
Report to Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 2nd December 2010

**Subject: Care Commission Inspection Reports regarding
Fostering and Adoption Service and Woodside
Residential Unit, Clackmannanshire Council, Social
Policy Service**

Report by: Head of Social Policy

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. This report has been completed to inform the Scrutiny Committee of the outcome of the most recent Care Commission Inspection reports for Fostering and Adoption Services and Woodside Residential Unit in Clackmannanshire.
- 1.2. The report with regard to Woodside Children's Unit was completed following an announced inspection on 21st July 2010. The Fostering and Adoption Service reports were written following an announced inspection that took place between 28th July 2010 and the 6th of August 2010. The content of the report was shared verbally with this Local Authority on 11th of August 2010. The final report was sent on 7 September 2010.
- 1.3. The Care Commission regulatory protocols operate in such a way that if they have any future improvements to the service that they wish to see implemented that relate to statutory obligations these are framed as requirements. Any recommendations that they make are only suggestions to the service that they feel may help without there being a requirement to implement.
- 1.4. The Woodside Children's Unit Inspection chose to inspect on two main areas: the Quality of Care and Support and the Quality of Staffing. Each of these two areas of Quality were further broken down into two statements:

Quality of Care and Support

Quality of Staffing

Statement 1: Excellent

Statement 1: Excellent

Statement 4: Excellent

Statement 3: Excellent

There were no requirements or recommendations requiring implementation as a result of this report. The conclusion of the report was that Woodside Children's Unit had a strong, well led and enthusiastic team giving support to 7 young people. They are continually responsive to young people's views. It went on to say that there is innovation and good outcomes in terms of

education, employment and personal development for young people. This had resulted in consistently high grades achieved in each inspection. A copy of the full inspection report is attached to this report as *Appendix 1*.

- 1.5. In the inspection of Fostering and Adoption Services the Care Commission chose to inspect on two main areas: The Quality of Care and Support and the Quality of Management and Leadership. Each of these two areas of Quality were further broken down into three statements. The outcomes were as follows: **Foster Care Services:**

Quality of Care and Support: Quality of Management and Leadership:

Statement 1: Very Good Statement 1: Good

Statement 2: Good Statement 2: Good

Statement 3: Very Good Statement 3: Good

Adoption Services:

Quality of Care and Support: Quality of Management and Leadership:

Statement 1: Good Statement 1: Good

Statement 2: Good Statement 2: Good

Statement 3: Good Statement 3: Good

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. Scrutiny Committee to note the content of this report and approve the action plan for the Fostering and Adoption Service.

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1. The Care Commission report made no requirements of this Local Authority with respect to its Fostering and Adoption Services. It did however make 4 recommendations with regard to the Fostering Service and 3 recommendations with regard to the Adoption Service.

- 3.2. The Fostering recommendations were as follows:

Quality Theme 1 Statement 1

The service should publish their Participation Strategy to ensure all people who use the service are clear about the ways in which they can be involved in assessing and improving quality of provision. National Care Standards Foster Care and Family Placement Services Standard: 13.7 Management and Staffing

Quality Theme 1 Statement 2

The system for Agency Decision Maker approval of carers operating outwith their registration should be further developed to include specific timescales for

follow up and review. National Care Standards Foster Care and Family Placement Services: Standard 11.8

Quality Theme 1 Statement 4

An annual report detailing the work of the service including feedback given by foster carers, children and young people and other stakeholders should be produced. National Care Standards Foster Care and Family Placement Services: Standard 13.7 Management and Staffing

Quality Theme 4 Statement 4

The service need to further develop and implement quality assurance systems which recognise the importance of consultation with all stakeholders. National Care Standards Foster Care and Family Placement Services: Standard 13.3

- 3.3. The Adoption recommendations were as follows:

Quality Theme 1 Statement 1

As per Fostering Quality Theme 1 Statement 1.

