

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: 22 September 2008

Service Number

CS2004082220

Service name

Intensive Fostering Services

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

SP2004007042

Provider Name

Kibble Education and Care Centre

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

Announced

Inspection Completed

22 September 2008

Period since last inspection

14 months

Local Office AddressCentral West Region
4th Floor
1 Smithhills Street
Paisley
PA1 1EB
Tel: 0141 843 4230
Fax 0141 843 4289

Introduction

The Intensive Fostering Service (IFS) provides a fostering service for 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.

Based on the findings of this inspection the service has been awarded the following grades:
Quality of Care and Support - 4 - Good
Quality of Staffing - 5 - Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership - 4 - Good

This inspection report and grades represent the Care Commission's 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. Please refer to the care services register on the Care Commission's website (www.carecommission.com) for the most up-to-date grades for this service.

Basis of Report

Before the Inspection

The Annual Return

The service submitted a completed Annual Return as requested by the Care Commission.

The Self-Assessment Form

The service submitted a self-assessment form as requested by the Care Commission.

Views of service users

The officer took the opportunity to speak with five foster carers and three young people during the inspection process.

Regulation Support Assessment

The inspection plan for this service was decided 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. The inspection was based on the relevant Inspection Focus Areas and associated National Care Standards, recommendations and requirements from previous inspections and complaints or other regulatory activity.

During the inspection process

Staff at inspection

During this inspection the Care Commission Officer discussed the service with the Operations Manager, Service Manager and Youth Worker and the organisation's internal practice auditor. The Care Commission Officer also observed a fostering panel and fostering panel business meeting.

Evidence

During the inspection information was gathered from a number of sources including;

Discussion with service users.

A review of a range of policies, procedures, records and other documentation, including the following;

supporting evidence from the up to date self assessment

Foster Carers' files

Young people's personal plans

Minutes of team meetings

Complaints Log

Staff supervision and appraisal records

Staff training records

Child Protection Policy

Young persons' service Information Booklet

Carers' information handbook

Service users' Participation Policy (Draft)

Advertising information

Young people questionnaires

Information regarding IFS Difference Event

Assessment reports provided to the Fostering Panel

Inspection Focus Areas and links to Quality Themes and Statements for 2008/09

Details of the inspection focus and associated Quality Themes to be used in inspecting each type of care service in 2008/09 and supporting inspection guidance, can be found at:

<http://www.carecommission.com/>

Fire Safety Issues

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 introduced new regulatory arrangements in respect of fire safety, on 1 October 2006. In terms of those arrangements, responsibility for enforcing the statutory provisions in relation to fire safety now lies with the Fire and Rescue service for the area in which a care service is located. Accordingly, the Care Commission will no longer report on matters of fire safety as part of its regulatory function, but, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, will alert the relevant Fire and Rescue service to their existence in order that it may act as it considers appropriate. Further advice on your

responsibilities is available at www.infoscotland.com/firelaw

Action taken on requirements since last Inspection

There were no requirements identified during the previous inspection.

Comments on Self Assessment

The operations manager submitted a self-assessment form identifying evidence against each Quality Statement and Quality Theme. This information was sampled and used during the inspection process.

View of Service Users

The Care Commission Officer met with three young people.

Comments included;

“I got lots of information about the foster carers and saw a DVD about them”.

“My life has got so much better”

“I wouldn’t have believed my situation now if I had been told this two years ago, it’s brilliant”

“My carer is like my friend, I really trust him”

“My life really is on track now and I feel positive that I’ll do well. I used to think I would end up in jail, not now”

“I would recommend being fostered here to anyone, it’s even better than I thought”

“The staff are great, you can talk to them”

“I have had a great experience and will definitely foster when I’m older”

The only issue for improvement identified was the amount of meetings to attend.

View of Carers

The Care Commission Officer met with five foster carers who expressed the view that the information provided about the service, the training opportunities and support provided was of high quality. All felt supported and expressed satisfaction in their role of foster carers.

Carers felt that sometimes information received about young persons placed with them could be fuller, however, attributed this to placing social workers and not the service itself.

Carers were pleased that the youth worker had been employed as they felt that previously young people who had left the school missed out on this support.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 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

The service provider had recently developed a participation policy to promote partnership working with young people, parents, carers, and other stakeholders. The provider had recently appointed a practice auditor who has introduced a systematic approach to gathering the views of all stakeholders who had connection with the organisation as well as service users and staff. This has resulted in imaginative ways to capture the views of young people including the use of 'pod casts', online questionnaires and pictorial questionnaires.

