

Inspection report

Intensive Fostering Services Fostering Service

Goudie Street
Paisley PA3 2LG

Inspected by: Anne Borland
(Care Commission Officer)

Type of inspection: Announced

Inspection completed on: 14 June 2007

Service Number

CS2004082220

Service name

Intensive Fostering Services

Service addressGoudie Street
Paisley PA3 2LG**Provider Number**

SP2004007042

Provider Name

Kibble Education & Care Centre

Inspected ByAnne Borland
Care Commission Officer**Inspection Type**

Announced

Inspection Completed

14 June 2007

Period since last inspection

10 months

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Introduction

The Intensive Fostering Service (IFS) provides a fostering service to young males aged from 12 to 18 years and who have a connection with Kibble Education and Care Centre. The service recruits and supports carers to provide foster care and respite services for young males who, at this point in their lives, cannot live with their birth family. The service provider, a voluntary agency, has operated for many years and is a well established educational centre which offers residential and daytime educational support to young males between the ages of 12 and 18 years of age. The service was registered on the 18th November 2005.

The service's offices are based in the Arran Unit within the grounds of Kibble Education and Care Centre. The Intensive fostering service employs a manager who divides her full time working hours between the day care services and the IFS. The service is a small service.

The aims and objectives of the service are to recruit, train and support carers to provide quality life experiences to the young people in living within a family setting. The service links closely with the educational services and the school residential services. The service regards the carers as part of the team of professionals based at the school who strive to meet the holistic needs of the young people.

At the time of inspection five approved carers were supported by the fostering service and two potential carers were going through the assessment process. Five young people were placed with approved carers in long term placements and two young people were awaiting placements.

Basis of Report

This report was written following an announced inspection. The inspection took place from 14th to 18th June 2007 by Anne Borland, Care Commission Officer. Feedback was given on the 3rd July to the Management team.

This service was inspected after a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) was carried out to determine the intensity of inspection necessary. The RSA is an assessment undertaken by the Care Commission officer (CCO) which considers: complaints activity, changes in the provision of the service, nature of notifications made to the Care Commission by the service (such as absence of a manager) and action taken upon requirements. The CCO will also have considered how the service responded to situations and issues as part of the RSA.

This assessment resulted in this service receiving a low RSA score and so a low intensity inspection was required as a result. The inspection was then based upon the relevant Inspection Focus Area(s) and follow up on any recommendations and requirements from previous inspections, complaints or other regulatory activity.

The service was also required to submit a completed Annual Return as requested by the Care Commission which helps the Care Commission to review the service using accurate and up to date information.

During the inspection visit, evidence was gathered from a number of sources including:

- The personal plans of two young people
- Child Protection policy and procedure
- Information booklets provided to service users, carers and young people

- Risk assessments
- Staff training records
- The training records of two carers
- Complaints register

Discussion took place with a range of staff and service users including:

- The Service Manager
- The Executive Director
- Two Senior Practitioners
- Two day care support workers
- Two young people in placement

Telephone interviews were also conducted with the social workers of two young people currently in placement.

The Care Commission Officer took all of the above information into account during the inspection process and reported on whether the Service was meeting a range of relevant National Care Standards for foster care and family placement services associated with the Inspection Focus areas for 2007/08.

The main inspection focus area for foster care and family placement services was: Child Protection and included Scottish Social Services Council: Staff training plans.

All foster care and family placement services will be inspected against the relevant National Care Standards: Foster Care and Family Placement Services in 2007/08 as these Services are relatively new to regulation. The following Standards were taken into account during this inspection to support the inspection focus areas and the follow up on the service actions in relation to recommendations and requirements made in all regulatory activity since the last inspection.

- Standard 1 – Informing and Deciding
- Standard 2 – Promoting Good Quality Care
- Standard 3 – Helping You as an Individual
- Standard 4 – Expressing your Views
- Standard 13 – Management and Staffing

Action taken on requirements in last Inspection Report

The service had three requirements made at the last inspection.

1. The service was required to improve the quality of the assessment reports to satisfy themselves of the suitability of the prospective foster carer.
Training has taken place for staff members undertaking assessment. This has been met.

2. The service was required to develop and implement a policy and procedure on the recruitment of panel members which took account of safer recruitment practices to ensure the welfare of service users.
This has been met with new procedures in place and new panel members appointed to the panel.

3. The service provider was required to evidence that social workers employed by the service are registered with the Scottish Social Services Council.

This was met and evidence was found in personnel files to support this.

