed (If yes please check box) <input type="checkbox"/>		This is an existing policy, procedure, strategy or practice being assessed? (If yes please check box) <input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Please give a brief description of the policy, procedure, strategy or practice being assessed.		Appendices 1 & 2 provide the inspection reports on the adoption & fostering services completed by the Care Inspectorate in September 2015.	
3. What is the intended outcome of this policy, procedure, strategy or practice?		The inspection reports provide an evaluation of the adoption and fostering services during the period since the previous review in 2014. The reports also highlight recommendations.	
4. Please list any existing documents which have been used to inform this Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment.		None	
5. Has any consultation, involvement or research with protected characteristic communities informed this assessment? If yes please give details.		No	
6. Please give details of council officer involvement in this assessment. (e.g. names of officers consulted, dates of meetings etc)		John Cooper, Service Manager, 13/01/2016	
7. Is there a need to collect further evidence or to involve or consult protected characteristics communities on the impact of the proposed policy? (Example: if the impact on a community is not known what will you do to gather the information needed and when will you do this?)		No	

Part 2: Protected Characteristics

Which protected characteristics communities will be positively or negatively affected by this policy, procedure or strategy?

NB Please place an X in the box which best describes the "overall" impact. It is possible for an assessment to identify that a positive policy can have some negative impacts and visa versa. When this is the case please identify both positive and negative impacts in Part 3 of this form.

If the impact on a protected characteristic communities are not known please state how you will gather evidence of any potential negative impacts in box Part 1 section 7 above.

	Positively	Negatively	No Impact	Not Known
Ethnic Minority Communities including Gypsies and Travellers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People with a disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socio-economic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 3: Impacts/Monitoring


<p>1. Have any positive impacts been identified?</p> <p>(We must ensure at this stage that we are not achieving equality for one strand of equality at the expense of another)</p>	<p>Regular external inspection ensures that the services continue to provide high standards of support to Looked After children and young people, supervision of staff and management of the service.</p>
<p>2. Have any negative impacts been identified?</p> <p>(Based on direct knowledge, published research, community involvement, customer feedback etc. If unsure seek advice from your departmental Equality Champion.)</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>3. What action is proposed to overcome any negative impacts?</p> <p>(e.g. involving community groups in the development or delivery of the policy or practice, providing information in community languages etc. See Good Practice on DCC equalities web page)</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>4. Is there a justification for continuing with this policy even if it cannot be amended or changed to end or reduce inequality without compromising its intended outcome?</p> <p>(If the policy that shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination you must stop and seek legal advice)</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>5. Has a 'Full' Equality Impact Assessment been recommended?</p> <p>(If the policy is a major one or is likely to have a major impact on protected characteristics communities a Full Equality Impact Assessment may be required. Seek advice from your departmental Equality lead.)</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>6. How will the policy be monitored?</p> <p>(How will you know it is doing what it is intended to do? e.g. data collection, customer survey etc.)</p>	<p>Regular internal review via the Family Placement Action Plan. Review by the Care Inspectorate during their next inspection in 2016/17.</p>

Part 4: Contact Information

Name of Department or Partnership	Children and Families Service
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Type of Document	
Human Resource Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
General Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy/Service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change Papers/Local Procedure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guidelines and Protocols	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Manager Responsible	Author Responsible
Name: Jane Martin	Name: John Cooper
Designation: Head of Service – Children and Families	Designation: Service Manager - Resources
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Signature of author of the policy:		Date: 13/01/2016
Signature of Executive Director/Head of Service:	Laura Bannerman, Head of Service, Strategy, Integration, Performance and Support Services.	Date: 26/01/2016
Name of Executive Director/Head of Service:	Laura Bannerman, Head of Service, Strategy, Integration, Performance and Support Services.	
Date of Next Policy Review:	N/A	

Care service inspection report

Full inspection

Dundee City Council - Adoption Service Adoption Service

Dunhope Castle
Dudhope Park
Barrack Road
Dundee

Service provided by: Dundee City Council

Service provider number: SP2003004034

Care service number: CS2004082550

Inspection Visit Type: Announced (Short Notice)

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and set out improvements that must be made. We also investigate complaints about care services and 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.

Contact Us

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Summary

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection following other regulatory activity. For example, if we have to take enforcement action to make the service improve, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

We gave the service these grades

Quality of care and support	4	Good
Quality of staffing	4	Good
Quality of management and leadership	4	Good

What the service does well

The standard of assessments and level of support for adopters was very good.

We found an enthusiastic team with a shared sense of purpose and commitment to the service.

Delegation of lead responsibilities, e.g. family finding, recruitment, communication, created good opportunities for developing leadership skills across the team.

What the service could do better

Decisions made about panels should be made collaboratively with all agencies.

The development of 'SMART' action plans, with clear priorities, in relation to recruitment of carers and service user involvement.

Annual appraisals for all staff.

What the service has done since the last inspection

There have been changes within the management of the service over the last twelve months. There has also been further development of family finding initiatives.

Conclusion

Progress in the last twelve months has been challenging with changes in management and in the delivery of panels. There was clear evidence that the new management arrangements were viewed positively and the team appeared invigorated.

The service continues to effectively recruit, assess and prepare adopters to provide permanent placements for children. Planning for children has improved in the last twelve months and the service has a coherent strategy to ensure that children have the best chance to achieve permanence with as little unnecessary delay as possible. There does remain some concern among those we heard from about 'drift' for some children. We will look at efforts to address this at the next inspection.

1 About the service we inspected

Dundee City council provides an adoption service for children, young people and their families who are assessed in need of this service. The functions of an adoption service are detailed in the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007.

These functions are to:

- assess children who may be adopted
- assess prospective adopters
- place children for adoption
- provide information about adoption and
- provide adoption support services.

Social Workers in the area teams and in the permanence team have responsibility for assessing children's needs for adoption and share responsibility for placing children for adoption. The family placement team fulfilled the remaining duties of the Local Authority Adoption Agency.

At the time of the most recent annual return (February 2015) the agency had 16 approved adopters, twelve of whom had been approved within the year. Twenty two children had been placed with an adoptive family within the year. Twenty four children were approved for adoption and were awaiting an adoptive family being identified.

Recommendations

A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions that a care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service, but where failure to do so would not directly result in enforcement.

Recommendations are based on the National Care Standards, SSSC codes of practice and recognised good practice. These must also be outcomes-based and if the provider meets the recommendation this would improve outcomes for people receiving the service.

Requirements

A requirement is a statement which sets out what a care service must do to improve outcomes for people who use services and must be linked to a breach in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (the "Act"), its regulations, or orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration. Requirements are enforceable in law.

