

Fostering Relations Ltd Fostering Service

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Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
Fostering Relations Ltd

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2007145923

About the service

Fostering Relations Ltd is a service who provide a range of fostering placements to children and young people. The agency is part of National Fostering Agency Partnerships Limited.

Fostering Relations offer family placements to children and young people between the ages of 0-18 years. The service accepts referrals from local authorities, who retain a statutory responsibility for the welfare of children and young people they place with the service.

Fostering Relations has a separately registered adult placement continuing care service which allows young people to remain living with their family beyond the age of 18 years. Both services inspected and each has their own report. Due to the same staff and caregivers, with the purpose of the continuation of foster care to continuing care, both reports are similar and should be read together.

About the inspection

This was a short announced inspection which took place between Monday 15 July 2024 and Monday 12 August 2024. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

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 of the service we:

- spoke with five children and young people using the service and six foster carers
- spoke with nine staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- reviewed survey responses from young people, caregivers and external professionals
- spoke with two visiting professionals, the panel chair, Independent Reviewing Officer and the Agency Decision Maker.

Key messages

Children and young people received nurturing and compassionate care from foster carers who had a high understanding of developmental trauma.

Supervising social workers were knowledgeable and supportive, using reflective discussions and training to enhance the trauma informed approach taken by foster carers.

There was a strong focus on relational based practice within the service from foster carers, staff and management.

Children and young people achieved positive outcomes in education and work placements, due to their hard work, support from carers and involvement from the service.

All children and young people had individualised safer carer plans which kept them safe and supported their wellbeing.

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

A number of strengths were identified which resulted in positive outcomes for children and young people, therefore an evaluation of very good has been awarded to this key question.

Children and young people benefitted from loving, compassionate and secure relationships with their caregivers and extended families. Young people were valued and accepted as individuals which led to a growing sense of confidence and self-worth. This provided a strong foundation from which young people could grow and succeed in all areas of life.

There was a strong commitment from carers towards the children and young people in their care. Young people benefitted from a high level of acceptance and understanding, and that in some cases this included carers continuing to offer love, care and acceptance throughout challenging period, demonstrating a high level of commitment and stickability.

Foster carers benefitted from meaningful and enduring relationships with their supervising social workers

and with the wider team at Fostering Relations. Reflective discussion was central to the work undertaken by Supervising Social Workers. Caregiving families felt valued within the service. One carer told us "Fostering relations are like a second family they provide great support".

Supported by their supervising social workers, caregivers took a thoughtful approach to recording and sharing information about children and young people, demonstrating a good understanding of their duties to maintain confidentiality.

Children and young people were supported to be actively involved in decision making about their care, and carers strongly advocated for young people when they felt that their needs were not being fully understood or supported. Caregivers and the wider service were actively involved in planning processes and where appropriate had sought and been granted ancillary rights and responsibilities as part of permanence planning for young people, further strengthening this role.

Young people and caregivers benefitted from the agency having a strong and well embedded commitment to participation, with the regular monitoring of engagement with young people and use of My Youth Voice surveys. Caregivers were consulted and listened to in relation to planning for individual children and the development of the wider service. One carer told us "they put a lot of thought into the wellbeing of everyone and take the time to listen".

Children and young people benefitted from having choice over all aspects of their day to day lives within their foster families. The agency takes a strongly child centred approach to short breaks and time away from main caregiver families, and short breaks are not routinely used unless this is a part of an individual child's care plan.

Young people were supported to maintain relationships with family members and other people who are important to them. Carers and staff had a good understanding of how best to support positive brother and sister relationships. This included some instances where brothers and sisters had previously been separated.

Children and young people benefit from a high level of support from caregivers and the wider service to enable them to engage with and get the very most from education. Families also benefited from involvement from an Education Support Worker which contributed to good outcomes for children and young people.

This ambition is extended to caregivers who are provided with a wide range of relevant and appropriate learning opportunities. Formal training was clearly well supported by a culture of reflective discussion within caregiver supervision. There were clear expectations of carer training which included child and adult protection training. Children and young people's safety and wellbeing was promoted by a robust and consistent approach to child and adult protection, which reflects best practice in this area.

Carers had a strong understanding of the impact of developmental trauma and were reflective in their responses to children and young people because of this. Staff were committed and knowledgeable which enabled carers to give children the highest quality of trauma informed and responsive care. This was enhanced by support to staff, caregivers and young people directly from the service's inhouse therapists and as well as independent clinical psychologists. Timely interventions supported relationships and individual wellbeing.

Caregivers had a good understanding of their role in promoting young people's access to health care which resulted in positive health outcomes for children. Young people were supported to lead healthy, active lives.

Caregiver families were comprehensively assessed to ensure that they have the capacity to meet the needs of children and young people. Assessments were of a consistently high quality which were evidence based and analytical. Matching processes between children's needs and foster families were thorough and robust which resulted in fewer disruptions for children and young people.

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

An evaluation of very good was awarded to this key question, as strengths were identified which resulted in positive outcomes for children and young people.

Children and young people's care and support was enhanced by the involvement of caregivers and the wider agency in every aspect of their care planning. Supervising social workers and foster carers were active partners in child review processes and helped to ensure that children and young people's voices were central to these plans. Where young people's views were not being sufficiently heard, carers often acted as powerful advocates and would enlist independent advocacy or legal support when needed.

All children and young people benefit from an individualised safer caring plan. These were regularly reviewed and updated, reflecting the changing needs, wishes and circumstances of children and families.

Planning was SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, responsible and timebound), with individuals and families central to the documents. There was regular audit and management overview of these documents, which resulted in consistent quality of these documents.

Carers were regularly supported to develop their own recording of young people's experiences and outcomes, in the form of weekly logs and monthly reports. Placing social workers reported to find these helpful, and that this in turn supported planning for young people.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

The service should ensure that quality assurance systems are robust and used effectively in order to identify and address areas for improvement timeously.

This is to ensure that management and leadership is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: "I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes." (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 26 July 2019.

Action taken since then

Quality assurance was well established and of a high quality, reflected in a high rate of compliance in all areas from statutory checks, carer training, and good quality documentation across the service.

Areas for improvement were identified by the service and addressed robustly – for example, carer recording and gathering the views of young people.

We have assessed that this area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The service should ensure that all relevant parties are provided with, undertake and remain up to date with relevant training including child and adult support and protection to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. In addition, training in respect of continuing care should be progressed as a priority to ensure young people are well supported at an early stage to make informed decisions about their future.

This is to ensure that management and leadership is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard which states: "I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes" (HSCS 3.14) and "I am protected from harm abuse, neglect, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities." (HSCS 3.20).

This area for improvement was made on 26 July 2019.

Action taken since then

Caregivers and staff members had all completed child protection and safer carer training with this being refreshed at appropriate intervals. Caregivers providing continuing care completed adult protection training prior to approval.

We have assessed that this area for improvement has been met.

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	5 - Very Good
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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