

Fostering People Scotland Limited Fostering Service

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Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
Fostering People Scotland Limited

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2012311047

About the service

Fostering People Scotland Limited was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 12th March 2013.

Fostering People is a private limited company, and wholly owned subsidiary of Polaris. It is registered as an Independent Fostering Provider under provision of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and regulated by the Care Inspectorate.

At the time of inspection, the service had 35 fostering families providing a range of fostering services.

The company's belief, reflected in their mission statement, is that all children and young people have a right to live in a safe, supportive, and life-enhancing family environment.

In January 2022 the service moved office to a more spacious and modern offices with improved facilities for staff and caregiving families.

The adult care service was inspected at the same time as the fostering service.

About the inspection

This was a short notice inspection that took place between the 5th and 25th October 2022. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations we visited three care giver families and spoke with a further two caregiving families through teams meetings. In total we spoke with eight children and young people. We also attended, and participated in, a staff team meeting, and a caregivers support group. We spoke with locality team staff and met with the independent chair of the services fostering and continuing care panel.

We further received a high level of response from our Care Inspectorate feedback survey; this was overwhelmingly positive.

Key messages

- Children and young people were safe, happy and achieving positive outcomes with fostering people.
- The service was well led by a highly respected and long serving manager with a skilled, and knowledgeable staff team.
- There was a clear plan in relation to fulfilling the aims detailed in "Keeping the Promise" with significant and beneficial outcomes already in evidence.
- The service had a detailed development plan in place which had a clear focus on continuous improvement.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support people's wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

We have evaluated this key question as very good with major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and young people.

Children and young people experienced warm, compassionate care from caregivers who were dedicated to ensuring that they were safe, valued, and respected within their family and community. Comments from children included "it is nice and cosy and warm at this house" and "I like staying here with (my caregivers), cause they make me feel happy and safe." One child, when showing us his bedroom commented "I love my bedroom, and look, my (caregiver) is just next door, so that's okay"

Caregivers used humour, physical affection and playfulness in their communications with children who responded positively, often playing themselves while supported by carers to express themselves openly and interact with us in a relaxed environment. This helped children to improve their communication and social skills with those out with the home and further promoted a sense of belonging to their caregiving family.

Children and young people received attuned care from caregivers who were well supported by their supervising social workers; regular reflective supervision and a wide range of mandatory and specialist training was evident. The many comments received included "Everything they do, they do it well" and "I would say that the support we receive is truly outstanding" This helped children and young people to feel confident that their caregivers could meet their needs and help them to reach their potential.

Caregivers had a good knowledge of discrimination and diversity, many had been actively involved in working with services such as education and health and on occasion, "Who Cares Scotland" These interventions were well supported by the service through training and supervision and had helped to ensure that children's rights in all aspects of their lives were recognised and their needs met.

Children and young people were supported to participate and express their views through a range of approaches. This had included a personal letter of welcome from the manager for each age group and had included fun activities for younger children and signposts to specialist support services and children's rights services for each child and young person. In addition to a regular newsletter, children had helped to choose from a range of indoor and outdoor events.

Children, young people, and their caregivers commented positively on the above. An older young person commented "Fostering People have been amazing" they were so inclusive; they involved all of us in everything irrespective of our age and stage and it was good to have so many opportunities. Younger children delighted in showing us the letter and games in the book sent about the "pinkie promise"

The service's recently appointed "Keeping the Promise Change officer" had visited each child and young person, having received a "promise pack" addressed to them. A "Voice of the Child" project group, with a focus on inclusion has emerged from discussions with children and young people. Changes made so far have included amended documentation to take account of individual health issues such as sight, hearing, and dyslexia; examples have included the use of different colours of background materials and larger font sizes and more choices of on-line options.

The above approach by the service had helped ensure that children's rights to inclusion in all aspects of their support are met in a way that is suitable for them and in accordance with the objectives of "The Promise"

Children and young people had been involved in numerous family activities and celebrations both at home and in the community which had included holidays away while off school in October and preparations for Halloween. Many children and young people had also chosen to attend in community groups such as cubs, brownies, and guides, with some caregivers actively involved as leaders and helpers. Others had been involved in raising money for a national charity.

The above activities supported choice, learning and community involvement for children and young people.

School attendance compared favourably with both national and other fostering services. Caregivers had completed an "Education Passport" which detailed and celebrated children and young people's progress at all levels. Children and young people had made considerable progress at school where they had achieved good outcomes and for some this had led to success at university. A caregiver who had just returned from school parents evening, told us "We have been in meetings with the school staff throughout this year; but were overwhelmed with what we were told about their excellent progress. We are so proud of them both."

It was clear that the positive outcomes we identified for children and young people were linked to the educationally rich environment provided by their caregivers and supported by their supervising social workers.

As stated in the "Pinkie Promise" Adults must make sure that children are able to stay close to the people they want to and stay connected with them.

All children spoken to had spent time with their families and caregivers had been actively involved in this process. Moreover, the "Keeping the Promise Change Officer" had been in the process of meeting with children and young people in preparation for addressing the issue of keeping in touch with brothers and sisters and with other adults important to them.

