Barnardo's Scotland Fostering - Glasgow
Fostering Service
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Type of inspection: Announced
Inspection completed on: 26 May 2014
Summary

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection following other regulatory activity. For example, if we have to take enforcement action to make the service improve, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

We gave the service these grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Care and Support</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of Staffing</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of Management and Leadership</td>
<td>5</td>
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What the service does well

Barnardos Fostering Service provides very good support to foster carers with regular supervision and good opportunities for training. All of the foster carers that we spoke to were committed to improving outcomes for young people and were providing high standards of care.

The service had a strong commitment to encouraging children and young people to participate in assessing and improving the service they were receiving. There was a high level of support available for young people with good access to children’s workers and supports such as play therapy and psychotherapy input.

The service had developed a children’s charter with the young people and young people’s achievements were being acknowledged and celebrated, which young people told us was important to them and ensured they felt valued and included.
What the service could do better
The service could improve their quality assurance and recording systems to include:

- An outcomes tool for young people using the service.
- Full and accurate record keeping of assessment work and sessional work being undertaken.
- A system to ensure contact information for young people remained up to date.
- An improved system to allow sessional staff access to all necessary information.

What the service has done since the last inspection
Since the last inspection the service had experienced a significant change in staff member’s mainly due to retirement and recruitment of sessional workers. We found that this had been managed well with staff that we spoke to being motivated and committed to development.

The staff had begun to develop formal consultation methods with their foster carers.

Conclusion
Barnardos Fostering Service continues to provide a very good quality of care and support to their foster carers and their young people, and outcomes for young people remain very good. The team are committed to further improving their service.
1 About the service we inspected

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Prior to 1 April 2011, this function was carried out by the Care Commission. Information in relation to all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com.

The Care Inspectorate will award grades for services based on findings of inspections. Grades for this service may change after this inspection if we have to take enforcement action to make the service improve, or if we uphold or partially uphold a complaint that we investigate.

The history of grades which services have been awarded is available on our website. You can find the most up-to-date grades for this service by visiting our website, by calling us on 0845 600 9527 or visiting one of our offices.

Requirements and recommendations

If we are concerned about some aspect of a service, or think it could do more to improve its service, we may make a recommendation or requirement.

A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions the care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service but where failure to do so will not directly result in enforcement. A requirement is a statement which sets out what is required of a care service to comply with the Public Services Reforms (Scotland) Act 2010 and Regulations or Orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration. Where there are breaches of the Regulations, Orders or conditions, a requirement must be made. Requirements are legally enforceable at the discretion of the Inspectorate.

Barnardo’s (Scotland) Fostering Service provides a fostering and family placement service for children and young people aged from birth to 18 years. New referrals are taken in respect of children up to 18 years. The service recruited and supported carer families to provide a range of fostering services, including foster care and respite care.

The service is a member of the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) which co-ordinates resource sharing between members. The service is a full member of fostering network, as are all their foster carers and are sometimes involved with other fostering services in joint training events.

The service was deemed registered with the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland on 1st April 2011, also known as the Care Inspectorate.
The Barnardo’s Fostering Service aims to make a difference to the lives of children, young people and their families and within their information pack they state their aim is to:

- assist in placing children who are looked after by local authorities into foster families
- recruit, assess and prepare carers for this purpose
- carefully consider the needs of children on referral and match them with appropriate families
- provide support to carers and families after placement
- help provide a comprehensive fostering support service to all carers, families and children who need it.
Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

**Quality of Care and Support - Grade 5 - Very Good**  
**Quality of Staffing - Grade 5 - Very Good**  
**Quality of Management and Leadership - Grade 5 - Very Good**

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. You can find the most up-to-date grades for this service by visiting our website www.careinspectorate.com or by calling us on 0845 600 9527 or visiting one of our offices.
2 How we inspected this service

The level of inspection we carried out
In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections when we are satisfied that services are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care.