We make requirements where (a) there is evidence of poor outcomes for people using the service or (b) there is the potential for poor outcomes which would affect people's health, safety or welfare.

Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of care and support - Grade 4 - Good

Quality of staffing - Grade 4 - Good

Quality of management and leadership - Grade 4 - Good

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. You can find the most up-to-date grades for this service by visiting our website www.careinspectorate.com or by calling us on 0345 600 9527 or visiting one of our offices.

2 How we inspected this service

The level of inspection we carried out

In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections when we are satisfied that services are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care.

What we did during the inspection

The findings are based on a short notice announced inspection carried out between Friday 4th September to Thursday 17th September

We carried out a range of activities and considered information from a variety of sources including:

Discussion with adopters, staff members, managers, panel members, placing social workers and panel advisers.

Collated feedback from adoption panels and feedback forms completed by adopters following training.

Review of documentation including children's plans and LAC minutes, adopters files, policies and procedures, team meeting minutes, newsletters and other quality assurance information.

We observed an adoption panel and reviewed documentation relating to the panel including the panel constitution and panel business meeting minutes.

We spent time in the office in Dudhope Castle, attended a team meeting, visited adopters and spoke to others on the phone.

Grading the service against quality themes and statements

We inspect and grade elements of care that we call 'quality themes'. For example, one of the quality themes we might look at is 'Quality of care and support'. Under each quality theme are 'quality statements' which describe what a service should be doing well for that theme. We grade how the service

performs against the quality themes and statements.

Details of what we found are in Section 3: The inspection

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

In any year we may decide on specific aspects of care to focus on during our inspections. These are extra checks we make on top of all the normal ones we make during inspection. We do this to gather information about the quality of these aspects of care on a national basis. Where we have examined an inspection focus area we will clearly identify it under the relevant quality statement.

Fire safety issues

We do not regulate fire safety. Local fire and rescue services are responsible for checking services. However, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant fire and rescue services so they may consider what action to take. You can find out more about care services' responsibilities for fire safety at www.firescotland.gov.uk

The annual return

Every year all care services must complete an 'annual return' form to make sure the information we hold is up to date. We also use annual returns to decide how we will inspect the service.

Annual Return Received: Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

Every year all care services must complete a 'self assessment' form telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this assessment is accurate.

The self assessment was fully completed.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

We spoke with three adoptive families during the inspection and they were all very happy with the quality of the service.

Taking carers' views into account

We did not speak with birth parents as part of this inspection.

3 The inspection

We looked at how the service performs against the following quality themes and statements. Here are the details of what we found.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 4 - Good

Statement 1

“We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.”

Service strengths

This statement was examined after an examination of: the self evaluation returned to the Care Inspectorate, the previous inspection report, service user questionnaires, placing agencies feedback and any notifications and complaints we received.

This statement was examined as the participation of children and young people in their care and support is very important to achieving good outcomes for them. In 2015-16 all services are being inspected against this statement.

The service was performing to a very good standard for this statement. The following strengths were evidenced on the inspection and we could also see that outcomes for children and young people were very good.

The self assessment provides a good outline of the opportunities available for service users and carers to take part in improving the service and good evidence of these being used. This included support groups, recruitment group, open evenings and other consultative groups.

The support groups are not well attended but the service are actively looking at what they can do in addition to this for a and have developed their website and Facebook page further over the last year and have also used email and newsletters to ensure that adopters are fully aware of opportunities to participate.

While the support groups are not well attended the relationships with other adopters developed at support groups and preparation groups has meant that adopters have developed their own peer support networks.

We found evidence of policy and strategy implementation which suggested the service made great efforts to encourage participation.

The preparation groups are reported on very positively by those attending and they provide good feedback to influence future delivery. In addition to this a recent initiative to get 'post-adoption feedback' has also given the service valuable information from adopters about all parts of the adoption journey from recruitment to post adoption support. We will look for evidence of this most recent feedback influencing practice at the next inspection.

We saw good evidence of adopters participating in the assessment process and contributing to the final report in a meaningful way. The adopters we spoke with also reflected on their role in the assessment process.

We heard from adopters returning to the service for a second time about their views of returning to the preparation group. It was clear that they were encouraged to attend not only to revisit and refresh their own understanding but also to share their experiences with new adopters. We were convinced that this was an effective and valuable example of real participation.

Staff, adopters and other stakeholders are encouraged to take part in the annual care inspectorate inspection and provided good feedback during this inspection.

The organisation has a well established LAC champions board who are accountable to a young peoples participation group - young people with experience of care are part of this.

The service has a healthy view on the right of service users not to take part and respect the views of a large number of adopters that they don't want to attend support groups or respond to surveys.

The panel seeks feedback from all who attend through questionnaires and review this feedback in their business meetings and there was evidence of this feedback being used to make changes.

We heard of the involvement of young people in the recruitment of panel members. We also heard about the involvement of children and foster carers being involved in formulating questions and interviewing prospective staff.

Panel members with experience of adoption continue to be a valuable aspect of that part of the process and we also heard about involvement of adopters in drop in events and the recruitment of staff.

Areas for improvement

There is a real challenge in evidencing how children and young people directly influence the quality of the service but we would encourage the service to consider how they improve in this area.

The service should give annual feedback to service users and birth families on future opportunities for participation and their influence on service development in the last year.

We would like to hear more about the experience of participation within the service empowering children, young people and carers to take part or have their voice heard elsewhere, perhaps at a regional or national level.

In conclusion the service has maintained its commitment to participation and further developed other strategies. Children, young people, adopters and birth families know that their views are valued by the service, they will be taken seriously and they can influence change.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 2

“We enable service users to make individual choices and ensure that every service user can be supported to achieve their potential.”

Service strengths

This statement was examined after an examination of: the self-evaluation returned to the Care Inspectorate, the previous inspection report, service user questionnaires, placing agencies feedback and any notifications and complaints we received.

While this statement was examined as we are looking at the educational outcomes for children and young people in this inspecting year, we are interested in all improved outcomes for children and young people and the parts played by care services in achieving these.

The self assessment clearly outlines the core elements of the work that the service does to achieve this and we found enough evidence on the inspection to convince us that the service remains good in this area.

Assessments completed on prospective adopters and on children requiring permanence through adoption were completed to a high standard and ensured coherent matching decisions.

We heard a number of reports from those we spoke with during the inspection about good outcomes for children. We found that the matching process is necessarily rigorous and benefits from the overview of the family finding group which ensures it is focussed and based on a solid knowledge of potential matches. In the cases that we looked at in detail, the matching process and permanence planning ensured that adoptive placements have the best chance to achieve good outcomes for children.