Comments on Self-Evaluation

A fully completed self-evaluation document was submitted by the service and gave relevant information for each of the Standards associated with the inspection focus area. The service identified strengths and areas for development.

View of Service Users

The Officer met with two young people individually. Both felt they had benefited from the placement with one young person stating fostering "had put his life on track". Carers were described as supporting contact with birth families and of treating them "as part of their (the carer's) family. Both felt they were consulted frequently about the quality of their placement and felt the support from IFS staff to be valuable. One young person felt the service could expand the matching process to include the preferences of the young people.

View of Carers

The carers who met with the Officer praised the support and training opportunities offered by IFS. Both described communication from IFS and the school in general as excellent. Both felt that becoming carers had added significant positives to their lives and felt valued for their contribution. No negative comments were made. It was recognised that the service had gone "from strength to strength" with the only frustration offered was the lack prospective carers coming forward.

The Officer spoke with two placing social workers. Both felt the service to be valuable and provided young people with quality placements. The service was described as "unique" in the level of support offered to young people. The communication from IFS was described as "excellent" and "pro-active" although it was suggested this was an area which had improved over time.

The linking with birth families was regarded as being something the service and carers promoted highly. The process of introducing young people to carers was described as being "impressive" and "extremely comprehensive". One worker shared regret that no other service such as IFS existed as she regarded this was a very much needed resource.

Regulations / Principles

Regulation :

Strengths

Areas for Development

National Care Standards

National Care Standard Number 1: Foster Care and Family Placement Services - Informing and Deciding

Strengths

The fostering service had developed comprehensive information booklets for carers and young people describing the work of the service. Details of how to use the service, the roles of everyone involved, and relevant contact details were provided. The language was user friendly and the written information was presented in a way that could be clearly understood by young people. Carers' were issued with 'standard' folders which contained the policies and procedures of the service and clearly stipulated the expectations of carers.

Young people are issued with information about potential carers on DVD format prior to introductory meetings. This included information about the family members, house, young person's bedroom, family pets, social interests and the local environment. This demonstrated good practice and was viewed as been very helpful in decision making

Information regarding the most recent Care Commission inspection was disseminated to carers and young people.

Children who met with the Care Commission Officer during the inspection were aware of the complaints procedure. The service was currently reviewing the complaint procedure to promote the confidentiality of young people. A suggestion box is in place at the day service.

The service recruitment strategies involved periodic articles in the press about the work of IFS and a routine insert within the general job vacancies advert for Kibble Education and Care Centre.

Information was recorded on a database to ensure all contacts were monitored and responded to.

Areas for Development

The IFS uses two types of advertising, dedicated advertising and inclusion in the general job advert for Kibble vacancies. While the dedicated advertising was detailed in terms of the criteria carers require the job vacancy advert lacked sufficient detail. The 'job advert' type advertising resulted in a high level of enquires which did not proceed beyond the initial

contact as enquirers were unsuitable. This was viewed as demanding on staff time which could be better utilised in responding to more appropriate enquires attracted by the consistent use of robust advertising. (See recommendation 1)

Young people are not currently used as part of advertising campaigns hence no policy was available. This should be developed in the event of involving young people in advertising campaigns. (See recommendation 2)

National Care Standard Number 2: Foster Care and Family Placement Services - Promoting Good Quality Care

Strengths

Interviews with social workers, young people, and carers all advised that in planned placements young people were given the opportunity to meet with carers prior to the placement commencing.

Young people are issued with information about potential carers on DVD format prior to introductory meetings. This included Information about the family members, house, young person's bedroom, family pets, social interests and the local environment. This demonstrated good practice and was viewed as been very helpful in decision making. The service promotes the involvement of birth families at this stage if the care plan supported such arrangements.

Risk assessments of the home environment were undertaken by link social workers as part of the fostering assessment and reviewed prior to carer's reviews thus ensuring that living arrangements were appropriate for young people. The service had 'safe care' plans which were regularly reviewed and contained detailed approaches to use in the promotion of safer care between the young person and carer.

Foster carers confirmed that they were offered and accessed training to support them to care for children and young people appropriately. The training opportunities were extensive and included mandatory training offered by the service provider 'Safe Crisis Management', 'First Aid', 'Protecting Children', 'Health and Safety'. The Fostering Network had also provided Skills to Care training and attendance at conferences relating to the fostering task was promoted. Carers are supported to attain the HNC and SVQ 3 awards. Recent training included working with children suffering trauma. Carers received regular supervision from senior practitioners and attended regular support groups. Approval was reviewed annually at the panel with updated local authority, medical and disclosure checks biannually.