What we did during the inspection
During this inspection we gathered evidence from various sources, including the relevant sections of policies, procedures, records and other documents including discussion with:

- ten foster carers individually who were currently using the service
- one young person using the service who had communication difficulties
- the team manager
- two team leaders
- one supervising social worker individually
- a group of supervising social workers
- an office manager
- two children’s workers
- a psychotherapist who works in the service
- three sessional workers and

attendance at:

- a children’s award ceremony and discussion with three young people and one foster carer
- a fostering panel and discussion with the panel members afterwards.

We also looked at:

- three questionnaires provided by ourselves to staff members
- panel questionnaires provided by ourselves
- evidence provided by the service in their self assessment
- foster carer files
- children’s files
- service user review minutes.
Grading the service against quality themes and statements

We inspect and grade elements of care that we call 'quality themes'. For example, one of the quality themes we might look at is 'Quality of care and support'. Under each quality theme are 'quality statements' which describe what a service should be doing well for that theme. We grade how the service performs against the quality themes and statements.

Details of what we found are in Section 3: The inspection

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

In any year we may decide on specific aspects of care to focus on during our inspections. These are extra checks we make on top of all the normal ones we make during inspection. We do this to gather information about the quality of these aspects of care on a national basis. Where we have examined an inspection focus area we will clearly identify it under the relevant quality statement.

Fire safety issues

We do not regulate fire safety. Local fire and rescue services are responsible for checking services. However, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant fire and rescue services so they may consider what action to take. You can find out more about care services' responsibilities for fire safety at www.firelawscotland.org
What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at our last inspection

There were no outstanding recommendations

The annual return

Every year all care services must complete an ‘annual return’ form to make sure the information we hold is up to date. We also use annual returns to decide how we will inspect the service.

Annual Return Received: Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

Every year all care services must complete a 'self assessment' form telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this assessment is accurate. The Care Inspectorate received a fully completed self assessment document from the service provider. We were satisfied with the way the service provider had completed this and with the relevant information they had given us for each heading that we grade them under. The service told us they had involved foster carers in completing the self assessment which we thought was good practice.

The service provider identified what they thought they did well, some areas for development and any changes they had planned.
Taking the views of people using the care service into account
During the inspection we spoke to four young people using the service.

Comments included:

• "my carers are always on my side, encouraging me"
• "I wasn’t going to put in an entry but I am so happy I did, I am pleased I got a prize"
• "I used to go to the residential weekends they were really good but I am not going this year"
• "the children’s workers are so good"
• "I know all the workers at Barnardo’s, I feel safe with my carers".

(One young person had very limited communication).

Taking carers' views into account
During this inspection we spoke to 11 carers using the service.

Comments included:

• "I am a big fan of Barnardo’s they are a big support especially in the tough times"
• "Barnardos give us anything we need, when we need it"
• "We have always had the support we have needed from Barnardos"
• "The training is fantastic, the networking opportunities are also good"
• "I can’t think of anything that they could do better"
• "I get visited very regularly and feel I have so much support"
• "Nothing could be improved in my opinion, everything is just right".
3 The inspection

We looked at how the service performs against the following quality themes and statements. Here are the details of what we found.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.

Service strengths

We found the service was performing very well in the areas relevant to this statement.

We found Barnardo’s Fostering service had developed a participation policy and a participation plan which communicated the services commitment to listening to people who use services. At the time of the inspection they also had in place participation workers.

We found the fostering service had good information available to prospective carers on their website and in their information pack which included a copy of the Care Inspectorate reports. This should enable them to assess the quality of care and support they can expect. This also had information on how to complain if they were unhappy with the care and support they were receiving and the complaints process had recently been updated to ensure it was user friendly.

Within the information provided was also a leaflet to guide sons and daughters of prospective foster carers through the process and this was designed by young people for young people. We felt that this should enable young people who foster to feel included in the support being offered from the service.

Young people using the service were provided with a welcome box which contained a handbook and a variety of information about what young people could expect from the service, contact information for the children’s worker and information on how to complain if they were unhappy. This also contained contact details for the Care Inspectorate, however, at the time of the inspection this required to be updated (see areas for improvement).
Young people had been involved in developing a children’s charter and we found evidence that young people had a good awareness of their rights. At the time of the inspection the young people were involved in developing the information contained in the welcome box, including the handbook and an ‘All about Me’ book.