Quality Theme 1 Statement 4

The work done with other local authorities in relation to post adoption contact with birth families should continue to be progressed. This is in order to comply with National Care Standards: Adoption Agencies: Standard 7.1 Keeping in Touch

Quality Theme 4 Statement 4

The agency should ensure the progress of new staff through the induction progress is clearly recorded. National Care Standards: Foster Care and Family Placement Services: Standard 13.2

- 3.4 An action plan has been prepared for the Care Commission to implement the recommendations in advance of any future inspection activity. A copy of this action plan is attached to this report as *Appendix 2*.
- 3.5 These recommendations are based on the Inspectors observation of the service during the Inspection process, including reviewing case files, meeting carers, meeting young people in placement and attending important meetings of a strategic and operational nature including the foster care consultative committee, reviews of carers and the children they care for.
- 3.6 The report also gives feedback on the service strengths that they have observed during the Inspection. A selection of these from the full report are:

"There is very good evidence that that the agency actively seeks the views of people using the service."

"Foster carers feel confident that their views are valued by staff at all levels in the organisation."

"Supervising social workers receive very good support from managers. As a result they are growing in confidence, knowledge and skills and becoming more effective in their roles."

"A participation strategy has been developed outlining ways in which adoptive parents can be involved in the service."

"Good information is recorded by social workers outlining why adoption or permanency is in the child's best interests. They are pro-active in seeking information and keeping birth parents involved and up to date about the progress being made for their child."

- 3.7 The full report with all the strengths and recommendations can be found in *Appendices 3 and 4* to this report.
- 3.8 It is important to appreciate the journey the Service has been on with respect to Fostering and Adoption services. As you can see from Reports themselves the service has improved from inspection to inspection. In 2008 the service was found weak in all but one area inspected, in 2009 it was found to be good or adequate and this year the overall quality indicators are all very good or good. This is despite there being localised absence issues in the Fostering and Adoption Team.
- 3.9 The next 12 months will be a time of change for the service with staff changes imminent including the need to look at new first line management for the Team itself. Ongoing work is taking place with Falkirk and Stirling Council's to establish whether there are efficiencies both organisational and financial in a shared Adoption and Fostering service across central Scotland. Further work is required particularly in relation to the harmonisation of systems, fees, administration and infrastructure but there appears to be a willingness to work together between the Councils.
- 3.10 The Woodside Children's Unit Inspection report shows a maintenance of the very high standards of care, support and staffing that has prevailed since 2008.
- 3.11 Further work to consider the possibility of extending local authority provision in this area of resource continues. As the number of external placements begins to reduce we are actively considering plans to increase capacity locally to avoid any future requirement to place young people in the same numbers and to the same types of external placement that became prevalent in 2006 to 2008. Good quality, local relief staff have been grown at Woodside who could, if it was considered appropriate, move to another location to staff a new unit. Final decisions on this issue will be considered within the context of the budget process.

4.0 Sustainability Implications

- 4.1. There is no doubt that the imminent financial challenges faced by this Council may have an impact on the journey of this service towards continuous improvement. Therefore the discussions between the three Local Authorities take on more immediate importance by being a possible solution to the need to seek to be more effective within a climate of less financial resources.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1. Financial Details

- 5.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate.

Yes

More detailed information will be forthcoming in the near future re the possible integration across the 3 Local Authorities.

- 5.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report.

Yes

5.4. Staffing

6.0 Exempt Reports

- 6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

- (1) **Our Priorities 2008 - 2011** (Please double click on the check box)

The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive	X
People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment	X
Our communities are safer	X
Vulnerable people and families are supported	X
Substance misuse and its effects are reduced	X
Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing	X
The environment is protected and enhanced for all	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence	X

- (2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

8.0 Equalities Impact

- 8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

Yes No

9.0 Legality

- 9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

10.0 Appendices

- 10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

Appendix 1 - Inspection Report: Woodside Children's Unit

Appendix 2 - Action Plan: Fostering & Adoption Services

Appendix 3 - Inspection Report : Clackmannanshire Foster Care Service.

Appendix 4 - Inspection Report : Clackmannanshire Adoption Service Report.