The family finding role has developed in the last year and now appears to be an invaluable element of the work of the service. A key part of this role is the

development of relationships and links with other agencies across the country. We saw evidence of achieving good outcomes for children.

Links with other local authorities and agencies are well developed. The service has been an active member of the 'north east consortium' and this has functioned well over the last year. The service has recently taken the lead in co-ordinating training for the consortium following the demise of BAAF.

Adoption exchange days are seen as a valuable part of family finding efforts and the service continues to invest in these and in the past year have developed their own profile at these events through the use of video and photographs. These initiatives are well supported by individuals within the team and the knowledge and experience shared with colleagues.

A number of people we spoke with during the inspection did raise concerns about 'drift', particularly in relation to older children and more complicated cases. However the cases we viewed demonstrated an ability to get assessments complete within target timescales. We also found that the service continued to take an overview of all children at different stages of permanence and we were satisfied that this was effectively monitoring timescales and was used to push and prompt where necessary.

The respective files for carers and children are well presented and are clear about the needs of children, the desired outcomes and how these will be met.

We saw evidence of the recruitment and assessment of carers including every effort to make sure that adopters were prepared for the experience of adoption, this included the delivery of preparation groups and other learning opportunities. Equally the service continues to make good efforts to develop potential supports for adopters through support groups and other more informal events.

Learning opportunities for adopters was openly available and these were delivered in different ways from directed learning to online courses as well as traditionally delivered training sessions.

The service continues to maintain a website which contains good information

for prospective adopters. It also has up to date information on the service and events which adopters can attend.

Areas for improvement

We found that there was a general view amongst the people we spoke with that some children were still waiting for too long for permanent placements. There was some evidence of this 'drift' in the data collected by the service. We would encourage the service to continue to monitor this closely. However we would also urge the service to feedback to all staff and other stakeholders on the achievements of the service in achieving permanence.

At the last inspection the inspector reported on the lack of evidence of routine 'life story work' being undertaken with children. We found that the service continues to make an effort in this area as their action plan following the last inspection outlined. However we would suggest that there is clearer reference to how this development is supported within the carer training strategy.

The demise of BAAF presents a number of challenges to agencies in the short term and Dundee's particular challenge is filling the gap created by the 'north east consortium'. The provider should clarify, in consultation with the other agencies involved in the consortium, what will take its place and restate a commitment to supporting this forum as appropriate.

We heard from some staff during the inspection that issues around contact and the levels of behaviours from children placed for adoption was a shock to some adopters and there was a concern that they had not been prepared for this. It was suggested that this should be reviewed with consideration given to the involvement of relevantly experienced permanence team staff at preparation and support groups.

The relationship between the service and other teams undertaking work relating to adoption was not as strong as it could be. Whilst there was good evidence of working together in the cases we looked at there was other evidence of tensions. We did not consider that this was currently having any effect on outcomes for children but we would suggest that the provider considers how it ensures that these relationships are supported.

Grade

4 - Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Grade awarded for this theme: 4 - Good

Statement 1

"We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service."

Service strengths

This statement was examined after an examination of: the self evaluation returned to the Care Inspectorate, the previous inspection report, service user questionnaires, placing agencies feedback and any notifications and complaints we received.

(For strengths and areas for development please see Quality Theme 1, Quality of Care and Support, Statement 1: "We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.")

At this inspection we considered that, on balance, the performance of the service was good for this statement.

Areas for improvement

There have been missed opportunities to involve service users in the recruitment of senior staff. The service could be clearer about the systematic involvement of service users in staff recruitment.

Implementation and review of the annual appraisal system should also consider how this will incorporate the views of service users.

Grade

4 - Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 3

“We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.”

Service strengths

This statement was examined after an examination of: the self evaluation returned to the Care Inspectorate, the previous inspection report, service user questionnaires, placing agencies feedback and any notifications and complaints we received.

The self assessment clearly outlines the core elements of the work that the service does to achieve this and on the balance of evidence the service remains good in this area with elements of very good practice.

We found that staff are very motivated, committed to their work, have good relationships with each other, with carers, with managers and with other stakeholders.

The service continues to support staff through team meetings, supervision and are committed to implementing annual appraisals. Development opportunities are agreed with supervisors and supported by the organisation. All staff are undertaking training for trainers to support the delivery of prep groups. All staff reported very positively on their supervision and the availability of senior staff. They also noted the value of the senior officer for fostering and adoption in offering professional leadership and advice.

This is a very experienced team and a low sickness level and little turnover evidences a settled group of staff. Team meetings are valued by all and we observed a well structured and constructive team meeting.

Staff development days have taken place in the last year and we heard from staff about the value of these, with specific reference to a recent development day focussed on infertility which also allowed the service to make good links.

There are well identified skills and identified areas of expertise within the team which all staff members referred to and spoke of an excellent level of peer support within the service. This support ranges to peer reading on assessment reports to photography skills for the development of carer or child profiles. In addition to this the delegation of responsibilities has effectively allowed staff at all levels to take on leadership roles whether that be in relation to training, recruitment or social media.

There is real enthusiasm within the team which has persisted since the last inspection and was identified by all as increasing motivation. We also heard that this had improved the attendance of adopters at training.

Panel members have good access to training during the year and regular business meetings also keep panel members up to date with local and national developments. There is also a well established appraisal scheme for panel members.

Areas for improvement

Professional development plans were not developed for staff and were waiting for the roll out of the new appraisal process. Considering this has been mentioned at previous inspections we would expect to see evidence of full implementation at the next inspection.

There could be closer links with the permanence team either through joint staff development events or as a cross team consultative group.

Grade

4 - Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 4 - Good

Statement 1

"We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service."

Service strengths

This statement was examined after an examination of: the self evaluation returned to the Care Inspectorate, the previous inspection report, service user questionnaires, placing agencies feedback and any notifications and complaints we received.

(For strengths and areas for development please see Quality Theme 1, Quality of Care and Support, Statement 1: "We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.")

At this inspection we considered that the performance of the service was good for this statement.

Areas for improvement

We would suggest that the service considers whether participation should be included in the service's annual plan identifying key priorities or specific developments. This would help ensure that improvement is effectively focussed.

The service should collate all feedback for inclusion in the annual report. It may be necessary to adapt this for wider reading.

There have been difficulties ensuring carers representation on strategic/ planning groups and on recruiting these individuals to panels. We will look at this at the next inspection.

Grade

4 - Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 4

“We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide”

Service strengths

This statement was examined after an examination of: the self-evaluation returned to the Care Inspectorate, the previous inspection report, service user questionnaires, placing agencies feedback and any notifications and complaints we received.