We found evidence that birth parents were encouraged to come to the service and given opportunities to chat with staff and the management. They were invited to give their views at foster carer reviews, invited to awards ceremonies for their children. The service also provided a venue for contact which we thought increased the opportunity for birth families to feel included and ensured young people felt safe due to being familiar with the venue and the staff.

Carers told us and we confirmed that they were involved in the recruitment and preparation training of prospective carers. At the end of the preparation training evaluations were collated. Carers told us that this gave them the opportunity to shape the training and information that was provided and we saw from evaluation forms that prospective carers had found this useful. A carer within the service continued to have a lead role in delivering training.

Foster carer agreements were in place which ensured carers knew what to expect from the service and what was expected from them. Day to day placement agreements were in place for all of the young people we looked at. This should ensure that the care young people receive is appropriate and able to meet their needs.

The service used a variety of methods to gather the views of young people and carers which included questionnaires and evaluation forms on all aspects of the care and support being provided. The carers we spoke to told us this enabled them to feel valued and that their viewpoint and experience was important. The evaluation forms we looked at collated from the young people evidenced the high quality of care and support the young people felt they were being provided.

Comments from the residential weekend collected from the service included:

- “Overall it was great”,
- “It is the best place ever”,
- “I had so much fun”.


We found that since the last inspection a foster carers’ consultative meeting had taken place with plans to increase the regularity of this. Carers told us that this enabled them to feel that their views were listened to and that the service was committed to working alongside them.

The service had in place a newsletter for foster carers, which was used to share information, provide updates about the service, highlight any forthcoming events and provide news of any achievements. This was a Scotland wide newsletter with localised information contained in it about each of the Barnardo’s fostering services. The carers were encouraged to contribute and the carers we spoke to told us that they found it helpful and it enabled them to feel included in future plans for the service.

A newsletter was also in place for young people using the service which invited contributions from young people and celebrated their achievements. This was local to the Glasgow Barnardo’s service.

The service had a number of other consultation groups which focused on a specific aspect of the service such as the carer training consultation group, which met three times a year. This had representation from all of the support groups to ensure that the views of as many carers as possible were gathered.

The group enabled carers to be involved in identifying the training they felt would be beneficial and evaluating previous training they had attended; allowing them to assess and improve the quality of care and support they were receiving. The training coordinator also being a foster carer provided a level of reassurance to carers that the correct training was being sourced.

Comments from evaluation forms collected by the service included:

- "I always welcome group meetings like this, to mix with other carers, sharing information and experiences which I feel will benefit my role and involvement and help me to become a better carer”.
- "The training was extremely valuable to me as a new carer."
- "It covered lots of questions I wanted to ask".
We found annual reviews were taking place which invited carers and young people using the service to give their view on the quality of care and support they were receiving and suggest any improvements. Young people were also invited to have their say with regards to the care they were receiving through their looked after away from home reviews.

The service held a carers’ conference in November 2013 in combination with their other fostering and adoption services in Scotland and we found evidence that this was well attended with over 138 carers attending.

This conference was an opportunity to provide development time, share information and gather carer views and the carers we spoke to told us how beneficial they felt this event to be. They told us they felt part of the development of the service and that they had an opportunity to influence certain aspects. The carers also advised that they felt the networking was important and that they would like to have these types of events more often.

We found that the service had involved carers in the completion of the self assessment requested by the Care Inspectorate. We thought this was good practice and enabled carers to be involved in assessing the service.

We found the service was using a variety of methods of communication to enable carers and young people using the service to participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support they were receiving.

**Areas for improvement**

While we found that the service was providing Care Inspectorate reports to carers and young people on request - we felt that a link on their website would ensure that all carers, young people, birth families and prospective carers could have access to it.