11.0 Background Papers

- 11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)
Yes (please list the documents below) No

Author(s)

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Approved by

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Inspection report

Woodside Childrens Unit Care Home Service Children and Young People

18-20 Woodside Terrace
Clackmannan
FK10 4HU
01259 213401

Inspected by: Tony Clarke
(Care Commission officer)

Type of inspection: Announced

Inspection completed on: 21 July 2010

	Page Number
Summary of this inspection report	3
Section 1: Introduction	
About the Care Commission	6
About the National Care Standards	7
What is inspection?	8
How we decided what to inspect	10
What is grading?	11
About the service we inspected?	12
How we inspected this service	13
Section 2: The inspection	15
Section 3: Other information	
Other Information	22
Summary of Grades	23
Terms we use in our reports and what they mean	25
How you can use this report	27
People who use care services, their relatives and carers	27

Service provided by:
Clackmannanshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002713

Care service number:
CS2003011578

Contact details for the Care Commission officer who inspected this service:

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Easy read summary of this inspection report

There is a six point grading scale. Each of the Quality Themes we inspected, is graded using the following scale:

We can choose from six grades:

 6  5  4  3  2  1
excellent very good good adequate weak unsatisfactory

We gave the service these grades

Quality of Care and Support	 6	Excellent
Quality of Environment		N/A
Quality of Staffing	 6	Excellent
Quality of Management and Leadership		N/A

This inspection report and grades are our assessment of the quality of how the service is performing in the areas we examined during this inspection.

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

What the service does well

The service does good work in getting young people who come to use the service, back to school and keeping up work preparation courses. The records showed almost full time school attendance for each young person. One young person was proud to have gained pupil of the year in his school, and this had been celebrated and recognised by the staff.

There was an ethos where personal authority and good relationships are

used to promote personal development and conduct and behaviour with good outcomes. Strengths and achievements of the young people and staff are recognised and praised. This was clear in the record of meetings, display of school merit certificates, and through listening to how people spoke with each other.

New referrals are only taken on where it is clear that the new person will not pose a risk to the existing young people in the service. This has led to a settled, stable group where young people can feel secure in a family like, damage free, setting.

What the service could do better

The service was planning to set up links with countries from different cultures.

A core group was being formed to ensure a smooth move to independence. Planning was underway to involve young people in the staff away day this autumn, as happened last year.

Topics for this day are:

What makes a good care service, what makes a good care worker, and about good friendships.

Young people from the service help to develop the Council's duties to all young people. This had already contributed to better employment support and more housing options for young care leavers.

What the service has done since the last inspection

Progress has been made in the study buddy scheme, utilising students from Dollar Academy, a local private school to help.

The service had a change of young people, since several young people had moved on to personal independence. The service had applied its expertise in dealing with behavioural challenges during the settling in period.

This had been successful: in some cases there has been a quick settling of young people into better day to day conduct and resumption of their

education.

The 'Meet the Bosses' scheme had continued to make progress, 17 young people including the young people using the Woodside service met this year with Employment support, Social Work, Education and Housing policy makers to look at progress made on an ongoing action plan.

A local supported flat was set up during the past year by the manager. It forms part of the overall registered service.

This has been highly successful in providing ongoing support to young people leaving. It enables young people to face the challenges of independent living with confidence, with good support and at the right pace.

Part time admin support is now given to the service.

Conclusion

Overall this is a strong, well led and enthusiastic team giving support to seven young people. They are continually responsive to young people's views.

There is innovation and good outcomes in terms of education, employment and personal development for young people. This has resulted in consistently high grades achieved in each inspection.

Who did this inspection

Lead Care Commission Officer

Tony Clarke

Other Care Commission Officers

Lay Assessor

Please read all of this report so that you can understand the full findings of this inspection.

About the Care Commission

We were set up in April 2002 to regulate and improve care services in Scotland.

Regulation involves:

- registering new services
- inspecting services
- investigating complaints
- taking enforcement action, when necessary, to improve care services.

We regulate around 15,000 services each year. Many are childminders, children's daycare services such as nurseries, and care home services. We regulate many other kinds of services, ranging from nurse agencies to independent healthcare such as hospices and private hospitals.

We regulate services for the very young right through to those for the very old. Our work can, therefore, affect the lives of most people in Scotland.

All our work is about improving the quality of care services.

We produce thousands of inspection reports every year; all are published on our website: www.carecommission.com. Reports include any complaints we investigate and improvements that we ask services to make.

The "Care services" area of our website also:

- allows you to search for information, such as reports, about the services we regulate
- has information for the people and organisations who provide care services
- has guidance on looking for and using care services in Scotland.

You can also get in touch with us if you would like more detailed information.