The service had held the 'Intensive Fostering Service (IFS) Difference Event' for foster carers, young people and staff in which the service gathered views regarding the service and suggestions for development. Carers and young people stated a preference to meet to share views and experiences with some built in time for socialising. As a result an event was planned this included a buffet meal, activity planned by the young people and a discussion forum. Staff, young people and foster carers were involved in evaluating and analysing the findings of the Difference event and of experiences of the service. This has formed the unit development plan. This was considered a successful venture and as such is now proposed that it be held annually.

The service has a suggestions box for young people to post ideas or concerns. There was evidence that the service adhered to the internal complaints process and evidence found that complaints were responded to with action taken as appropriate.

The service had a dedicated 'Who Cares?' worker who is known to the young people and met with them recently to discuss issues and offer information regarding through-care and moving on. Carers were also encouraged to make contact with the local 'Who Cares?' worker.

Young people were given access to written information about the service and a DVD of their prospective foster family to give insight before committing to being fostered. Young people are given the opportunity to complete a 'Young Persons Answer' sheet to ask any further questions they may have and give more detail about their preferences.

Young people are invited to attend progress meetings and formal LAAC reviews. Young people are encouraged to present their own report to LAAC meetings.

Young people were invited to complete an end of placement report to give their view of the service received. Foster carers were invited to the fostering panel to give their perspective on issues surrounding placement endings.

Foster carers met weekly as a group with staff team at the service to discuss the progress of young people, share experiences and provide advice and guidance support. In addition foster carers met individually for formal supervision with the supervising social worker. All carers felt that the staff at the service responded promptly to requests for support and valued their contribution.

Foster carers were encouraged to provide reports for their annual review in which they are invited to comment on the quality of support received.

Foster carers were part of the Handbook Development group which identified when information required updating, improved upon or added. One of the latest developments was linked to a recommendation following last year's inspection regarding general standard setting for paying and allocating of allowances for young people while in placement.

Prospective carers are given evaluation sheets following preparation training. Previous comments received about the value of meeting with experienced carers and hearing from a young person's perspective have resulted this been a fixed part of the preparatory training. This has been further developed with a carer due to attend the 'Training for Trainers' course in 'Skills to Foster' to allow an increased input into the training of prospective carers.

Carers and young people had been issued with copies of the Care Commission information about the grading system, service users' involvement and the information CD rom.

Foster carers and young people were encouraged to participate fully in the Care Commission inspection.

Areas for Development

The service could consider developing a local service users' participation policy to detail and consolidate the processes used to involve carers and young people.

The comments box and complaints box was rarely used. The service should explore ways to overcome this.

Carers felt they may benefit from meeting alone as a group to offer each other support and the opportunity to offload in a less formal setting. However this had been addressed by the time inspection feedback was given.

Carers expressed views of the added difficulty following failed placements knowing that the young person may come into contact with the new young person who has been placed. Given the relatively small community of the centre this is largely unavoidable; however, the service could consider some dedicated training for carers and young people around this issue in appreciation of the relatively unique situation in which they operate within.

The service recorded in case files when, due to circumstances, the views of birth parents would not be sought. However the service should explore ways to gather the views of other significant others who may be in touch with the young people.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

Statement 3: We ensure that service user's health and wellbeing needs are met.**Service Strengths**

The IFS issued carers with a comprehensive handbook which detailed their responsibilities in meeting the needs of young people, the standards of the organisation and where help and support can be accessed.

The health needs of young people were assessed when entering the service and at ongoing progress and review meetings. Evidence was found of staff and carers being proactive and fully embracing their responsibility to promote good health with recent excellent practice witnessed during the inspection of staff and carers advocating on behalf of a young person with specialised agencies.

The service had established links with health professionals including the host authority LAAC nurse, community adolescent psychiatry services and addictions services. Young people also have access to an educational psychologist and a nurse within the centre.

The service held group work nights for young people to raise awareness about a range of issues. Recent groups included drugs awareness, healthy eating, careers advice and leaving care information. Outside facilitators had been invited and imaginative ways of engaging with the young people had been used, such as, 'Can't cook, won't cook'. Each group night finished with an activity requested by young people with the recent activity being snow boarding lessons.

The young people were given the opportunity to access supported training from Kibble Works or could choose to take up college placements. The service continues to support young people within the school at Kibble but did support young people to return to mainstream schooling when possible as in the case of one of the young people.

Young people felt their opportunities to achieve academically and succeed in employment had improved greatly, mainly as a result of being in a foster family but also due to continued support from the IFS team and other staff employed at Kibble. There was evidence found to support this with young people clearly benefiting from stability and quality relationships.

The service had recently seconded a member of staff into the role of youth worker with the remit of giving individual support and key time to young people independent of their carers. This was seen as a positive step in meeting a gap to support young people who had left the school.