At this inspection we considered that the performance of the service was very good for this statement. The service continues to have well established quality assurance processes which are effectively implemented and discussed throughout the report.

The service functions in the context of a wider 'permanence and adoption' plan, overseen by a 'permanence forum' and reports to the provider on an annual basis. The annual report outlines the work of the service in the preceding year referring to specific service developments.

We were satisfied that the service uses the following quality assurance processes and systems to ensure that service users, carers, staff and other stakeholders contribute to the assessment of the quality of the adoption service.

- Adoption and Permanence panel
- Preparation groups
- File audits
- Panel feedback forms
- Supervision of staff
- Team meetings
- Carers support groups

- Review of policies and procedures
- Recruitment group
- Family finding group
- Permanence forum
- Permanence action plan
- Adoption and permanence action plan
- Post adoption feedback
- Independent review of breakdowns
- Induction
- Newsletters
- Training feedback forms
- Panel business meetings

In addition to these the service also uses the inspection processes effectively - completing notifications, annual returns, self assessments and action plans when appropriate.

All of the adopters, staff, panel members and others we heard from were aware of the quality assurance processes they had access to and we saw good evidence of these systems being used effectively.

Areas for improvement

The self assessment did not identify specific areas for improvement. We found that there were a number of areas where we considered improvement could be made.

The service did not use second opinion visits during the assessment process. While we found that arrangements for the quality assurance of assessments were good we would suggest the service considers how this is reflected in the final assessment report.

Decisions made about panels should be made collaboratively with all stakeholder agencies. In the last year the provider had made the decision to change the timing of the panel. The reasoning for this change was weak and meant that the robustness of arrangements for the provision of professional

and medical advice to the panel was compromised. We would suggest that the provider reviews this decision.

The 'annual report' should be available to all stakeholders in an easily accessible format. The annual report should also contain the collated feedback gathered by the service and the developments and improvements made in response to this feedback.

There are two overarching 'action plans' in place for the work of the service. The 'adoption and permanence' action plan outlines the aims of the adoption service and was updated in June 2015. The last review of the 'permanence action plan' was completed in March 2014 and is due at the end of 2015. We will look at progress with both of these plans at the next inspection.

We heard from staff that while they felt part of service development they were less confident about how they had been consulted on wider organisational developments. The provider should ensure that staff do feel that their views are valued and listened to at a broader organisational level.

Grade

4 - Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

4 What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at our last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

5 What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at our last inspection

Previous recommendations

1. The Adoption Agency should ensure that Life Story/Life History work/books are available for children being adopted. National Care Standards, Adoption Agencies, Standard 5: Choosing you new family.

This recommendation was made on 14 August 2014

A range of books and workbooks are available for loan to workers and carers from the Family Placement Team and the Permanence Team.

The need for Lifestory work is highlighted when children are considered at Adoption Panel and reviewed at the time of a Matching Panel. The Panel continue to ensure that staff are made aware of the available materials and guidance.

Resource workers ensure that Departmental staff and carers are made aware of the availability of materials at the point of links and matches being considered.

Family Finding Group remind Departmental staff of the availability of resources. Preparation for children moving on to permanent placements is included in the carer training strategy.

2. The agency should ensure more effective overview of the need to review adopters approval ranges. National Care Standards, Adoption Agencies, Standard 25: Action

This recommendation was made on 14 August 2014

The Service has procedures that require prospective adopters to be reviewed within 12 months of approval if they are not identified for a match with a child.

The Service ensures that prospective adopters are reviewed if the adoption order is not granted within 2 years of their original approval, even if they are matched with a child and the child is in placement. The Service lists a date for review on the list of approved carers kept by the Team Manager, Adoption & Permanence Resource Team. The date for review is added at the time of original approval.

6 Complaints

No complaints have been upheld, or partially upheld, since the last inspection.

7 Enforcements

We have taken no enforcement action against this care service since the last inspection.

8 Additional Information

There is no additional information.

9 Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
14 Aug 2014	Announced (Short Notice)	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not Assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and Leadership	4 - Good
5 Sep 2013	Announced	Care and support	5 - Very Good
		Environment	Not Assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and Leadership	4 - Good
17 Nov 2010	Announced	Care and support	5 - Very Good
		Environment	Not Assessed
		Staffing	Not Assessed
		Management and Leadership	Not Assessed

20 Jan 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good Not Assessed 4 - Good Not Assessed
28 Jan 2009	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	4 - Good Not Assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good

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

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

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Care service inspection report

Full inspection

Dundee City Council - Fostering Service Fostering Service

Dudhope Castle
Dudhope Park
Barrack Road
Dundee

Service provided by: Dundee City Council

Service provider number: SP2003004034

Care service number: CS2005097782

Inspection Visit Type: Announced (Short Notice)

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and set out improvements that must be made. We also investigate complaints about care services and 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.

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Summary

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection following other regulatory activity. For example, if we have to take enforcement action to make the service improve, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

We gave the service these grades

Quality of care and support	4	Good
Quality of staffing	5	Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	4	Good

What the service does well

Children and young people were being supported to achieve positive outcomes in their school work and in further education, leading to greater stability at home with their foster carers and an increased sense of achievement.

Foster carers continued to use their learning from training to more effectively look after children and young people. Awareness of child sexual exploitation was being raised and there were plans in place for training for foster carers, staff and panel members on this issue.

The service had continued to build on existing quality assurance systems to monitor, evaluate and improve the service and was engaged in national policy drivers such as the work of the fostering review, integration and continuing care.

What the service could do better

The service should continue to involve children, young people, birth families, staff and foster carers in assessing and improving the service. This should include the sons and daughters of foster carers.

The manager should ensure that case records are audited and that the service develops through learning gained from critical practice and review.

Foster carers should be offered de-escalation training to support the effective management of challenging behaviour.

What the service has done since the last inspection

There had been developments within the team. Changes in staff were well-managed with foster carers commenting that they have been kept well-informed through involvement in recruitment processes, regular management communications and also by their individual supervising social workers.

Conclusion

The service remains committed to providing high quality foster care. Overall, we found that the outcomes for children, young people and foster carers were very good, however, for a small number of foster carers who had retired or been deregistered, there was dissatisfaction and this was taken into account in our evaluation of the service.

At our last Inspection we told the service that if further improvements were made in the areas we highlighted to them in our last report, that we would consider re-evaluating the service before this inspection. In March 2015 the service provided information to show that improvements had been fully made and we re-evaluated the service from adequate to good at that time.

1 About the service we inspected

Dundee City Council - Fostering Service recruits, trains and supports foster carers and their families to provide emergency, temporary or permanent care for children and young people who require alternative family care.