About the National Care Standards

The National Care Standards (NCS) set out the standards that people who use care services in Scotland should expect. The aim is to make sure that you receive the same high quality of service no matter where you live.

Different types of service have different National Care Standards. When we inspect a care service we take into account the National Care Standards that the service should provide.

The Scottish Government publishes copies of the National Care Standards online at: www.scotland.gov.uk

You can get printed copies free from:

Booksource
50 Cambuslang Road
Cambuslang Investment Park
Glasgow
G32 8NB
Tel: 0845 370 0067
Fax: 0845 370 0068
Email: scottishgovernment@booksource.net

What is inspection?

Our inspectors, known as Care Commission Officers (CCOs), check care services regularly to make sure that they are meeting the needs of the people in their care.

One of the ways we check on services is to carry out inspections. We may turn up without telling the service's staff in advance. This is so we can see how good the care is on a normal day. We inspect some types of services more often than others.

When we inspect a service, typically we:

- talk to people who use the service, their carers and families, staff and managers
- talk to individuals and groups
- have a good look around and check what quality of care is being provided
- look at the activities happening on the day
- examine things like records and files, if we need to
- find out if people get choices, such as food, choosing a key worker and controlling their own spending money.

We also use lay assessors during some inspections. These are volunteers who have used care services or have helped to care for someone who has used care services.

We write out an inspection report after gathering the information. The report describes how things are and whether anything needs to change.

Our work must reflect the following laws and guidelines:

- the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001
- regulations made under this Act
- the National Care Standards, which set out standards of care that people should be able to expect to receive from a care service.

This means that when we register or inspect a service we make sure it meets the requirements of the 2001 Act. We also take into account the National Care Standards that apply to it.

If we find a service is not meeting these standards, the 2001 Act gives us powers that require the service to improve.

Recommendations, requirements and complaints

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

- 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 Act 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 Care Commission.

Complaints: We have a complaints procedure for dealing with any complaint about a registered care service (or about us). Anyone can raise a concern with us - people using the service, their family and friends, carers and staff.

We investigate all complaints. Depending on how complex it is, a complaint may be:

- upheld - where we agree there is a problem to be resolved
- not upheld - where we don't find a problem
- partially upheld - where we agree with some elements of the complaint but not all of them.

How we decided what to inspect

Why we have different levels of inspection

We target our inspections. This means we spend less time with services we are satisfied are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care. We call these low-intensity inspections. Services where there is more concern receive more intense inspections. We call these medium or high intensity inspections.

How we decide the level of inspection

When planning an inspection, our inspectors, or Care Commission Officers (CCOs) carefully assess how intensively each service needs to be inspected. They do this by considering issues such as:

- complaints
- changes to how the service provides care
- any notifications the service has given us, such as the absence of a manager
- what action the service has taken in response to requirements we have made.

The CCO will also consider how the service responded to situations and issues: for example how it deals with complaints, or notifies us about incidents such as the death of someone using the service.

Our inspections take account of:

- areas of care that we are particularly interested in (these are called Inspection Focus Areas)
- the National Care Standards that the service should be providing
- recommendations and requirements that we made in earlier inspections
- any complaints and other regulatory activity, such as enforcement actions we have taken to improve the service.

What is grading?

We grade each service under Quality Themes which for most services are:

- **Quality of Care and Support:** how the service meets the needs of each individual in its care
- **Quality of Environment:** the environment within the service (for example, is the service clean, is it set out well, is it easy to access by people who use wheelchairs?);
- **Quality of Staffing:** the quality of the care staff, including their qualifications and training
- **Quality of Management and Leadership:** how the service is managed and how it develops to meet the needs of the people it cares for
- **Quality of Information:** this is how the service looks after information and manages record keeping safely.

Each of the Quality Themes has a number of Quality Statements in it, which we grade.

We grade each heading as follows:

6	5	4	3	2	1
excellent	very good	good	adequate	weak	unsatisfactory

We do not give one overall grade.

How grading works.

Services assess themselves using guidance that we given them. Our inspectors take this into account when they inspect and grade the service. We have the final say on grading.

The Quality Themes for this service type are explained in section 2 The Inspection.

About the service we inspected

This service is managed by Clackmannanshire Council, and provides a homely setting and individual support to seven young people from the age of twelve upward. The service is based in two attached terrace houses and a nearby supported flat in a small town in Clackmannanshire.