As a result of a successful advertising strategy the service had been successful in attracting and approving new carers. Prospective carers underwent a full home assessment to assess their suitability. Reports were very detailed and issues fully explored. Competency assessments were complete and plans in place for gaps in knowledge. Continued suitability was reviewed annually. Any question over medical fitness was referred to the medical advisor of the fostering panel and action taken as appropriate. Evidence was found of the assessing social worker acting appropriately when coming to the decision when applicants were unsuitable and of providing the fostering panel with a full written report to support this recommendation.

Carers and staff received mandatory training, such as, Safe Crisis Management (SCM) and Child Protection. The service had robust procedures in place to manage and monitor incidents involving the use of SCM which included individualised behaviour support plans for young people which were regularly reviewed. Carers' were not permitted to use physical restraint techniques due to the isolated nature of caring for a young person in a family home. If and when staff required using restraint, full debriefing took place with staff and young people. Staff and carers were issued with a comprehensive Child Protection handbook during the training to keep for reference. This booklet included the definitions of Child Abuse, action to take in the event of abuse being suspected or reported, contact details of the agency child protection officer and of relevant statutory agencies, such as police and Social Services. The booklet also contained 'The Charter for Protecting Children and Young People and Framework Standards for Child Protection (Scottish Government). The legal framework including 'The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child' and the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 were also included. A list of recommended reading material on best practice guidance and the findings of related enquiries were listed.

Additional training opportunities were provided for carers, as 'Attachment and Loss' and 'Emotional Freedom'. The service accessed a wide range of training for carers from the Fostering Network and BAAF. Reading material on recent research and best practice was made available to carers. Specialised information and training was sourced and made available if requested or identified to meet individual needs of young people.

Carers were either qualified to HNC with SVQ level 3 or undergoing this training as a part of the expectation of the service when becoming a carer.

Mandatory respite was provided to carers in recognition of the need for rest time. The service had good organised systems in place to manage this on a planned basis and, if necessary, on emergency. Carers felt well supported in this regard.

Areas for Development

The support to young people from their key worker had been limited for a period of time due to staffing levels and geography issues as some young people had left the school. This was unfortunate as the young people expressed valuing this time. However, this had been addressed by the appointment of the youth worker.

As yet the service was not yet in the position of offering a choice of carers to young people. However, it is hoped if the advertising campaign continues to meet with the continued success then this option could eventually be realised.

The service did not hold pathways plans for the young people who were of age to have this work undertaken. This should be addressed and resolved with placing case managers. (See recommendation 1)

CCO Grading

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Overall CCO Theme Grading:

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 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

Carers were part of the weekly team meeting and contribute to the agenda and discussion.

Carers and young people contributed to the creation of the service development plan.

Carers had participated in the job description for the newly appointed 'Youth Worker'.

The provider had employed a dedicated 'practice auditor' to identify ways and seek the views of all stakeholders using the provider's services. Young people and carers have been asked to complete satisfaction questionnaires. Carers were found to feel the quality and support from staff was very good. Young people chose not to complete questionnaires hence ways were sought in conjunction with the service to gather views using methods more acceptable to the young people, such as pod casts, and face to face meetings.

At annual reviews carers were asked to comment on the quality of the support received from supervising social workers.

Views were sought from prospective carers regarding the quality of the preparation training and evidence was found of changes being made as a result of this.

There was evidence that the service adhered to their internal complaints process with carers and young people also aware of external bodies to which they could complain, such as the Care Commission and 'Who Cares?' There was evidence that young people felt able to challenge the practice of staff and carers and that their view would be fully considered. The manager was clear that the service holds a no blame culture instead of learning from experiences. This may well be attributing in the success in creating an open culture in which carers, staff and young people felt able to give their views about practice.

The service provider had recently employed a young person in recognition of his skills and first hand knowledge of the care system re-enforcing that the views of young people are valued.

Carers were part of the Foster Carer Handbook development group which updates and improves information provided to prospective carers about the service and role of foster carers.

Young people were encouraged to complete 'having your say' reports about the quality of care at LAAC reviews.

Areas for Development

The service did not have a formal link between the views sought from carers and young people and the staff appraisal system. (See recommendation 2).

Carers had not been involved in the recruitment of staff, however the provider was in the process of updating the recruitment policy and procedures and this was to include the involvement of carers in interviews.

Young people had been invited to interview new job applicants, however, had not taken this opportunity. The service could consider ways to promote this involvement.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Statement 3: We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.

Service Strengths

The service had a recruitment policy and procedure in place which was supported by an equal opportunities policy. The organisation used safer recruitment practices and staff were subject to a period of probation in which their suitability and development needs were assessed.