The aims of the service are stated within the context of Dundee City Council's duties towards children and families. The team had a new service manager, a team manager, a senior officer and six supervising social workers. At the time of our visit the service was supporting 96 foster carers to look after 156 children and young people.

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com

This service was previously registered with the Care Commission and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

Recommendations

A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions that a care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service, but where failure to do so would not directly result in enforcement.

Recommendations are based on the National Care Standards, SSSC codes of practice and recognised good practice. These must also be outcomes-based and if the provider meets the recommendation this would improve outcomes for people receiving the service.

Requirements

A requirement is a statement which sets out what a care service must do to improve outcomes for people who use services and must be linked to a breach in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (the "Act"), its regulations, or orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration. Requirements are enforceable in law.

We make requirements where (a) there is evidence of poor outcomes for people

using the service or (b) there is the potential for poor outcomes which would affect people's health, safety or welfare.

Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of care and support - Grade 4 - Good

Quality of staffing - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of management and leadership - Grade 4 - Good

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. You can find the most up-to-date grades for this service by visiting our website www.careinspectorate.com or by calling us on 0345 600 9527 or visiting one of our offices.

2 How we inspected this service

The level of inspection we carried out

In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections when we are satisfied that services are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care.

What we did during the inspection

We wrote this report following a short notice announced inspection. The inspection took place between 19 August 2015 and 4 September 2015.

As part of the inspection, we took account of the completed annual return and self assessment forms that we asked the provider to submit to us.

During this inspection, we sampled information from various sources, including discussion with several foster carers including retired and de-registered foster carers, young people, the team manager, staff members. We observed a foster carer review panel, joined a foster carer recall group and attended a resource allocation panel.

We looked at:

- Foster carer records
- Children/young people's records
- Records kept about a range of meetings, practices and communications
- Records relating to service development work
- Questionnaires returned to us by staff.

Grading the service against quality themes and statements

We inspect and grade elements of care that we call 'quality themes'. For example, one of the quality themes we might look at is 'Quality of care and support'. Under each quality theme are 'quality statements' which describe what a service should be doing well for that theme. We grade how the service performs against the quality themes and statements.

Details of what we found are in Section 3: The inspection

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

In any year we may decide on specific aspects of care to focus on during our inspections. These are extra checks we make on top of all the normal ones we make during inspection. We do this to gather information about the quality of these aspects of care on a national basis. Where we have examined an inspection focus area we will clearly identify it under the relevant quality statement.

Fire safety issues

We do not regulate fire safety. Local fire and rescue services are responsible for checking services. However, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant fire and rescue services so they may consider what action to take. You can find out more about care services' responsibilities for fire safety at www.firescotland.gov.uk

The annual return

Every year all care services must complete an 'annual return' form to make sure the information we hold is up to date. We also use annual returns to decide how we will inspect the service.

Annual Return Received: Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

Every year all care services must complete a 'self assessment' form telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this assessment is accurate.

The self assessment was completed and submitted as we requested. It showed that the service had identified strengths and areas for development and our findings were consistent with what the service told us.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

The views of some children, young people and carers have been taken into account.

Taking carers' views into account

The views of some children and young people's family members have been taken into account.

3 The inspection

We looked at how the service performs against the following quality themes and statements. Here are the details of what we found.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 4 - Good

Statement 1

"We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service."

Service strengths

In the self assessment the service told us:

"There is a consultative group which has met regularly giving carers the opportunity to share views and contribute to service development. Applicants to foster have the opportunity to contribute in writing to their assessment and matching reports and are invited to attend approval and matching panels. Questionnaires give them the opportunity to give feedback on processes and support. These questionnaires are used to inform plans for service improvement. Carers are invited to complete a form giving their views prior to the foster carer review and reports for these reviews have been changed to allow more focus on the carers and the service. In addition childcare social workers are asked their views about the quality of care and support provided, and express the views of younger children or those who have communication difficulties, where appropriate feedback from education and health professionals are also sought.

Current carers are involved in all foster carer preparation groups and are invited to sit on all working groups for service delivery and improvement including foster care recruitment, ACE scheme review and contact review group. We

continue to develop our website for carers and have recently launched a face book page. The website gives useful information and contact numbers to support foster families. We encourage more informal contact through coffee mornings with carers and foster children. Carers have attended informal coffee mornings to share views on the service and allow them time to get to know the team and the managers. Carer support groups are now in place for all temporary carers on a 4 to 6 weekly basis and carers are given the opportunity to give feedback on aspects of the service. Carers who leave our service are given an exit interview. Comments contribute to service improvements"

The information we considered supported what the service told us in the self assessment. We saw an increasing range of opportunities for foster carers and children and young people to be involved in the development of the service.

Current foster carers confirmed the very good working relationships with their supervising social workers, who visited regularly. Records we looked at showed evidence of high quality discussion between staff and foster carers about foster carer involvement in the development of the service.

We found that some foster carers were involved in most aspects of the service including the recruitment of other foster carers, policy development work and training for new foster carers.

When we looked at foster carer review reports and minutes we saw there were good opportunities for foster carers to express their views about the service and to contribute ideas for improvement. We also saw that the service listened carefully to these suggestions and took action to use them. For example, one foster carer told us she had asked to be able to attend a particular support group and this was accommodated. Another foster carer told us she had commented on a better way to record incidents and this was acted on and shared with other carers.

The service had established a system of recalling more newly approved foster carers to a focus group session to ask for their views about the quality of their preparation and to ask about ongoing support needs. During our visit we attended a recall group and found this was well attended. Foster carers

provided many suggestions for the service to consider and these were discussed by the members of the group and wider staff team.

Foster carers commented:

"I am often asked if there is anything that can be done better, in my supervisions, at my panel and when children have their reviews. I can honestly say I have never had any complaints."

We found that established links with Who Cares? Scotland and the Dundee Champions Board and Children's Rights Service continued to exist for those children and young people who wanted to access them. The service had continued to raise awareness of these advocacy groups with children and young people through inviting workers to support groups and supporting young people to attend meetings or groups.

Children and young people's views and whenever possible the views of their families were sought and provided at foster carer reviews and at their own looked after child reviews.

Young people told us:

"I can talk to my social worker or my foster carer. Even when I have not been happy in the past I have been able to talk about it and get it sorted out."

"I get asked a lot if there is anything that needs to be changed to make things better for me by my social worker and my foster carer's social worker."

"We get to write a report about our foster carers. I think that's a good thing because we can say if they do a good job and if their worker does a good job, it shows they care about my views."

We took all of the above into account and considered some areas for improvement.

