

## Perth & Kinross Council - Fostering Services Fostering Service

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**Service provided by:**  
Perth & Kinross Council

**Service provider number:**  
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**Service no:**  
CS2004083801

## About the service

Perth and Kinross Fostering Services recruits and supports caregiving families who provide care for children and young people in their local authority area.

## What people told us

Carers and children and young people told us that were generally well supported by the service and that social workers were responsive to need and communicated effectively. Social workers for children placed were generally positive about the quality of care provided although some issues relating to carer understanding of trauma was raised.

Some comments from carers:

"I genuinely cannot fault the supervising social worker/s that I have worked with"

"I feel listened to and if I have a problem that means I need extra support, I ask and it is considered important. For example when I got covid."

"I have a tremendously supportive Social worker for my supervision"

## 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?	4 - Good
How well is our care and support planned?	4 - Good

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

## How well do we support people's wellbeing?

**4 - Good**

We have evaluated this key question as good where important strengths are present that outweigh areas for improvement.

Children and young people in the service experienced positive and enduring relationships with their carers. Care was seen to be individualised to need and we saw many positive examples of children and young people succeeding in education and living full lives.

Carers felt supported by the service and had positive relationships with their social workers within the family based care team. Carers felt included in service development via a consultation group and had access to regular support groups.

Children and young people benefitted from continuity of short break care. The service was piloting

assessments of support carers within caregiver families own network at the time of approval to provide further stability and provide children and young people with a more natural experience of short breaks.

The service was committed to keeping brothers and sisters together and had a steering group to review practice in this area. We saw examples of creative practice to keep brothers and sisters together and a commitment to maintaining relationships. Children and Young People had access to supports from life long links with the aim create a connections plan for all looked after children to maintain important relationships.

Children and young people's health benefitted from the care they received and we saw examples of carers providing care to manage complex health needs. Children and young people had comprehensive health assessments via the Looked After Children nursing team and internal supports within the service to support mental health needs.

Carers were committed to ongoing learning and accessed a range of material to support their development as carers. The service produced a training calendar signposting carers to material on relevant topics. The service should improve the range of provision available for carers in particular related to trauma informed practice and child protection to ensure that carers have the right knowledge to support positive outcomes. This will form an area for improvement (please see area for improvement 1).

Carers were rigorously assessed and panel processes were robust in providing quality assurance. This ensured that all carers were approved in line with best practice.

When children and young people were in need of substitute care the service considered which carer would be best able to meet their need to reduce the number of moves experienced by young people. The service did evaluate practice when young people experienced unplanned endings, these meetings could be more specific in identifying learning points and how these negative outcomes could be prevented.

Children and young people in need of permanent care generally did not experience delay in assessment. The service had monthly planning meetings to monitor outcomes and ensure timescales were met. Some children and young people did experience delay in planning and the service should continue to review practice to further improve outcomes. This will form an area for improvement (See area for improvement 2).

Young people moving to continuing care and adult services had clear information about their rights and discussions around transition begun at an appropriate stage with engagement from the Throughcare Aftercare service. We saw positive outcomes of young people experiencing continued support from their fostering families after the age of 18.

## Areas for improvement

1. To support Fostering families to fully support children in their care, the provider should improve the support available to carers in particular in relation to trauma informed practice and managing challenging behaviour.

This should include but is not limited to the creation of a clear programme of training to create a shared vision of the approach to care to ensure fostering families are fully supported to meet the needs of children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS 4.11)

2. To ensure that children in need of permanent substitute care do not experience drift and delay, the provider should ensure that delays in panels being arranged can be reduced.

This should include but is not limited to reviewing the permanence process and paperwork used for panel to reduce delay.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'As a child or young person needing permanent alternative care, I experience this without unnecessary delay' (HSCS 1.16)

## How well is our care and support planned?

4 - Good

We have evaluated this key question as good where important strengths are present that outweigh areas for improvement.

Children and young people benefitted from multi-agency plans that were regularly reviewed and met their needs. Young people had access to advocacy services and children's rights officers as required. Social Workers within the fostering service built relationships with children and young people and advocated on their behalf.

The service did not have individual safer caring plans for all children and young people using the service. A risk assessment document was used in situations of more high risk but was not routinely used in every caregiver family. The service should review its practice in this area to ensure that all children and young people have safer caring plans that outline how their needs will be met by their carers. This will form an area for improvement (see area of improvement 1)

We did not see evidence of how the service obtains the views of young people as part of a wider participation strategy. The service has a champions board (Fun Young Individuals) based within youth services but it was not clear how the views of young people in foster care were gathered and used to inform service development or how caregiver families contributed to decision making forums. This will form an area for improvement, (see area for improvement 2).

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children and fostering families are included in discussions related to safer caring, the service should review its implementation of safer caring plans.

This should include but not be limited to, reviewing formats of documentation and improving guidance to staff on how to engage children and Fostering families in safer caring plans.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I am as involved as I can be in agreeing and reviewing any restrictions to my independence, control and choice.' (HSCS 2.6)

2. To promote children's welfare, the provider should ensure that children's reviews reflect their views, their carers views and contribute to service development.

This should include but is not limited to, children, fostering families and fostering team staff providing written updates for children's reviews and improving how it gathers these views prior to meetings taking place.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources.' (HSCS 4.27)

## 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 day to day placement arrangements and placement agreements are in place for all children and young people using the fostering service.

**This area for improvement was made on 4 October 2017.**

#### Action taken since then

Matching matrix with risk assessment used to assess carers ability to meet a child's needs when a child is needed substitute care.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

2. Management systems should be developed to provide a wider management overview of quality and key events within the service. Specifically a system of file auditing should be developed as well as central records for child/adult protection allegations.

**This area for improvement was made on 4 October 2022.**

#### Action taken since then

File audit system in place and central records for allegations against carers kept. Service needs to keep central child protection records for children in the service and this has been discussed with the service during the inspection.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	4 - 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	4 - Good
1.4 Children, young people, adults and their caregiver families get the service that is right for them	4 - Good
How well is our care and support planned?	4 - Good
5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects the outcomes and wishes of children, young people and adults	4 - Good

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