Staff members undergo a period of induction training part of which includes education on the ethos, values and procedural guidance of Kibble Education and Care Centre.

Staff employed in IFS who carry out assessments of prospective carers had attended BAAF competency training and held the appropriate Social Work qualification.

Staff were all registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). Staff members were issued the SSSC Code of Practice when recruited and were aware of the National Care Standards for Fostering Services.

Staff members receive regular formal supervision from line managers. Team meetings are held regularly. Staff members receive annual appraisals. Evidence was found of staff development and training needs being identified and met within the timescales agreed.

There was a range of policies and procedural guidance in place to protect the rights of others, some of which included Whistle-blowing, Bullying and Harassment and Child Protection.

Staff members had access to a wide range of training opportunities to develop their skills and understanding of the needs of young people who have suffered trauma and of fostering provision Applied Suicide Intervention (Asist) and Young Minds, exploring mental health issues. Mandatory SCM training and Child Protection training also took place.

Staff at the service had ready access to latest research documents, publications and best practice guidance to further develop their knowledge base.

There was evidence that views of staff members contributed to the service's self assessment grades prior to the Care Commission inspection.

Staff members spoke positively about working for the organisation and expressed feeling valued and supported.

Panel members were vetted appropriately and training offered. The panel chair submitted an annual report on the service to the board of directors. A panel was observed by the Officer and members were seen to be well prepared and very considered in their decision making process. The manager, who is the professional advisor to the panel, has arrangements in place with another fostering agency to take on role as professional advisor in the case of a conflict of interest. This arrangement was seen to being used appropriately.

Areas for Development

The service could consider pathways training for staff in recognition of the age of several of the young people with whom they work.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 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

The provider had developed a participation policy and employed internal auditors to oversee policies, resource management, practice and the standardisation of documentation used throughout. Questionnaires had been issued to carers, placing social workers and young people. While carers responded positively about the service, young people did not complete the questionnaires. However their views were sought in other ways and were positive about the service, staff and management. The one response received from placing social workers was positive.

The service had commissioned Stirling University to carryout a study into 'Young people's experiences of, and participation in, the fostering service'. Young people had participated fully in giving their views on the service with evidence found of action taken as a result of their expressed views, such as, the improvement in written and visual information provided to young people about fostering service and of the family they have been matched with prior to accepting the placement. Overall this was a positive report which concluded that young people had felt they had benefited as a result of being fostered with life opportunities enhanced.

The service had held the IFS Difference day which involved carers and young people and a further development day in which the service development plan was created.

The fostering panel sought the views of prospective carers and existing carers regarding their experience of the fostering panel and included views expressed within the annual report submitted to the board of directors.

Areas for Development

The service development plan could be more specific in recording where the expressed views of young people and carers had been included and shaped the development strategy of the service.

CCO Grading

5 - Very 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

The provider had developed a participation policy and employed internal auditors to oversee policies, resource management, practice and the standardisation of documentation used throughout. Questionnaires had been issued to carers, placing social workers and young people. While carers responded positively about the service, young people did not complete the questionnaires. However their views were sought in other ways and were positive about the service, staff and management. The one response received from placing social workers was positive.

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Areas for Development

The provider's participation policy was still in draft form and did not detail how the organisation currently carries out service users' participation and how this will feed into quality assurance framework.

The service should continue to explore ways to gather the views of a wider range of stakeholders.

The Officer examined the complaints received by the service and the methods by which they were investigated and was of the view that the process used could be further developed. This is specifically in relation to clarifying with the complainant the aspects which would be investigated and stating clearly in the resolution letter which of the aspects investigated were upheld or not upheld. (See recommendation 3)

The report of the findings from Stirling University was still in draft form. The service should look to agree a date to finalise this report and consider how recommendations could shape the improvement and change agenda of the service. This would also allow those who contributed the opportunity to make comment on the report.

CCO Grading

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Regulations / Principles

National Care Standards

Enforcement

There has been no enforcement action against this service since the last inspection.

Other Information

The service is currently exploring how they will continue to support young people and carers who wish to extend the placement over the age of 18 years.

Requirements

There were no requirements made at this inspection.

Recommendations

1. Young people who have received age fifteen and a half years should commence pathways planning. This is to meet with the National Care Standards for Fostering Care and Family Placements Services - Standard 2.3. Promoting Good Quality Care.
2. The service should develop a formal link between the views and experiences of carers and young people of service delivery and staff appraisal. This is to meet with the National Care Standards for Fostering Care and Family Placements Services - Standard 13.7 Management and Staffing.
3. The service should review the current complaints investigations processes. This is to meet with the National Care Standards for Fostering Care and Family Placements Services - Standard 4.3. Expressing Your Views.

Anne Borland
Care Commission Officer