We felt that the carers did not all know who was who within the service due to changes in staffing. We felt that the service could consider ways of ensuring carers knew who was who within the service (for example developing pen profiles of staff and panel members) as this would allow them to be included, know who to contact and feel respected.
We found that the information being provided to young people on how to contact the care inspectorate was out of date. This was discussed with the manager and had been highlighted as an area for improvement at last year’s inspection. A recommendation was made (see recommendation 1).

Whilst the service had in place a comprehensive handbook for carers, at the time of the inspection this required to be updated to include the latest legislation.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 1

Recommendations

1. The provider should ensure all service users are given up to date information on how to contact the Care Inspectorate directly.

National Care Standards for Foster care and Family Placement Services:
4.4 Expressing your views.
Statement 3
We ensure that service users’ health and wellbeing needs are met.

Service strengths
We felt that the service was performing very well in the areas relevant to this statement with elements of excellent.

The service had in place a Scotland wide recruitment team to ensure that they are proactive and responsive in recruiting the carers with the right skills for the young people being placed within the service. The recruitment team are also working towards ensuring assessments are completed effectively and efficiently and within national care standard guidelines.

We found that thorough Form F assessments had taken place which included latest research and evidence based practice. All statutory checks were being undertaken and clear recommendations being made. These checks included full medicals and the medical advisor for the fostering panel scrutinised the GP reports and commented on the applicant’s suitability to foster.

Following approval we found that foster carer written agreements were in place, which were regularly updated, this ensured that carers were aware of the expectations of carers including in relation to the health and wellbeing of the children in their care. A comprehensive foster carer handbook was in place which provided helpful guidance, including the roles and responsibility in relation to child protection. This was provided on a CD rom (see areas for improvement under Quality Theme 1 Statement 1).

Looked after children’s reviews were mostly happening within statutory timescales and we found evidence of the service highlighting out of date reviews to the relevant local authority. In the cases we looked out all of the young people were registered with the relevant health services and all had received a looked after away from home medical. We found evidence carers were extremely responsive, proactive and effective advocates in ensuring the medical needs of the young people in their care were being met.

All of the young people we looked at had a clear care plan in place based on the principles of getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) and in situations where specialist medical services were required these were in place and carers told us they had no difficulty accessing health services. Placement agreements were in place for all of the young people we looked at and these were being regularly reviewed.

We found that the service had effectively recruited volunteers to provide a befriender role to the young people using the service. This should support positive outcomes for young people.
Young people using the service had access to a children’s worker which was separate from their social worker or the supervising social worker for the carers, and the children’s worker was able to advocate and ensure the young person’s voice was heard. Sons and daughters of foster carers were also provided access to children’s workers. Regular events took place in order to provide young people with a forum to meet with other young people. Events included Christmas pantomime, summer picnics, day trips and a residential weekend away in the summer holidays.

The service was committed to identifying and celebrating young people’s achievements and we saw that these were highlighted through the newsletter and also special events hosted by the service. These events involved all the significant people in the young people’s lives which we found had positive outcomes.

All carers had in place a health and safety assessment with each child placed having a risk assessment which was regularly updated. Each carer also had a safer caring policy in place which was regularly updated. This should work towards ensuring the health and wellbeing of young people and carers. Within the regular support visits which were being undertaken by supervising social workers to carers additional information was being recorded on the young people who included physical and emotional health information and any actions required.

The young people, carers and staff members had access to psychotherapy input through the service mainly through consultations with carers and supervising social workers. The psychotherapist also facilitated a therapeutic parenting group which had recently started back up again. Carers told us this was very important to them and provided them with opportunities for reflection and peer support and discussions around strategies to better support young people. There were also opportunities for direct work with young people using story stem assessments and child attachment interviews.

The young people also had access to a play therapist to do direct work, and we found positive outcomes through this work. At the time of the inspection the play therapist had recently gone on leave, however, the service had arranged for a temporary play therapist to continue supporting the young people requiring the service. We found that this was supporting young people in their placements and it should support carers to have the knowledge and skills to support young people to attain good mental health. The service also had access to other independent specialist services such as the “skylight” project.
The service had sessional workers available to provide support to young people and carers and where placements were requiring extra support the sessional workers were responsive and flexible. This had supported placement stability and provided carers and young people emotional and practical support. Carers we spoke to valued this input. The service had recently added to their pool of sessional workers to further strengthen the service being provided to carers and young people.

