

# Angus Council Fostering Service Fostering Service

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Angus Council

**Service provider number:**  
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## About the service

Angus Council Fostering Service provides a fostering service for children and young people from birth to 18 years and their families, who are assessed as in need of alternative family care. The service recruits, trains and supports foster families to provide therapeutic care to children. This care can be provided by interim, long term, permanency and short break foster experiences.

A separate Adult Placement (Continuing Care) Service was in the process of being registered which would provide young people with the opportunity to remain with their foster families beyond the age of 18 years.

An inspection of the Adoption Service was also undertaken and a separate report has been completed.

## About the inspection

This was a short announced inspection which took place between 26 February 2024 and 19 March 2024. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed two children within their foster families and spoke with four of their foster carers
- spoke with eight staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with four external or visiting professionals.

## Key messages

Children and young people received nurturing and meaningful care from their foster families.

Relational based practice was strongly evidenced within the service, but particularly within the relationships surrounding the children and young people.

The Fostering Service played an essential role in the progression of permanency planning for children which resulted in timely progression of children's plans to secure permanence.

Lifestory was prioritised within the service which ensured that children and young people had a strong sense of their life journey.

High quality training was offered to staff and foster carers which resulted in a good understanding of trauma informed approaches.

Risk assessments and care planning were holistic and robust which supported positive outcomes for children and young people.

## 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?	5 - Very Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good

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

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

**5 - Very Good**

This key question has been awarded the grade of very good as there were a number of strengths identified that strongly outweighed any areas of development.

Relationships were meaningful and affectionate between children and their foster carers. Care was attuned with tactile and nurturing care observed during the inspection visits to families.

Children would have a strong sense of being part of their foster family. There was a strong sense of commitment and love within fostering families, even when children were there as part of an interim care plan. Where care relationships ended, caregivers maintained connections with the children which strongly evidenced the focus on relational based practice within the service.

Relationships were supported and maintained within the service. Brothers and sisters were placed together where possible, and where not possible, relationships and family time was well supported. Short breaks were well managed and in most cases with the same family or with good introductions. There was clear procedures and assessments in place for short break and support carers.

Foster carers experienced strong and positive relationships with their supervising social workers. Discussions were trauma informed and attachment focused which encouraged carers to reflect on experiences of children. One carer told us that their worker is "knowledgeable and has the expertise to best support us".

The Promise was embedded in practice with children and young people being empowered to be part of national campaigns impacting care experienced children and young people. The service placed priority on children and young people's rights, and participation. This was clear within the aims and objectives and independent advocacy was actively promoted for those using the service.

There were very positive outcomes for children in terms of their education. Multiagency working supported alternative care plans where mainstream education was not fully meeting the needs of children and young people. Caregivers attended education settings to provide role modelling to staff, while also supporting the child with an attachment focused intervention.

There was a comprehensive training calendar available for all caregivers, which covered essential and interesting topics relevant to the caring role. Carers told us they felt training was meaningful, informative and helped them to think about the individual experiences of the children in their care. There was a clear expectation on carers of their engagement in training and good manager oversight into the attendance and review of sessions.

Safeguarding incidents and accidents were well managed within the service. However, there was no tracker for incidents and protection concerns. This would be a beneficial area for development as would ensure that managers have an oversight and allow scrutiny to the process. There was a good focus within training, supervision and documentation which resulted in a high understanding of risk and child protection. Regular meetings were held where there was escalated risk which ensured that appropriate and timely interventions were being utilised.

Children with their fostering families were claimed by their caregivers and extended families. Children were provided with stable care and a limited number of moves between care environments. Where moves between families were required, there was mindful consideration of how the transition should be managed with the child kept at the centre of decision making. Where children moved from permanent placements unexpectedly or in an unplanned way, a disruption meeting was held and learning for the service identified. A clinical psychologist had also been involved in supporting some of the team and families directly to consider the most effective way to support children and young people.

The service placed high priority on the importance of life story of information for children who were living permanently with their foster carers. Carers and professionals were involved in planning and delivering life story work. There was also a prioritisation given to memory boxes which is important for all young people. In some situations, the supervising social workers were directly supporting children and young people if it was identified that they were the most appropriate person to do so.

The health and wellbeing of children and young people was strongly prioritised within the service. There was strong evidence of multiagency working to best support positive outcomes for children within a coordinated care plan.

Assessments were analytical, comprehensive and evidence-based which included the birth children's views and needs clearly. There was positive support provided to birth children from the service and their views were included within foster carer reviews.

The service had developed strategies to reduce drift and delay for children who were registered for permanence with workers being directly allocated to younger children after they had been registered for permanency. The team was viewed as experts as managing permanency as a result and would offer mentoring experiences to the locality team to support achievement of permanency for older children. This practice had been successful in securing permanency in a timely way for children with the service being a positive driver to delivering this outcome. Matching processes were well managed with children being kept central to decision making.

There were clear processes in place for supporting young people moving into continuing care with their foster families with positive outcomes for young people being evidence. However, the registration of the adult placement had not been completed at the time of inspection.

Prospective adoptive families were dual approved as adopters and foster carers, which supported the child's journey smoothly and swiftly. Despite there being a clear understanding of the regulations, it was found that these had not consistently been followed in all cases. Although there was no negative outcome identified as a result this is an area which should be developed to ensure consistency and accountability and will follow up on this process at the next inspection.

### How well is our care and support planned?

**5 - Very Good**

The grade of very good has been awarded to this key question as there were a number of positive outcomes identified for children and young people.

Care planning was SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timebound) which, coupled with well planned and timely placement support meetings, ensured a tight focus on planning and promoting positive outcomes for children and young people.

Every family had a clear and concise safer caring family policy. Risk assessments were completed for all children and young people within tight timescales. These were clear and specific to individual children, although in some cases would benefit from further exploration of risk factors and strategies used to reduce risk. It was concluded that the assessment of need and risk was robust and informed best practice.

Advocacy services were involved with families where appropriate and also attended consultation sessions which was a helpful way of keeping advocacy on the agenda for families.

The service had a focus on enabling participation for children, young people and their families. Individual views were sought for carer reviews and training was delivered to all carers to highlight the important role carers play in advocating and helping children be a key part of planning.

The service would benefit from standardising templates for processes, including carer supervision and unannounced visits. This would create consistency across the team and enable transparency in the processes.

## 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?	5 - Very 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	5 - Very Good
1.4 Children, young people, adults and their caregiver families get the service that is right for them	5 - Very Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects the outcomes and wishes of children, young people and adults	5 - Very Good

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