

Moray Continuing Care Services Adult Placement Service

Rose Cottage
PO Box 67
Elgin
IV30 9BX

Telephone: 01343 563 579

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
6 July 2023

Service provided by:
The Moray Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001892

Service no:
CS2020379353

About the service

Moray Continuing Care is an adult placement service linked to the Moray Fostering Service. The service supports young people to remain living with their carers beyond the age of 18.

Inspections of the fostering and adoption services have been undertaken and separate reports have been completed.

About the inspection

This was a short notice inspection which took place between 19 June 2023 and 6 July 2023. 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:

- spoke with one young person using the service and their caregiver
- spoke with ten staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Young people experienced supportive, enduring relationships with fostering families beyond the age of 18 that provided them with a sense of belonging.
- Young people were supported to maintain meaningful relationships with extended family members and were involved in the wider community.
- Caregivers valued relationships with their social workers, and we assessed that staff were skilled at supporting them.
- High quality tracking and monitoring systems had been put in place since the last inspection, and these have the potential to improve consistency of practice.

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 good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	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 made an overall evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas of improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on young people's experiences.

We saw that a number of young people were supported to remain within their caregiver families past the age of 18. Young people enjoyed, warm, affectionate, and trusting relationships with their caregivers promoting a sense of belonging and security. We were confident that young people were experiencing love with their needs fully met by committed fostering families.

Caregivers we spoke to valued staff knowledge, skills, commitment, and responsiveness. We saw evidence of regular monthly visits taking place and carers confirmed they were getting high levels of support. Continuity of relationships had been impacted by high staff turnover, however, the service was now fully staffed and caregiver families reported positive relationships with staff which helped to support positive outcomes.

Caregivers reported a weaker relationship with managers in the service.

Young people experienced individualised care, were achieving positive outcomes in education and employment, and were involved in their communities. Caregiver families supported young people to have fulfilling lives with high aspirations for success. This supportive and positive culture contributed to positive outcomes for young people.

Supervising social workers and carer training supported caregivers to adopt informed approaches to caring for young people and helped them to feel loved and valued. A training calendar was in place which outlined training opportunities throughout the year. Caregiver families also had access to support groups and family events. The service would benefit from strengthening relationships with existing caregivers and improving caregiver attendance at training, support groups and events.

Young people were supported to maintain important relationships including siblings and previous carers. We saw good practice around how young people are supported to have time with birth families.

Young people's safety and welfare was being protected due to the consistent completion of safe caring plans. We asked the service to ensure that these documents are reviewed in line with their policy, as from our case tracking, we found that some of these had not been reviewed. Unannounced visits are now taking place in line with policies and procedures.

Young people's needs in relation to life story work was well promoted by the service. Life story training has been provided to staff and caregivers and a new departmental life story policy is being developed which aims to ensure consistency in approach across children's social work and placement services. During this inspection we discussed the need for life story work to remain an important feature of the lives of those young people living in continuing care.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We made an overall evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas of improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on young people's experiences.

We saw significant improvements in quality assurance systems had been made since the last inspection ensuring key elements of practice to safeguard welfare were undertaken. A new policy team with a role to review complaints has brought extra capacity to develop procedures and to embed a learning culture from all aspects of service delivery. The service manager has embedded a range of quality assurance processes to inform ongoing development which has created a foundation for continuous improvement.

We assess there was now a more consistent overview of key processes, such as carer checks, foster carer reviews, unannounced visit and safer caring plans. We discussed with the service that they should progress similar tracking of incidents, accidents and allegations which we are confident will be progressed. These changes are at the early stage, however, we are confident that there is now an increased capacity for improvement and development.

Children's outcomes were being improved through the implementation of a new policy regarding unplanned endings which evidences there is an overview of unplanned endings which highlights learning and actions to be taken forward.

The Fostering and Adoption Panel and Agency Decision Maker provides scrutiny to carer review and applications for approval for fostering families and they were able to challenge assessments presented to them. We heard that there is a high level of communication between the independent chair, the Agency Decision Maker and panel co-ordinator. Panel members are well supported through regular supervision and appraisal and have access to a range of learning and development opportunities.

Staff in the fostering and adoption team have told us that they are experiencing delays in decision making and are feeling that the managers do not understand the service. They described a sense of detachment from senior managers and there were some negative comments in our survey relating to management culture. Staff in the team expressed that seniors in the service lack autonomy which can impact on outcomes. It is anticipated that having a team manager in post will improve the speed of decision making.

