

The Adolescent & Children's Trust Fostering Service

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Edinburgh
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Telephone: 0131 455 4488

Type of inspection:

Announced (short notice)

Completed on:

14 December 2018

Service provided by:

The Adolescent And Children's Trust

Service provider number:

SP2007009362

Service no:

CS2007162713

About the service

This service has been registered since 2008.

The Adolescent & Children's Trust (TACT) is registered to provide a fostering and family placement service. TACT is a charity fostering agency providing a service for children and young people aged from 0-18 years and their families. The agency recruits and supports carer families to provide a fostering service to a range of children throughout Scotland. The service is based in Edinburgh and places a great emphasis on its close working with placing Local Authorities.

The service is managed by an area manager, supported by two deputy area managers under whom are senior supervising social workers (SSSW), a duty worker and backed by administrative staff. The service is also supported by departments within the national organisation based in England.

The stated vision and values of the service are:

Our vision - Better lives for our children and young people.

Our Values: Aspirational - by helping others to grow, we grow ourselves; Passionate - We are determined to keep improving what we do. We will ambitiously pursue the best outcomes for everyone we work with and strive for excellence in all we do; Customer Focused - we shall listen and respond to the people we work with, children and young people, their birth families, carers, our staff, our supporters and Local Authorities; Fair and Equitable - we will be open and transparent, communicating what we do and why we do it, based on equality and respect for all; Beyond Profit - reinvesting our resources into services for our carers and improving outcomes for children and young people.

What people told us

We spoke to three foster carers during home visits and a further 12 carers during two support groups. We spoke to two young people during the home visits. We also had access to documentary evidence and feedback.

Foster carers reported that they felt well supported by their supervising social workers and there was evidence of a strong skill base within the staff team.

We observed one panel and received completed questionnaires from four panel members. Feedback regarding panel was overwhelmingly positive with acknowledgement being given to the commitment and consistency of panel members.

Some of the feedback from carers included:

"We have regular questionnaires when we can voice our opinions".

"Personal service the feeling of being part of a large team is a strength".

"We have had access to a child psychologist".

"We receive fantastic training".

"In my experience, as supporting social workers get to know their carers, they approach training opportunities that will suit learning styles and time available".

"Support from our supervising social worker is excellent".

"We know someone is there if we need it".

"We completely trust TACT".

Self assessment

A self-assessment was not requested for this inspection year, however, we looked at the last self-assessment completed in 2016 and the service provided a detailed operational plan and a detailed service development plan.

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	4 - Good

What the service does well

The service provides a high level of support to carers. We saw that supervising social workers provided regular support to the carers in addition to the provision of training and support groups. Training provided is of a high level and the expectation of continuous professional development is clear to carers.

The service has undergone a change of management and staffing over the last year, however, evidence showed that this has strengthened the team and that there has been no adverse impact on carers. The manager of the service was improvement focused. There was evidence of regular team meetings and development days with the inclusion of a focus on staff well-being.

Quality assurance systems were in place to ensure all relevant checks were completed.

We found that carers enabled young people to be safe and healthy by providing routines and boundaries. There was ample evidence of young people being encouraged to achieve their educational and personal ambitions and to take part in new experiences. This supported children and young people to feel safe, nurtured and included. Carers described good communication between carers and birth family and two carers spoke about on-going relationships with birth mothers after young children had been rehabilitated home. The skill level of carers was evidenced as they were aware of their responsibilities and boundaries in such cases.

Carers were witnessed providing nurturing and responsive care and had supported the young people to have meaningful memories. There was evidence of a positive approach from carers and small achievements are recognised and celebrated. This was seen in carer recordings.

The service provides a consultancy service to carers from a child psychologist one day a month. This has supported carers to be child focused and there was evidence of all staff and carers using common therapeutic based language.

There was safe care plan and risk profile available for completion which supported keeping young people safe.

We observed consistency of an experienced panel membership, strengthened by the inclusion of two care experienced young people. Members have annual appraisals and there is a new member buddy system.

The recent employment of a Children's worker has brought an added dimension to the team. There was significant evidence of carers and young people being enabled to share their views through questionnaires, inclusion on staff interview panels and the development of participation groups.

We looked at child protection procedures and practice and were satisfied that there were procedures and practice in place to ensure service users are protected.

What the service could do better

Some carers informed that they did not receive full background information on young people placed with them. The service should ensure that there is detailed evidence of referrals matching considerations and decision making.

The service are undergoing a review of the carer training and as part of this should consider how carer training is recorded and audited.

The development of policy, carer and children's participation groups are seen as a positive feature and the service should ensure clear recording of any developments considered.

The service has advised that they are looking to review the current carer handbook and it was felt that it would be useful to ask for both staff and carer involvement in the development of this.

The service provided clear evidence of unannounced visit being undertaken and agreed during discussion that the development of a pro forma for these visits would provide more robust evidence and analysis.

The service is aware of the need to undertake a file audit to ensure all paper work is recorded in the correct place on carer and young people's files. The use of chronologies would also assist in ensuring a clear narrative and recognition of significant events.

The service could enhance their assessment of carers by seeking the views of young people, birth children and LA social workers more consistently.

The service should progress the work they are currently doing in relation to monitoring permanence timescale and the development of policies and procedures specific to permanence assessments.

The service have recently been registered as an adult placement provider and are aware of the need to support the development of continuing care placements and support carers, staff and panel members in their learning.

There was observed to have been a gap in the provision of regular panel business meetings, however, the service are aware of this and have a date in place for early next year. Following observations and discussion, we further

advised the service that they should review the scheduling of panel agenda to reflect on individual cases and complexities therefore allowing sufficient time for full discussion and decision making.

The service have already started discussions on how they can develop partnerships with others in order to provide advocacy support for young people and they are keen to progress this further.

The service are aware of the need to continue their learning following placement breakdowns and carer de-registrations. The service could consider the use of a mid-point meeting during the carer assessment process to review progress, address any issues and confirm if assessment to progress or not.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

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								
6 Oct 2017	Announced (short notice)	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment</td> <td>Not assessed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staffing</td> <td>4 - Good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management and leadership</td> <td>Not assessed</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	5 - Very good	Environment	Not assessed	Staffing	4 - Good	Management and leadership	Not assessed
Care and support	5 - Very good									
Environment	Not assessed									
Staffing	4 - Good									
Management and leadership	Not assessed									
9 Oct 2015	Announced (short notice)	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment</td> <td>Not assessed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staffing</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management and leadership</td> <td>4 - Good</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	5 - Very good	Environment	Not assessed	Staffing	5 - Very good	Management and leadership	4 - Good
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Staffing	5 - Very good									
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28 Aug 2014	Unannounced	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment</td> <td>Not assessed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staffing</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	5 - Very good	Environment	Not assessed	Staffing	5 - Very good		
Care and support	5 - Very good									
Environment	Not assessed									
Staffing	5 - Very good									

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
29 Nov 2013	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
22 Nov 2012	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
9 Sep 2011	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
15 Oct 2010	Announced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
31 Jul 2009	Announced	Care and support	3 - Adequate
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate

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