We found that for all of the young people we looked at there was an identified respite carer to ensure that carers were able to take holidays with minimal disruption to young people. This should ensure young people feel safe if their full time carer needed to take a break at any time. We found that this had limited multiple moves for young people and maximised consistency.

Carers told us that they had a lot of opportunity to attend a variety of training including having the opportunity to achieve nationally recognised Scottish Vocational Qualifications. Carers told us that training was of a very high standard, was provided jointly with staff which gave a variety of perspectives and the training coordinator was responsive to their needs.

There was an annual training calendar in place and the lead training facilitator was also a foster carer which ensured they had a good understanding of the foster carer role and the training that was relevant and appropriate. This supported carers in gaining skills and knowledge relevant to their role as foster carers, and to support young people to remain safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, included and ensure their rights were protected. Training offered included managing allegations, incredible years, attachment and brain development and child protection.

Staff told us that all approved foster carers were subscribed to ‘Fostering Network’ which is a national organisation for foster care who:

- “lobby, campaign and influence policy in order to develop, improve and champion fostering”

(http://www.fostering.net/contact-us).

Carers we spoke to told us they valued this subscription and that it gave them access to an independent organisation including their publications and training events.
Carers told us their supervising social worker visited regularly and that formal supervision was carried out regularly. All of the carers we spoke with told us that they valued the support they were receiving and they had access to support and guidance when ever they needed it. Carers had access to out of hours support.

A good system was in place for reviewing carers and these were taking place annually in line with National Care standards, which ensures carers remain well enough supported, have access to training and makes a recommendation regarding their continued approval. Regular health assessments, criminal records checks and annual unannounced visits were also being undertaken. This should ensure that young people’s health and wellbeing needs continue to be met.

At the time of the inspection we found the service were proactive in supporting young people in continuing care and were working towards the implementation of the new young person’s (Scotland) Act by ensuring clear systems, policies and guidance were in place. The service was prioritising the Scottish Government’s staying put agenda which was in line with the National Care Standards keeping up to date with best practice and latest legislation.

Areas for improvement

Whilst we felt that the involvement of sessional workers was promoting positive outcomes, at the time of the inspection we found that some important safeguards needed to be put in place. We found that sessional workers could not access the record keeping system for young people out of hours. This included access to the latest risk assessments and all up to date information on the young person which we felt was required in the event of out of hour’s direct work.

We also found that whilst the majority of sessional workers had the number for the out of hours support service, some did not. This was discussed with the service and rectified during the inspection.

Sessional workers also did not have access to phones unless they had their own personal phones, the service should give consideration to further discussion about this practice to ensure that all possible steps are taken to safeguard workers and young people.

Whilst we found that there was a buddy system in place, carers we spoke to told us this wasn’t consistent and they would like this to be a more formal process.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0
Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing
Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1
We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service.

Service strengths
The strengths highlighted in 1.1 are also relevant to this statement. In addition we found that young people and foster carers had been involved in recruitment and staff members we spoke to told us this had been very beneficial.

The service told us that foster carers were involved in staff annual appraisals which we felt was good practice and allowed carers to assess and improve the staffing within the service. Joint training also encouraged good communication and improved working relationships.

Areas for improvement
The areas for improvement highlighted in 1.1 are also relevant to this statement.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good
Number of requirements: 0
Number of recommendations: 0
Statement 3
We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.

Service strengths
We felt that the service was performing very well in the areas relevant to this statement.

At the last inspection there had been a lot of structural changes, which was impacting on staff morale. At this inspection despite a significant staff turnover, the staff team presented as motivated and knowledgeable and had a good awareness of the national care standards and latest best practice. The service told us all qualified staff members were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), and we found all staff members we spoke with had a good awareness of the codes of conduct.

The staff members we spoke to told us they had regular team meetings, team development days, and ‘team away’ days which staff members advised they found important in building the team and providing opportunities for peer support and reflection. This also enabled them to look at practice issues as a team, identify relevant training, evaluate the service and look at further developing the team.