Areas for improvement

In the self assessment the service identified the following areas for improvement:

"We will continue to support and encourage the young people through the Champions Board. We will continue to support the engagement strategy for young people in foster care."

We agreed that progress in these areas would enhance the existing good work in this area and we thought the service should more rigorously identify areas for improvement in the next self assessment.

Although most foster carers we spoke to told us they were happy with their involvement in improving the service, a small number of retired and deregistered foster carers told us their views expressed at the Dundee Foster Carers Association consultation meetings with managers had not been taken on board by the service. They raised issues of quality of care and support to them as carers, expressed concerns about the independent nature of panels and the need for more open and transparent decision-making processes and the barriers they had experienced in making complaints. We took these comments into account during our inspection and have asked the service to ensure that foster carers attending consultation meetings receive quality information about making complaints and about how their views will be taken forward to develop the service. In their response the service stated that the Dundee Foster Carers Association is an independent group set up by carers and is something that the service and team is not part of.

The independent nature of panels and robust decision-making processes have been considered within the Quality of management and leadership Theme 4 - Statement 4 within this report.

Grade

4 - Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 2

"We enable service users to make individual choices and ensure that every service user can be supported to achieve their potential."

Service strengths

In the self assessment the service told us:

"Applicants are given clear written and verbal information throughout the application, assessment and approval processes, via foster care handbooks, information packs, and comprehensive preparation groups that include input from adopters, foster carers and adoptees. This includes information on how to appeal a decision or request a reconsideration of a decision. The agency also has a website specifically for fostering and adoption, as well as the Integrated Children's Services website and the corporate website, all of which provide detailed information on services provided by the council.

The medical adviser meets or has contact with all applicants when they are considering a match with a child to ensure they are fully informed of child's health & developmental needs.

Children and young people have access to leaflets/websites giving information on how to make a complaint, child protection issues, process affecting them, and information on how to contact Who Cares? Scotland.

The ethnic, cultural and religious needs of children are always considered when a potential match is being pursued. During the linking, matching and introduction process, adopters, foster carers, children and birth parents participate as fully as possible in the planning and decision-making processes to ensure that this remains child-centered whilst taking account of the adult's views."

Our inspection findings confirmed what the service told us in the self assessment.

Most foster carers told us they felt confident they had good information about the service they could expect. They confirmed they had access to a foster carer handbook and told us about the very good relationships they had with their workers. They mostly felt supported to manage very difficult circumstances and behaviour and to access specialist resources if required. Foster carers told us that this led to improved outcomes for themselves and for the children they were looking after.

Foster carers told us:

"I got support whenever I needed it. I just had to phone and my worker was round, helping me to understand what was going on. It got very difficult at times but I never felt like I was on my own".

"If it was not for the support I have had I would not have continued, but being able to talk it through helps me to realise the difference I have made and the positive contribution to the child's life, and so I have kept going".

Most foster carers we spoke to confirmed that their resource worker had shared good information about children/young people to ensure they were aware of their interests and personal plan. Some foster carers who felt they had not received good information at the start of the placement, acknowledged this was when children were placed on an emergency basis when limited information about the child was known. Children and young people and placing workers were given profiles and welcome books from carers to prepare children with getting to know new carers and to provide some choice for young people where possible.

One young person told us:

"I looked at some carers first, but they were younger and when I looked at my carers I have now I thought they would be better for me".

"I go to school now. Before I came here I didn't go to school for over a year. Now I go every day and I have even started enjoying it!"

"I stuck in at school when I came here because I didn't have so much stuff in

my mind".

"My foster carers talk to me about my life, I can speak to them, I can be open with them and I've learned so much it has given me a better life, like not hurting myself as much".

We saw that foster carers had access to training and information relevant to the fostering role. Training programmes had been developed to ensure good access to core information and also to be focussed on meeting the needs of individual foster carers supporting individual children and young people. This included topics such as self harming and substance misuse. There were plans to roll out a programme of training for all foster carers and staff on the subject of child sexual exploitation. We found one example of a foster carer being encouraged and supported over time to give up smoking.

We found that children young people were being very well supported to remain in full-time education at school and beyond school years, and to achieve both in formal education and in a variety of social and sporting activities. Foster carers young people and staff told us about how this improved health, confidence and self-esteem. They also told us about the connection between settled foster care placements and educational and social achievements. Additionally, when we attended a resource management panel we noted some particularly creative thinking along with social workers about ensuring the right resources were accessed for individuals at the right time. This was a multi-disciplinary panel with membership from education and neighbourhood resources, fostering, residential and commissioning services.

Taking all of the above into account and some areas for development we assessed quality in this area as good.

Areas for improvement

In the self assessment the service identified the following improvements:

"The specialist fostering ACE scheme is currently nearing the end of the review which will help to identify the types of carers to match the young people needing a specialist resource. We are currently recruiting in partnership with our neighbouring authorities to look at recruiting carers for the hard to place groups

of children. We have also established a further post to deal with the increase in resources. We are now considering a skills based service in keeping with the national directive"

We agreed that progress in these areas would enhance the existing very good work in this area.

When we met with a group of foster carers we heard that one foster carer had been asked to care for a young person who subsequently had a birthday and became outwith the foster carers approval range. We noted that interim approval for this was not sought from the agency decision maker or from a panel. We heard that the young person presented challenges which the foster carer had not been trained to manage. This resulted in particularly poor outcomes for both the young person and the carer. We discussed this example with the managers of the service and made recommendations for improvements to be made. The poor outcomes we found have impacted on our evaluation of practice in this area.

We agreed that development work towards a model of concurrent planning for babies and that further awareness raising with all stakeholders of continuing care for older young people, would further promote better outcomes for children and young people. Links with need to increase resources for older age range.

Although most foster carers we spoke to told us they were happy with their involvement in improving the service, a small number of retired and deregistered foster carers told us their views expressed at the Dundee Foster Carers Association consultation meetings with managers had not been taken on board by the service. They raised issues of quality of care and support to them as carers, expressed concerns about the independent nature of panels and the need for more open and transparent decision-making processes and the barriers they had experienced in making complaints. We took these comments into account during our inspection and have asked the service to ensure that foster carers attending consultation meetings receive quality information about making complaints and about how their views will be taken forward to develop the service. In their response the service stated that the Dundee Foster Carers

Association is an independent group set up by carers and is something that the service and team is not part of.

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The service told us that although they do not maintain specific 'emergency placement availability', they do send a list every night to Out Of Hours Social Work with a list of foster carers available who can be contacted out of hours for emergency placements. At this inspection we encouraged the service to continue with this practice.