Caregivers of children and young people with disabilities had developed a range of visual and nonverbal resources to help them to practice skill such as timekeeping and personal and road safety. This approach helped to promote children and young people's self-esteem, social skills and confidence while having fun with their friends.

Children and young people's physical health and emotional well-being was actively promoted allowing them to have their needs met and to thrive.

All children and young people were registered with key health services; caregivers were assertive in advocating for children to receive mental health support such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) encouraged and supported by their supervising social workers. The service provided appropriate and updated mandatory training in child protection and first aid and digital safety for example which further ensured the safety and well-being of children and young people.

Some caregivers had prior experience in childcare and protection prior and others had had qualifications in therapeutic interventions such as hypnotherapy, counselling, and sleep therapy. There were many examples of caregivers using these skills positively to compliment the wide range of courses offered by the service such as attachment, trauma awareness, and life story work. One older child told us " My (caregivers) look after me really well. I can be angry and upset sometimes but they always know how to calm me down. I love living here"

Caregivers themselves were confident of support from their supervising social workers, on- call and counselling service provided. One caregiver told us "There is always someone to answer the phone; they all know us; nothing is too much trouble"

This above measures allowed children and young people to experience effective and timely interventions by caregivers who themselves felt well supported by the service.

Children and young people enjoyed healthy eating and active lifestyles. Some caregivers with younger children made helped children to have fun and learn healthy habits, by guessing games where their food originated from and how it helped them to stay healthy, for example. Daily routines and structures further supported their health and well-being. We saw examples of memory boxes made and life story work undertaken. This helped children and young people to develop a positive sense of self.

The above support provided by the service helped to ensure that children and young people have confidence in their caregivers to be able to meet their physical, social, and emotional needs.

Caregivers families had been comprehensively assessed, with strengths and vulnerabilities identified and approval based on experience. The views of children and young people were included in reports.

Security for children and young people was supported by a robust matching process and well planned processes in place such as introductory videos of the home and caregiving family and visits to school and caregivers prior to the child coming to stay. These measures helped reassure children and helped them to settled with their caregiver family.

All children and young people were familiar with the manager who had welcomed them and had often visited thereafter, at key times, such as their transition to adoption or to continuing care, for example. This provided an additional layer of scrutiny and helped to further ensure that children and young people and their caregivers felt listened to and supported at all levels of the service. Their achievements appreciated and celebrated.

There had been a number of placements which had ended in an unplanned manner, and one formal complaint from a birth parent. We noted that there had been an open and transparent approach by the service to each incident with robust meetings, chaired by senior management within the service where appropriate, which had promoted continuous learning and improvement.

We saw that over the year of this inspection, unplanned endings had been further reduced; we discussed this with the manager and were confident that the service would continue to improve this aspect of service. We will monitor this at the next inspection.

Reassessments for permanent care were of high quality and the majority had been provided by staff in a timely manner. However, we were advised by the manager that on one occasion, due to unforeseen circumstances, a reassessment of caregiver, to enable her to provide permanent care to child already settled, had not been completed within the agreed timescales.

Discussions with the local authority had taken place and action taken to ensure that any further delay would be minimised. At the time of inspection, an additional staff member had been recruited due to the growth of the service over this year. We will monitor this aspect of the service at the next inspection.

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good where the service has demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for young people.

Children and young people benefitted from care plans that followed Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and time bound (SMART) principles. Children and young people's views were included in their care plans and reviews and questions from young people had been and there was a robust and regular system of audit of all service case files, completed by the manager of the service. This ensured that children's plans of high quality and included of children and young people in the planning process.

All care givers had an up to date safer caring plan and risk assessments for their family and for each child: these were reviewed on a regular basis and subject to audit. This measure promoted children and young people's safety and well-being.

Fostering assessments were of consistently high quality, as were foster carer review reports. One locality social worker told us "The caregivers reports to the children's reviews are exceptional. They take great care to ensure that each child's individual needs are identified, recorded, and met" Reviews were held within regulatory framework and minutes of the meeting were completed in a timely manner and reflected a thorough and robust approach by panel members.

These measures helped to ensure that children and young people experienced high quality of care from caregivers whose circumstances and skills had been robustly assessed and who advocated for them to ensure that their needs could be met.

The service had a robust panel service with a good gender skills and experience mix and deputising arrangements in place. Questions devised by children and young people were asked by panel members and a wide range of presentations and training sessions had included "Keeping the promise" and child and adult protection. These aspects of the service, together with regular supervision and appraisal of panel members, helped to ensure that children and young people experienced overview and scrutiny of their care plans and ensured a continuous focus on their achieving positive outcomes.

Complaints

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

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Children, young people, adults and their caregiver families experience compassion, dignity and respect	6 - Excellent
1.2 Children, young people and adults get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
1.3 Children, young people and adults' health and wellbeing benefits from the care and support they experience	5 - Very Good
1.4 Children, young people, adults and their caregiver families get the service that is right for them	5 - Very Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects the outcomes and wishes of children, young people and adults	5 - Very Good

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