The aims include providing an environment which promoted feelings of safety and which respect and value all who live and work at Woodside.

Clearly planned long term care was aimed for, to allow work towards identified outcomes and the achievement of the young people's aspirations.

The service was first registered on 1 April 2002.

Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of Care and Support	6 - Excellent
Quality of Environment	N/A
Quality of Staffing	6 - Excellent
Quality of Management and Leadership	N/A

This inspection report and grades are our assessment of the quality of how the service is performing in the areas we examined during this inspection.

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

You can use the "Care services" area of our website (www.carecommission.com) to find the most up-to-date grades for this service.

How we inspected this service

What level of inspection did we make this service

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 activities did we undertake during the inspection

We visited by prior arrangement on 21 July 2010, to look at documentation, to speak with the young people and to meet with the staff and the manager.

We looked at:

Minutes of staff and young people meetings,
Staff appraisal and supervision
Record of sanctions
Care plans
School/training attendance monitoring sheets
Record of restraint
Risk assessments of care needs and general risk assessments.
Two care plans
Family questionnaire survey returns
Cook safe materials

We met with three of the young people.

We attended a handover meeting and young people invited us to a garden party after the inspection.

We had discussions with the manager, with three support staff and with the housekeeper.

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

Each year we identify an area, or areas, we want to focus on during our inspections. We still inspect all the normal areas of a care service; these are extra checks we make for a specific reason.

For 2010/11 we will focus on:

- Quality assurance for care at home and combined care at home and housing support services.

You can find out more about these from our website www.carecommission.com.

Fire safety issues

The Care Commission no longer reports on matters of fire safety as part of its regulatory function. Where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant

Fire and Rescue service to their existence in order that it may act as it considers appropriate. Care service providers can find more information about their legal responsibilities in this area at: www.infoscotland.com/firelaw

The annual return

We use annual returns (ARs) to:

- make sure we have up-to-date, accurate information about care services; and
- decide how we will inspect services.

By law every registered care service must send us an annual return and provide us with the information we have requested. The relevant law is the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, Section 25(1). These forms must be returned to us between 6 January and 15 February.

Annual Return Received

Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

This was received in good time electronically, and it gave an accurate and useful guide to the progress of the service.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

Young people and families, had positive views of the support which they received. Typical comments were:

- ' I'm well supported in my flat '
- ' Everything is well run '
- ' There is nothing they could do better '.

Taking carers' views into account

These were incorporated in the above.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: **6 - Excellent**

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

The young person is given choice as to the decor and furniture in their room and will work together with staff to plan and decorate. Current carers and/or parents are also invited to take part in this process, including visiting Woodside to help the settling in period.

Early in the admission process the young person is advised who they can contact if they are unhappy about their care or have a complaint. Visual information was prominently displayed in the building regarding information on advocacy and rights, and there were regular visits by Children champions, advocacy workers and senior managers of the Council.

Weekly young people's meetings are held. These are always attended by the manager, and they allow two way discussion between staff and young people regarding how the service is operating.

Examples of useful exchanges here were reaching a shared view of how the young people influenced the daily recording; agreement on breakfast meals; and discussions about holidays. The young people had suggested a return to recycling and energy saving (' Save the Planet '), and had complied with suggestions about more careful disposal of chewing gum, safe use of the internet and other issues.

There were also six monthly meetings for each young person with the housekeeper. These were to ensure that the food preferences and other health needs of the young people were met.

Minutes of these individual meetings were kept. There was a high level of participation by young people in cooking and menu setting. Produce from the vegetable garden at the side of the house was used for many meals, and several of the young people worked with staff to maintain this garden.

Young people from Woodside took part in an annual 'Meet the Bosses' event. They presented their views on issues affecting them to senior policy makers in the local authority. We saw the ongoing action plan for this meeting, and there had been

significant improvements as a result in housing and employment services for young people leaving care.

The manager and staff had set up this program for young people being looked after in Clackmannanshire. The outcome was that the service was well respected in the policy making of the Council, young people's views were listened to, and young people told us that they were proud of being able to change things to help themselves as well as others.

Overall, there was extensive evidence that the views of young people are given the highest priority and acted upon where possible.