Grade

4 - Good

Number of requirements - 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 1

1. The manager must ensure that children are placed with foster carers who are appropriately skilled and experienced and who have been approved by the agency decision maker to meet their needs.

**National Care Standards foster care and family placement services,
Standard 2 - Promoting good quality care.**

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

"We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service."

Service strengths

Information recorded in Quality Theme 1, Care and Support - Statement 1, has also been taken into account in assessing the grade for this Statement.

In the self assessment the service said:

"Young people have been involved in recruitment The recent recruitment of a resource worker included both a young person and a foster carer as part of the interview process. Both the young person and the foster carer scored each candidate following an informal meeting and this scoring was included in the final scoring of candidates."

Taking all of the above into account and the areas for improvement identified, we assessed quality in this area as having improved since our last visit and to be very good.

Areas for improvement

In the self assessment the service stated:

"We are considering how to involve carers in our recruitment."

We agreed that more involvement of foster carers and young people in recruitment processes would enhance the quality of practice in this area. We also acknowledged with the service the benefit in terms of outcomes for foster carers and young people involved. One foster carer who had been involved in the recruitment of staff told us:

"We got a lot out of it. It's something else for the CV and I would feel more confident about doing that again."

More regular feedback should be provided to inform foster carers and children/young people about how their views have been used to improve the quality of staffing. We also discussed with the managers the need to offer foster carers and young people interview training to further support their active involvement.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 3

"We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice."

Service strengths

Foster carers were assessed, supervised and supported by professional, trained and motivated staff.

In the self assessment the service told us:

"Staff adhere to SSSC training requirements as a minimum, and the code of practice. We have a staff support service which contributes to our retention of staff. Staff development and training are standing items for supervision agendas. Teams have development and action plans. Individuals have action and development plans, including training needs.

All new staff have an induction programme. Staff are encouraged to attend training or events that keep them informed of current practice. There is additional information on practice provided via our Senior Officer via e-mails, distribution of research information and practice guides. We also use

consultation exercises with staff and communicate feedback from Service Group Meetings and Management Team meetings. Family placement staff have attended joint training with panel members to allow wider discussion regarding dual registration of foster carers and also family finding for children. The fostering resource team hold fortnightly team meetings where information from management meetings is filtered down and also areas are identified to be discussed at 6 weekly Service Group Meetings where all family placement staff meet together to ensure all staff are fully informed about service development plans."

Our inspection findings confirmed what the service told us in the self assessment.

We found that staff within the service were knowledgeable and skilled in the work they undertook. Records we looked at showed that assessments were of a high quality and that reports reflected this. As appropriate, staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) which regulates staff in social care settings. Staff knew about the SSSC codes of practice and that these codes underpinned their work.

Staff benefited in their professional development from a wide range of training opportunities, both internal and external, that supported them in the work they did.

Staff we spoke with confirmed they received regular and effective supervision. They also valued the opportunity for informal supervision from the manager and colleagues.

Staff members commented:

"This is a good team. We all have our skills and we are good at sharing our knowledge so that we develop as a team. We recognise the need to work with individuals respectfully and offer support and training at the right pace for them."

"We have a full team and people in this team are supported and enthusiastic, keen for quality and looking for best outcomes. There is a mix in terms of

experience and skills."

Foster carers confirmed the professional approach by staff:

"We get on great with her she has taken time to get to know us and I always take on board her advice. She is very good and will come out at the drop of a hat if I need her to."

"We got a new worker, we felt she was more critical and we didn't like being questioned, it was difficult to adapt after our previous worker who we had for 10 years and who was brilliant."

Staff worked in partnership with other agencies to ensure children and young people's needs were met. Comments made by other agencies relating to improvements in outcomes for children based on partnership working included:

"The young person remains settled in placement, marked reduction in disruptive/anti social behaviour in the community."

"All routine health appointments met."

"Good school attender."

"Contact with family goes well."

We considered all of the above information and some areas for improvement; we assessed quality in this area as very good.

Areas for improvement

In the self assessment the service identified the need to progress with greater partnership working with colleagues in education. We agreed with the service that further partnership working would support further improvements in this area and noted that the service could develop a plan to progress with this.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 4 - Good

Statement 1

"We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service."

Service strengths

Information recorded in Quality Theme 1, Care and Support - Statement 1 and Quality Theme 3, Staffing - Statement 1, has also been taken into account in this Statement.

In the self assessment the service told us:

"On a departmental level there are strategies that ensure that participation of service users and carers can directly influence how the service is managed and developed.

The department has an Involvement Policy which sets out how all staff can encourage the active involvement of customers, stakeholders and communities in Dundee around the planning, development and improvement of services. To implement this policy we need all staff to help, a toolkit is available to support staff.

The development of The Champions Board in Dundee has introduced young people who are developing a peer mentoring and a service user's involvement strategy aimed particularly at children and young people in foster care. The group provided a "LAAC attack" meeting for children in foster care to give their views and question leaders and policy makers.

The Integrated Children's Services Improvement Plan Task Group has developed a framework for engagement within the wider community and practitioners, and this of course includes children and young people.

There is also work underway in developing an engagement network consisting of lead officers from Child Protection, Dundee Violence Against Women Partnership, Alcohol and Drug Partnership, Community Safety and Adult Protection and a draft paper is being produced by the Corporate Planning Manager, Integrated Children's Services.

Alongside this is considerable activity on the participation and engagement agenda led through our partners in Leisure & Communities.

Within the fostering service itself children & young people, carers, birth parents can comment on management issues in LAAC Reviews, or at Adoption/ Permanence Panels.

Carers are involved in consultative groups, they can have membership of the DFCA and the website gives carers opportunities to put forward their views and suggestions. Carer Consultative Groups are held four times a year and chaired by the Service Manager which encourages direct communication with foster carers and senior management.

We have now introduced more informal coffee mornings which don't set an agenda, but allow managers to be more visible and accessible.

Ex foster carers and adopters are represented on both the Adoption/ Permanence and Fostering Panels. The panel can comment on individual cases and raise practice issues as appropriate. They are also involved in a more general quality assurance role in relation to practice and delivery of service. Practice issues are used to highlight concerns and directed to appropriate managers."

Most foster carers we spoke with felt highly involved in the overall development of the service. They had opportunities to express their views at reviews and support groups and some we engaged co-productively in training and policy development work. Information about proposed changes was raised in

consultation meetings, support group discussions and in newsletters.

Most foster carers knew who the managers and leaders of the service were and had some information about their roles.

The service had progressed with identified improvements in all areas since the last Inspection and this impacted on our evaluation of practice in this area.

We took all of the information above and some areas for improvement into account and assessed quality in this area as very good.