The service held regular progress meetings for young people in which health, education, social, and emotional needs were considered. The service was very pro-active in encouraging links between the young people and birth families with evidence found of very sensitive work being carried out by carers and IFS staff members. Contacts were established with specialist health and psychological services as required. Young people were supported to enjoy a range of activities and increase their social network. Young people were involved in progress meetings and were encouraged to verbalise their views.

The progress of young people was also monitored at Looked After Children's (LAC) reviews and parents/carers were considered within the review forum when decisions regarding the young persons care plan were made. Young people were encouraged to complete a 'Having

your say' report which was circulated at the review. Decisions made were recorded in the LAC review minute that was circulated to all relevant parties.

Areas for Development

Currently carers do not provide a written report to LAC reviews. This should be reviewed in recognition of the primary care role carers provide to the young people in their care.

The service should consider developing a process which would engage young people in expressing, exploring and agreeing their expectations of the carers they are placed with. (See recommendation 3)

The service does not currently have protocol in place to manage emergency placements. This should be developed. (See recommendation 4)

National Care Standard Number 3: Foster Care and Family Placement Services - Helping You as an Individual

Strengths

This report does not include comments on all elements of standard 3 as these were looked at and reported under another standard. Standard 3.1 and 3.5 will be reported on under this standard.

The Service manager advised that due to limited carer availability it was difficult to offer a choice of placements to young people. However, the combination of the robust assessment of carers, coupled with the rigor of the introductory period meant it was possible to fully explore if the carer would be likely to meet the individual needs of the young person.

Information regarding care needs of young people was referred to within individual care plans and specified particular requirements of individual young people.

Areas for Development

The service only took referrals of young people for whom it had been agreed that fostering was a suitable option. However, evidence was not found of the young person being consulted as to their preferences as to the type of family they would wish. Whilst this would be the placing social workers responsibility it may be beneficial if the service's referral procedures have a prompt to ensure this information gathering has occurred.

National Care Standard Number 4: Foster Care and Family Placement Services - Expressing Your Views

Strengths

This report does not include comments on all elements of standard 4 as these were looked at and reported under another standard and will refer to 4.5 and 4.6 only.

Information provided to young people, carers and families could be made available in other

languages, Braille and via the use of interpreters if required.

Young people had access to key work staff from the day service and met with a 'Who Cares?' representative during visits to the school. Young people were aware of how to make a complaint.

Areas for Development

The service should make arrangements for young people who have left the school to have contact details of the 'Who Cares?' worker in the area where they are living.

National Care Standard Number 13: Foster Care and Family Placement Services - Management and Staffing

Strengths

The service has recently restructured and had two senior practitioners who shared the day to day management of IFS and the day educational services. This new structure had provided the opportunity for creating direct links between the IFS and day service. Both senior practitioners have the responsibility of carrying out applicant assessments and of supervising sessional staff that also assess potential carers. Key workers provided an additional support to young people. A full time administrator had been employed by the service.

These developments contributed significantly to ongoing development and operations of the service. The roles were clarified and the manager was more able to consider strategy and the continued development of the service. The two senior practitioners were able to focus their attentions on the quality of service delivery and supporting placements. The service had reviewed policies and procedures as the service had evolved to keep abreast of latest best practice. Service staff, carers and other stakeholders attending conferences held on the needs of accommodated children and fostering. The IFS had arranged a conference inviting guest speakers with specialist knowledge to provide lectures.

The service had employed a researcher to look at the outcomes for young people using the service. This involved interviews with young people and others involved in the IFS. The findings of this research have yet to be presented to the service, however, the manager advised of her intention to use the findings to further shape service delivery.

All of the recommendations made following the last inspection had been progressed and the service continues to adopt a partnership approach towards the Care Commission expressly welcoming the focus on continued development.

Areas for Development

None identified.

Enforcement

There has been no enforcement action taking place with this service.

Other Information

No other issues were identified to be reported on.

Requirements

There were no requirements made following this inspection

Recommendations

1. Standard 1 - The IFS should review the current advertising to ensure all advertising is sufficiently detailed.
2. Standard 1 - A policy regarding the involvement of young people in advertising campaigns should be developed.
3. Standard 2 - The service should consider developing a process which would engage young people in expressing, exploring and agreeing their expectations of the carers they are placed with.
4. Standard 2 - The service should develop a written protocol to ensure young people are given as much information about the new placement when using emergency placements.
5. Standard 3 - The service should review information of the referral procedures in term of the information gathered regarding the views of the young person to preferred family life.

Anne Borland

Care Commission Officer