There were also regular supervising social worker meetings, children’s workers meetings, administration meetings and manager’s meetings which allowed for specific focused meetings to take place relevant to each group of workers role.

We found supervision was taking place regularly and focused on business discussion and reflection. Staff told us supervision was recorded and actions points were identified which were followed up at the next supervision session. In addition all of the staff we spoke with told us that there was an open door culture within the service and they felt able to seek support and guidance at any time.

The staff team which included the psychotherapist and sessional workers had access to internal and external training and staff members told us they felt well supported to access training and development. There was a library available online which contained best practice guidance and up to date legislation. We found that there was a clear staff handbook in place with a variety of policies and procedures including whistle blowing and safeguarding. Staff members had access to the employee assistance programme.

We found there were opportunities for leadership roles which included children’s work, specific training, charms champion and running support groups. The service run an annual safeguarding day which provided opportunities for shared learning.
Areas for improvement

Staff members told us they would welcome a pay review and a workload capacity review. This would ensure they continued to work to their maximum effectiveness and continued to feel valued as a staff group and for the work they do.

Whilst all of the staff members we spoke to had received a national and local induction, the local induction was experienced as inconsistent. The service should consider how to formalise their local induction processes to ensure consistency.

Staff members also told us about the difficulty of establishing which forms to use for which purpose. Guidance on the use of these forms would be helpful and would provide consistency for workers across the service.

Staff told us and we confirmed that whilst the information technology system had improved further progress was required to ensure the service had the tools necessary to support the work they were doing.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0
Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership
Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1
We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service.

Service strengths
The strengths highlighted in 1.1 and 3.1 are also relevant to this statement.

In addition we found that questionnaires had been regularly provided to service users and contained questions specifically about management and leadership. The carers had been invited to a meeting to meet with the head of business - this was very valued by the carers.

At the consultative forum we found that the assistant head of business attended alongside the manager of the service which enabled the carers to feel valued, respected, included and that their views were being heard. We found that the service had collated carer views from this forum about carers having more opportunity to meet socially, having a drop in area for carers to meet, more consistent use of the buddy system.

Areas for improvement
The areas for improvement highlighted in 1.1 and 3.1 are also relevant to this statement. In addition we felt that the service should consider setting a regular pattern for the consultation forums to enable more consistent planned action with regard to carers views.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good
Number of requirements: 0
Number of recommendations: 0
Statement 4

We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide

Service strengths

We found foster carers were regularly supervised and these were recorded and signed with any areas for improvement identified. The annual review system provides the placing social workers and young people using the service with the opportunity to evaluate the quality of service they are being offered. Staff members receive an annual appraisal which also looks at their learning, development and practice and identifies any areas for improvement. The service told us carers’ views were included in the appraisal process.

The fostering panel provided an important quality assurance measure within the fostering service. Regular business meetings to which all panel members were invited allowed for discussion to ensure that panel members were discharging their duties effectively and identifying developments. The minutes from these reviews were being shared across all the Scottish services which we felt was good practice, enabling shared learning and continued development. The panel members were independent and we found the panel to be robust when we observed a panel.

We found panel members were supported with regular training, and an identified panel adviser, which should ensure their knowledge and skills remain up to date in line with best practice. The chair of the panel attended the panel chair forum which was facilitated by a national organisation, and included chairs of panels from a variety of different local authority areas. The agency decision maker observed the panel once a year sharing any learning and development observations.

The service had good working links with other national organisations which allowed for sharing of up to date practice and guidance and maintained reflective discussion.

The service had in place monitoring forms which were completed for each placement and where there were specific difficulties identified these were raised at quarterly meetings with local authorities social workers. We found regular liaison meetings were taking place with local authorities where there were concerns or where drift and delay for young people was being identified.

The management had regular meetings which allowed for protected time to look at quality assurance systems in place to enable the continued improvement of the service. The managers from all of the Scottish services also met regularly which enabled good communication, consistency and shared practice discussions.
The service had in place an effective system for recording of incidents and accidents and for collating and evaluating the information. The service also had in place an effective system in place for notifications to the care inspectorate.