We were encouraged to see that a lot of attention and action has been taken to support the quality assurance improvements needed within the service. Whilst these are positive developments many are very recent and therefore, we are unable to confidently report that outcomes have improved as a result. The comments relating to the negative view of the management culture do give us cause for concern. We will review both of these at the next inspection.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We have made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweigh areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children and young people's experiences.

Staff practice observed through tracked cases and individual discussions aligned to the values and principles of the Health and Social Care Standards. There has been a high staff turnover in the team since the last inspection which has impacted on consistency of relationships for many caregivers and children and young people. We received positive feedback from caregivers in relation to the knowledge and competence of workers within the team. We heard that staff had worked hard to build genuine and trusting relationships. Staff in the team were knowledgeable and displayed a passion for their area of practice.

We saw improved relationships with children's social work teams with this leading to improved support and positive outcomes for caregivers and children and young people.

Staff in the team had received consistent supervision and had access to annual appraisal which identified learning and development needs. Staff also had access to a range of learning and development opportunities, including external training offered by the Fostering Network. Newly qualified staff were supported by a buddy system and clear induction procedures were in place.

Morale in the team was high and staff felt supported by colleagues and their line manager. Staff told us they felt a disconnect with senior management in the service and this has been discussed in Key Question 2. At the time of inspection, the post of Team Manager was vacant which reduced management capacity and support to staff with senior managers providing cover alongside their existing workload.

Greater clarity in policies and procedures had supported the integration of new staff and had improved consistency of practice.

How well is our care and support planned?

4 - Good

We have made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweigh areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children and young people's experiences.

Young people's plans identified involvement and input from a range of professionals supporting the child and their caregiver family. We found that Looked After and Accommodated reviews were taking place regularly and in line with timescales. This contributed to comprehensive assessments which promote positive outcomes for young people.

There was a clear assessment and review process in place for all young people within continuing care and for their caregivers. Welfare assessments and Pathways plans were detailed reports which clearly outlined the needs and wishes of young people. We saw evidence of regular review of these.

We saw positive outcomes for young people due to the multi-agency working from a range of parties.

The voice of young people was evidenced through their contributions to foster carer reviews and Looked After reviews with their voices being seen within assessments and minutes. Formal advocacy was used where required. The service has improved the range of methods used to ensure that young people are able to lead and direct their own care and we look forward to reviewing these continued efforts at the next inspection to ensure that views are sought in a meaningful way.

Young people and their caregiver's safety was protected. Family polices and risk assessments for individual young people were consistently completed and the majority of those we saw were up to date.

Risk assessments seen as part of our case tracking were completed to a reasonable standard and reflected risks in most cases. We saw that these reflected the dynamics within the household and improved the protection and safety of the children, young people and adults within the home, however, some would benefit from a more holistic approach and greater analysis.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 30 June 2022 the provider must ensure that all staff are fully trained and supported effectively to provide consistent support to fostering families. To do this the provider must as a minimum ensure:

- a) there is a clear induction process for new staff joining the service
- b) there is a clear training plan for all staff
- c) all staff have regular access to annual appraisal
- d) there is continuity of supervisory relationships for all staff
- e) exit interviews are undertaken and information analysed to understand reasons for staff turnover so that

this can be addressed.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the SSSC's Code of Practice for Employers of Social Service Workers, which state that the employer will: 'provide effective, regular supervision to social service workers to support them to develop and improve through reflective practice' (3.5).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes. (HSCS 3.14)

This requirement was made on 18 March 2022.

Action taken on previous requirement

We saw that the service now had in place a range of training opportunities for staff. These evidenced a high level of training completed and available for the staff team. New staff had received a full induction and they reported feeling supported when joining the service. Regular supervision was in place with annual appraisal. This was ensuring consistent support to fostering families.

Met - within timescales

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 keep all young people safe from harm, the provider should ensure that all continuing care carers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to adult protection. This should include but is not limited to the provision of specific training in adult protection for adult carers.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities.' (HSCS 3.20).

This area for improvement was made on 18 March 2022.

Action taken since then

The service has provided adult protection and safer caring training to carers. There is a training calendar in place with a range of learning and development opportunities.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at 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	4 - 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	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
3.2 Staff have the right knowledge, competence and development to support children, young people, adults and their caregiver families	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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.