

Family Connections Team (Adult Placement Continuing Care) Adult Placement Service

Clackmannanshire Council
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Clackmannanshire Council

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About the service

Family Connections Team (Adult placement Continuing Care) is an adult placement service provided by Clackmannanshire Council. It is linked to the Family Connections Team (Fostering Service) and supports carers providing support to young people on a continuing care basis.

About the inspection

This was a short notice which took place between 23 September and 11 October 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. We also received information as part of pre-inspection surveys completed by carers, staff and external professionals.

In making our evaluations of the service we spoke with 2 carers, spoke with six staff and management observed practice panel, reviewed documents and spoke with two external professionals.

During our inspection year 2024-2025 we are inspecting against a focus area which looks at how regulated services use legislation and guidance to promote children's right to continuing care and how children and young people are being helped to understand what their right to continuing care means for them. Any requirements or areas for improvement will be highlighted in this report.

The provider of this service is a corporate parent, with statutory responsibilities to look after and accommodate children. This may mean that the duty to care for children and young people on an emergency basis, or with highly complex needs, is their highest safeguarding priority.

In these circumstances our expectations, focus on outcomes and evaluations remain identical to those of all other providers. We may, however, provide some additional narrative in the body of the report to reflect the impact of these duties, should it be relevant to this particular service.

Key messages

- Young People experienced enduring loving relationships within caregiver families.
- Caregiver families were well supported and relationships with the service had improved.
- Caregiver families had access to a range of appropriate training opportunities.
- Positive educational outcomes were well supported within the local authority area.
- Young people were supported to engage in their care planning.
- Young people were aware of their rights to Continuing Care and Welfare Assessments were in place.

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?	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?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Young people benefitted from meaningful, affectionate and secure relationships with their caregiver families. Children living with caregiver families were experiencing improved outcomes as a result of the care and support they received. Caregiver families generally felt well supported by the service. A continued emphasis on consultation and engagement helped caregiver families to feel valued.

Caregiver families engaged positively with support groups and a range of social events were arranged that carers and children could attend. This helped to build a sense of community and build relationships between carers. Formal consultation with carers also took place via a fostering Annual General Meeting (AGM). This promoted participation for caregiver families in service improvement. Carers felt that at times action points arising from consultation could be communicated more clearly to further improve participation.

Staff turnover and staff absence had impacted the continuity of support for some carers since the last inspection.

Young people had access to external advocacy to ensure their views were heard in relation to care planning. The service also had a clear participation strategy for care experienced young people and had undertaken work to reframe the language of care in line with The Promise.

Young people experienced highly personalised care and support from caregiver families who understood their needs. Carers demonstrated a knowledge of the impact of trauma on young people and were attuned

to their needs. Young people had opportunities to engage in community activities and they enjoyed holidays with their caregiver families.

Caregiver families worked well with important people in young people's lives. We saw examples of carers working collaboratively with birth parents and a promotion of sibling relationships. Tracking of sibling relationships took place centrally to ensure that family links were maintained.

A strong focus on educational attainment within the authority remains a key strength for the service. Educational outcomes were promoted through the Virtual Headteachers who champion the needs of care experienced young people across the local authority area. The educational psychology service was also involved in supporting positive outcomes for young people through provision of assessment, consultancy and carer training. Young People were supported to access college and employment opportunities.

Caregiver families had access to a range of training to support them in their role. Mandatory training expectations were clear and a training calendar was in place outlining a range of learning opportunities available. Carers personal development plans were regularly discussed with supervising social workers and at panel. A positive culture for learning existed in the service and carers were motivated to engage which helped to support positive outcomes for young people.

Caregiver families had access to training in relation to safeguarding and child protection which formed part of mandatory requirements. External training on online safety had also been provided to carers to enhance their knowledge and ability to identify potential risks. Carer chronologies were used consistently and were updated regularly which helped the service to maintain an overview of key events for caregiver families.

A plan is in place to implement a model of trauma informed, relationship-based practice but this is not yet embedded. The service should continue its developments in this area.