We found case file audits were regularly taking place, with identified action points being highlighted to the relevant supervising social worker. Annual health and safety audits also took place within the service.

Second opinion visits were in place to provide an important quality assurance mechanism for all reports being presented to panel. This enabled prospective carers to provide their view on the assessment process directly to the management and leadership within the service.

The service had in place an information technology system which monitored important information to ensure high quality placements were being provided such as when young people were registered with health services, any placement moves they had, and ensured all statutory checks were up to date. This system was used during supervision with supervising social workers where action was required. We felt this was an important quality assurance step ensuring young people and carers were safe, healthy and achieving.

Children’s workers across all of the Scottish services had good links, and met regularly. Psychotherapists were given the opportunity to maintain their up to date knowledge and maintain links with other psychotherapists across Scotland.

The service produced an annual report about their fostering service and the work of the fostering panel. We found that the chair of the panel had been involved in the contents of this report. This ensures that all stakeholders and service users are updated on the work of the service, and should ensure they feel included.

Announced and unannounced internal inspections were in place with all services in Barnardo’s using self audit tools. This level of quality assurance should ensure the service provided remains of a high standard and is continuously identifying improvements.

**Areas for improvement**

Whilst the information technology system was able to monitor a number of things, it did not as yet include an outcome recording tool. The service should consider how to extract outcome data for the placements they are providing to ensure that there are positive outcomes being identified routinely for young people.
The service had a panel adviser who was also the manager of the service. On most occasions this was very helpful to the panel, however, some carers told us that this may impact on them being able to fully share their views at their annual review on the quality of care and support they were receiving.

The looked after children’s guidance suggests that carers should experience their reviews as “both a review of his or her progress, and also an opportunity for him or her to comment on the service received from the agency” (Guidance on looked after children (Scotland) Regulations 2009), therefore, we would ask the service to consider ways of ensuring this.

We found that where lengthy placements had come to an unplanned ending the service were not always putting in place a meeting in order to reflect or gather any learning opportunities. We felt that a system to gather this learning would be in line with best practice.

Whilst all statutory checks were being undertaken we found that checks were not being made consistently with regulatory bodies that prospective carers may be registered with. The service should consider including these checks at some point in the assessment process.

During this inspection we sampled the recordings of Form F assessments for prospective carers and we found that these were not full and did not include what was being undertaken during the assessment. We also found that where young people were being matched with long term/permanent carers there was no record of matching information. We discussed this with the service and a recommendation was made (see recommendation 1).

The service should put a system in place for supervising and appraising panel members this would be in line with best practice guidance.

The service should review the way that sessional workers were recording the work they were undertaking with young people to ensure they were up to date, accurate and in line with best practice.

We found that the panel were not always being presented with full information in order to make a decision. The service should ensure that they review what paperwork the panel should have presented and be clear on the role of the panel in the cases being presented. This is to ensure that the service remains in line with the National Care Standards.
Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 1

Recommendations

1. The provider should ensure that there are effective recording and information systems and that all significant contacts and incidents are recorded.

National Care Standards for Foster Care and Family Placement Services: Standard 13.6 Management and Staffing.
4 Other information

Complaints
No complaints have been upheld, or partially upheld, since the last inspection.

Enforcements
We have taken no enforcement action against this care service since the last inspection.

Additional Information

Action Plan
Failure to submit an appropriate action plan within the required timescale, including any agreed extension, where requirements and recommendations have been made, will result in the Care Inspectorate re-grading a Quality Statement within the Quality of Management and Leadership Theme (or for childminders, Quality of Staffing Theme) as unsatisfactory (1). This will result in the Quality Theme being re-graded as unsatisfactory (1).
5  Summary of grades

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of Care and Support - 5 - Very Good</th>
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6  Inspection and grading history

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Management and Leadership  5 - Very Good

All inspections and grades before 1 April 2011 are those reported by the former regulator of care services, the Care Commission.
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