

Intensive Fostering Services Fostering Service

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Type of inspection: Announced (short notice)
Inspection completed on: 22 March 2018

Service provided by:
Kibble Education and Care Centre

Service provider number:
SP2004007042

Care service number:
CS2004082220

About the service

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

The Intensive Fostering Services (IFS) provides a fostering service to young people aged from 5 to 21 years many of whom who have a connection with Kibble Education and Care Centre. The service recruits and supports foster carers to provide foster care, respite services, who at this point in their lives cannot remain with their birth family. The service also provide the separately registered adult placement service.

The stated aims and objectives of the service are to recruit, train and support carers to provide quality life experiences to children and young people within a family setting. The intensive fostering service has close links with the residential and specialist intervention services that are based in the same campus, and with the primary education provision off campus.

The service also provides access to further education and work placements within the KibbleWorks campus, which is part of the service's social enterprise scheme.

The service regards foster carers as an integrated part of the professional team who strive to provide positive outcomes for children and young people.

What people told us

We spoke with seven foster carers and two young people during our inspection. Foster carers told us the level of support from family placement social worker continued to be extremely good and this was clearly valued. Training opportunities were also considered to be plentiful and of good quality. Most foster carers were aware of the recent challenges in successfully placing younger children and considered that this was an area in which the service could improve. All remained committed to the good work provided by the IFS.

Young people told us they enjoyed living with their foster carers and could describe the progress they had made. Young people particularly appreciated the time they had with key workers.

Foster carers commented:

'The assessment was very professionally done, extremely thorough and I had my belief system fully examined. It was exhausting at times, but the pace felt logical'.

'The training and support we get is excellent, the weekly meetings are great for catching up with other carers and discussing any difficulties. The online training fits in well with my life too, and we have a training plan well in advance'.

'My key worker is amazing, the information sharing is excellent. There is a lot of support for carers and children it is a fantastic service'.

Young people commented:

'This is better than other fostering care, we get a key worker, its good because it means I have someone on my own to talk too about stuff'.

'You get a chance to try out lots of things and I get help to keep up with things that interest me'.

'I like living with xxxx, I'm happy'.

Self assessment

This was not requested for this inspection year, however, the service had completed their own self evaluation.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

What the service does well

Regular preparation groups were held for prospective applicants, and feedback to the service demonstrated that these were valued by those who had attended. Foster carers informed us that adult children living within their family homes had also been invited to attend these groups. This had been very beneficial in terms of their understanding about what was required to help support vulnerable and traumatised children.

Assessments we examined during the Inspection were of a very good quality. Form F's (The assessment tool used to assess prospective foster carers). They were well written, evaluative and considered in their conclusions. All necessary statutory checks were carried out to ensure the safety of children. Second opinion visits were always carried out to discuss any vulnerability highlighted and ensure all information had been covered. This meeting also allowed potential foster carers to give feedback on the assessment process directly to managers. We were pleased to hear from managers that there were regular meetings with the assessors to ensure continuity of report writing and sustain good practice.

Transitions for children moving from residential care to foster care were sensitively planned and co-ordinated for two of the cases we examined. The approach taken was child-centred, with all key individuals involved including a strong input from the young people themselves. We were pleased to hear that some foster carers took on a befriending role initially with the young person, and this was prior to being formally matched. This type of activity enables bonds to be established, integration into the local community and for young people to move gradually and at a pace that will best suit their needs.

Support offered to carers to help them carry out their role effectively was very good. This included receiving appropriate and good quality training, and being provided with a high level of contact from individual workers and key workers through home visits along with a range of well-functioning group support. Carers provided us with examples where staff and management had gone 'above and beyond' their role to sustain placements and offer additional services including psychological input when required. The commitment and motivation of staff remained a key strength, and it was evident that the good outcomes we identified for children and young people were linked to the high level of support provided to foster carers.

Staff described being supported by the management team and valued the rights based and child-centred approach promoted. Regular supervision took place where operational tasks alongside their professional development were discussed. Staff members were given opportunities to attend relevant quality training including conferences and post graduate courses. These learning opportunities for both staff and managers provided a sound theoretical base for their work. The management continued to be extremely proactive when researching best practice and where relevant integrating into the practices within the service. It was evident that there was a mutual respect within the staff group, and morale was reported as very good.

High levels of therapeutic support are integral to helping children recover from adversity and negative life experiences and we were very encouraged to find that this type of intervention informed much of the services work practice. We found this had significantly positive outcomes for the wellbeing of children and young people. It was particularly impressive that children and young people were achieving in mainstream school and were making positive steps towards further education and employment opportunities.

Several members of staff were trained to provide ongoing therapeutic support and intervention to foster families with a particular focus on building positive attachments. We were advised that this approach had successfully enabled placements to be sustained during testing times and was consistent with the needs of children and young people who had experienced developmental trauma.

What the service could do better

There had been a number of placement breakdowns over the last year which was unusual for this service. We were aware that these involved children transitioning from the linked care home 'Arran Villa'. The staff and management were aware that this needed addressing and to this end were exploring additional training for foster carers, targeted recruitment for foster carers for younger, more complex children. The management were also looking to develop a new model of care where highly complex children may benefit from an intensely resourced foster care placement. Whilst it is commendable the way in which the service is addressing the challenges which have presented, we do acknowledge that for some children, there were poor outcomes. (Refer to recommendation)

We asked the service to look at restructuring the placement disruption meetings to ensure that learning for the service, learning for foster carers, and consideration of foster home reviews were considered and decisions clearly recorded. We also asked the service to include the child and or young person views as provided in the placement endings form.

We asked the service to review the risk management tool so that included child sexual exploitation and suicide/self harm as standard items for consideration. We were told this would be updated.

The service had complied a service self-assessment using the new National Care Standards. We noted that the service graded themselves as excellent throughout. We found this was not in keeping with the services own understanding of where the service could improve. This was accepted and we were told this would be reviewed.

We made some suggestions to improve the quality of the information contained within the draft annual panel report.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. IFS should continue to learn from placement breakdowns and this should inform practice when placing further children, particularly from the linked care home, Arran Villa.

National Care Standards, foster care and family placement services - Standard 2: Promoting good quality care and National Care Standards, foster care and family placement services - Standard 13: Management and staffing.

Complaints

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

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
11 Jan 2016	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
31 Jan 2014	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment Not assessed Staffing 6 - Excellent Management and leadership 5 - Very good
22 Feb 2013	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 6 - Excellent Management and leadership 6 - Excellent
21 Sep 2010	Announced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 6 - Excellent
2 Dec 2009	Announced	Care and support 6 - Excellent

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Environment Staffing Management and leadership	Not assessed 5 - Very good Not assessed
22 Sep 2008	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed 5 - Very good 4 - Good

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