Young people experienced positive health outcomes as a result of the care they received. Young people's health needs were comprehensively assessed, and we saw examples of mental health needs being met through specialist interventions from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Young people's life story was promoted through the use of a new app to capture important memories of life events which was being used by carers in the service. A worker trained in therapeutic life story work was also available to undertake specific pieces of individual work with young people. A worker in the team had also been trained in therapeutic interventions which enhanced the support available to caregiver families.

Young people had the opportunity to express their views in relation to carer reviews. The service is exploring how this feedback can be incorporated in to a digital platform used to gather views for children's reviews to enhance levels of participation.

Transitions to Continuing Care were generally well managed. Young people were aware of their rights and Welfare Assessments were in place that considered their needs. Caregiver families' registration as adult placement carers was appropriately reviewed by panel.

Young People benefitted from pathways planning that was responsive to need. The service should ensure that transitions for young people with additional needs are well managed to ensure care planning is effective.

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

Young people were able to express their views in relation to care planning. Meetings were conducted in a young person friendly manner. Young people had the opportunity to express their views using digital technology. Access to independent advocacy further supported the ability of children and young people to participate in care planning. Young people were included in reviews of caregiver families and the service was exploring implementing the use of digital technology to support this.

Staff from the Family Connections Team worked collaboratively with children and families social workers to support care planning. They attended meetings, undertook joint visits and understood their role in supporting positive outcomes. Young people were supported to maximise independence and make choices in how they were supported.

The service has undertaken work to review the language of care in conjunction with care experienced young people from the "Oor Clacks voices" group. This had led to a new policy on language to ensure that social workers write in way that is non judgemental, easy to understand, transparent and that culture and values align within the organisation.

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

To ensure carers have up to date knowledge to support them in their caring role the service should improve carer's engagement in core training.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) Ensuring management oversight of access to core training
- b) Developing a consistent model of practice to inform carer training needs.

This is to ensure that practice is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: "My care and support meets my needs and is right for me" (HSCS 1.19).

This area for improvement was made on 13 October 2023.

Action taken since then

- Core training calendar in place providing a range of training from in house, online and external.
- Carers access to Clacks academy e learning platform for mandatory modules which have been clearly defined.
- Service maintaining overview of training and this is monitored in supervision and at panel.
- Plan to develop readiness for care (building on readiness for education model) to enhance relationship

based/trauma informed model of care.

Area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To improve the quality of life story work for children and young people the service should develop a clear implementation plan to improve practice.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) Planning how therapeutic life story work will be utilised within the service
- b) A clear plan for implementing use of technological solutions for storage of photos/videos of children and young people which helps to form their life story.

This is to ensure that practice is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: "I am supported to be emotionally resilient, have a strong sense of my own identity and wellbeing and address any experiences of trauma and neglect" (HSCS, 1.29).

This area for improvement was made on 13 October 2023.

Action taken since then

- Worker trained in therapeutic life story work and plan in place for this to be utilised by the service.
- Life story app being used to support carers to record important information.

Area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure that young people experience a positive transition from continuing care, the service should improve pathways planning and information available to carers in relation to post 21 support options.

This should include but is not limited developing a transition policy and ensuring pathways planning occurs timeously so young people are aware of their rights.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the health and social care standards (HSCS) which state that:

"My future care and support needs are anticipated as part of my assessment" (HSCS 1.14).

This area for improvement was made on 13 October 2023.

Action taken since then

- Increased capacity in reviewing team supported improved pathway planning..
- Refreshed guidance for TCAC, briefing session for staff.
- Young people were aware of their rights to Continuing Care and welfare assessments were in place.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To promote positive outcomes for children, the service should ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge required to practice effectively.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) Devising a training strategy for staff, including individualised training plans.
- b) Clarifying the role of the family placement team in promoting positive outcomes for children in need of permanent substitute care.

This is to ensure that practice is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: "I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and good practice" (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 13 October 2023.

Action taken since then

- Staff have annual appraisal and PDPs. Constructive conversations used to review progress.
- Training available to staff, Readiness to Care will further enhance training available.

This area for improvement has been met.

Complaints

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	4 - Good
1.2 Children, young people and adults get the most out of life	4 - 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?	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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