Areas for improvement

In the self assessment the service identified the need to "Continue to increase the opportunities for carers to attend any relevant meetings."

We thought this would support continuous improvement in this area, however, this was not specific or rigorous and more detail was needed to meet the criteria for evaluating very good in this area.

We noted that service users had not been involved in the recruitment of the new manager and suggested that the service could consider greater involvement in this area in future.

Grade

4 - Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 4

"We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide"

Service strengths

Our Inspection findings evidenced what the service told us within the self assessment and during the Inspection visit. The service had very good systems in place to ensure consistent quality and continuous improvements. Procedures were in place to record performance information including the work of the service such as; the number of carers, numbers of children awaiting placements, and the reasons for unplanned placement endings with a view to ensuring greater placement stability.

The service had been notifying the CI of relevant incidents and accidents.

The work foster carers undertook was monitored in the following ways:

- Regular supervision visits which were recorded
- Annual unannounced visits
- Feedback from other agencies such as health and education
- Reviews through the fostering panel.

The work staff undertook was monitored in the following ways:

- Regular supervision that included reflective discussions as well as case discussions
- Team meetings
- Joint visits when required with the manager or another social worker
- Quality assurance of assessments and reports
- Management attendance at the fostering panel.

The panel we observed and the minutes of previous panels which we read confirmed the independent nature of the panel membership. Appeal panels convened ensured that a completely different set of panel members was asked

to review information heard at the previous panel. Panel members were knowledgeable and experienced practitioners in the field of child care and demonstrated a caring and rigorous approach to their work. Panel members confirmed they regularly attended training, supervision and appraisal and business meetings.

The service had a complaints policy in place which included the Care Inspectorate contact details.

We saw that there were development plans which outlined the direction of travel for the service.

We took all of the above information and some areas for improvement into account and assessed quality in this area as good.

Areas for improvement

When we considered information regarding the review of foster carers we found that although statutory reviews were being carried out within timescales annual reviews were not always being carried out within 12 months. This impacted on our evaluation of practice in this area and we have made a recommendation about this. Previous foster carers told us that more regular access to an independent reviewer in order to consider the development and continued competency of the carer would have supported better outcomes for them.

Following review of records we asked the service to ensure that as far as possible, the views of all previous children (or those representing them) were sought and used to consider the competency of the carer. We also discussed with the service the effective practice of recording an action plan within or separate to the minute made of each carers review meeting.

Having listened to some carers who were not satisfied with the quality of management and leadership in the service, we discussed with the managers the need to support all carers to feel valued. When we looked at termination of approval records we found that recommendations for deregistration were made for sound practice reasons and that panel processes adhered to the regulations governing them. However, we suggested that the service should seek to further minimise numbers of carers having approval terminated through maintaining

high quality supervision of foster carers and by promoting open and transparent communication about any issues at an early stage. The service should also undertake critical practice reviews when appropriate to ensure learning is used to promote improvement .

We noted that more detailed agency decision-maker comments in their letters to deregistered foster carers would offer foster carers more opportunity for explanation and understanding of decisions made.

The service needed to ensure audits were being carried out to monitor and maintain the quality of record keeping in the service.

Grade

4 - Good

Number of requirements - 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 1

1. The service should ensure that each year the agency reviews the performance and quality of care provided and that review meetings are chaired by someone who can form an independent judgement.

**National Care Standards foster care and family placement services,
Standard 11 - Reviews.**

4 What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at our last inspection

Previous requirements

1. The service must ensure that foster carers have the necessary skills and attitudes to ensure that children in their care are treated with dignity. In order to achieve this the service must demonstrate that:

- It reviews how supervising workers assess the ongoing attitudes of foster carers in maintaining the dignity of children in their care.
- Staff within the service have a clear understanding of their role in monitoring the standards of placements and reporting concerns.

This is in order to comply with SSI 2011/210 regulation 4(1)(a) - a provision of the health, welfare and safety of service users.

National Care Standards for foster care and family placement services.
Standard 3(1) - Helping you as an individual.

Timescale: To be completed within 1 month of receipt of this report.

This requirement was made on 14 August 2014

Appropriate action was taken to address the requirement.

Met - Within Timescales

2. The service must ensure that foster carers have the necessary skills to care for children who have been the subject of abuse and neglect. In order to achieve this, the service must demonstrate that:

- It reviews how supervising social workers assess the ongoing skills and attitudes of foster carers.
- It has clear policy on actions it takes when concerns are raised about foster carers.
- Staff within the service have a clear understanding of their role in monitoring the standards of placement and addressing concerns.

This is in order to comply with SSI 2011/210 regulation 4(1)(a) - a provision of the health, welfare and safety of service users.

National Care Standards for foster care and family placement services.
Standard 2 (3) - Promoting good quality care.

Timescale: To be completed within 1 month of receipt of this report.

This requirement was made on 14 August 2014

Appropriate action was taken to address this requirement.

Met - Within Timescales

3. The service must ensure that review of foster carers are held as soon as possible when any significant incident, complaint or allegation of abuse or neglect is made. In order to achieve this, the service must demonstrate that:

- It reviews its decision-making procedure and shows that it has a clear understanding of their responsibilities in requesting reviews.
- Staff within the resourcing team have a clear understanding of their professional responsibility to seek a review.

This is in order to comply with SSI 2011/210 regulations 4 (1)(a) - a requirement that makes proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users.

This is in order to comply with the Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009 Regulation 25 (2)(a)

National Care Standards for foster care and family placement services.
Standard 11 (10) - a standard that ensures the service is clear about why and when a review should be called.

Timescale: To be completed within one month of receipt of this report.

This requirement was made on 14 August 2014

Appropriate action was taken to address this requirement.

Met - Within Timescales

5 What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at our last inspection

Previous recommendations

1. The manager should ensure that all children and young people can express their views about the service and that independent advice and support can be made available.

This recommendation was made on 14 August 2014

Appropriate action was taken to address this recommendation.

6 Complaints

None upheld.

7 Enforcements

We have taken no enforcement action against this care service since the last inspection.

8 Additional Information

There is no additional information.

9 Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
3 Apr 2015	Re-grade	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	4 - Good Not Assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good
14 Aug 2014	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	3 - Adequate Not Assessed 3 - Adequate 3 - Adequate
20 May 2014	Re-grade	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	1 - Unsatisfactory Not Assessed 2 - Weak 1 - Unsatisfactory
5 Sep 2013	Announced (Short Notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good Not Assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good
17 Nov 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good Not Assessed Not Assessed Not Assessed
20 Jan 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good Not Assessed 4 - Good Not Assessed

28 Jan 2009	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good Not Assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good
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