Areas for Improvement

The staff and young people were working to ensure that the action plan from 'Meet the Bosses' events were pursued and realised.

We saw this plan, which indicated real influence by the young people in how the Council's services formed their policies regarding young people. The service stated they were helped by the direct support of the Chief Executive of the Council. Work was in hand to prepare the agenda for this year's 'Meet the Bosses' event.

The views of young people on the service were annually expressed and acted upon in the development away day: young people, management and staff jointly considered the priorities for the coming year at these events. Preparation was in hand for the autumn event this year.

Grade awarded for this statement

6 - Excellent

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 4

We use a range of communication methods to ensure we meet the needs of service users.

Service Strengths

A notice board was used for useful information such as advocacy, Children's rights, and messages about food preferences.

The needs and abilities of the young people were paramount in how the service communicated. For example, visual and pictorial notes were used because of the issues with verbal communication for some young people. Instructions to staff included ensuring that young people understood what was being said, and the use of simple language and checking out where necessary to ensure this.

The manager attends the daily staff handover meeting as a matter of course. Communication books, individual message trays and a whiteboard are all used to ensure that staff have an up to date picture of daily care plans, tasks to do and daily appointments.

There was daily contact where needed with families, schools and social workers to ensure co-operation and good outcomes for the young people as they attended school or training and had regular contact with their families in line with their care plans.

As noted earlier, regular young people's meetings were held. These were largely chaired and minuted by the young people themselves. There were clear outcomes where young people had been able to change how the service was run as a result of these meetings. Conversely, young people had complied with staff messages in details about the daily running of the service. The manager attends these meetings also as a matter of course.

The service worked well with other caring agencies to ensure good outcomes for young people. We saw detailed communication and liaison with schools, health and social work staff.

Areas for Improvement

The service continues to work to ensure that young people and their families could make their views known, and have them listened to on any matter, in whatever way best suited them.

Grade awarded for this statement

6 - Excellent

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Grade awarded for this theme: 6 - Excellent

Statement 1

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

Service Strengths

Young people as a matter of routine took part in interviewing for new staff. We observed situations where they knew the particular strengths of staff because of their participation in their recruitment. This helped everyone to work well together and contributed to the feeling of confidence which young people clearly had.

The service had worked to ensure a good gender balance among the care staff, and this had worked for the benefit of the young people. One outcome of this was a forthcoming camping trip involving male care staff and young people. The manager felt that there were also less tangible but important benefits such as showing a positive male role model which may have been absent for some of the young people.

The involvement of young people as an essential part of the staff development day was a significant method to allow young people to influence the quality of staffing and the quality of their work. One of the subjects for this year's planned event was 'What makes for a good member of care staff?'.

The service involves young people centrally in the selection and ongoing quality of staffing. The excellent measures here led to good working relationships and corresponding good outcomes for the young people and their families.

Areas for Improvement

Questionnaires surveys for families and social workers, and skills and insight of young people in recruitment and staff development were areas which the service intended to continue to review and to develop. This can only strengthen the skills mix of a very competent team.

Grade awarded for this statement

6 - Excellent

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

A new appraisal procedure was being rolled out, 'Performance Review and Development worksheet'. This enabled staff to take responsibility for their own development, and to demonstrate it as a process rather than a form filling exercise.

It included areas of evidence which were used by staff to include the perspective of young people with whom they were working. The process allowed the service to demonstrate progress in staff's competence. This was measured in line with annual agreed targets, with corporate expectations, and with the requirements of the SSSC, the registering and accrediting body for care staff.

Written guidance was available for new staff on how to communicate with , and on how to genuinely relate to, young people using the service. This was in addition to the comprehensive induction procedure for new staff. That induction was informed by the views of the young people which had been incorporated in the annual staff development day: this had resulted in a visual collage mounted prominently within the house.

There was a high level of qualification among care staff, including people qualified in psychology, social work, and community development. Management training, HNC and SVQ training were also being undertaken. The manager was a practice teacher, and regular placements of social work students helped to keep staff abreast of current research and policy developments.

A further strength of the service was that the manager also had responsibilities for managing the Through and after care service. This resulted in an integrated service to the young people in their transition to independent community living.

Each young person had monthly meetings with the through care staff. This led to an easy transition to less directed support when they moved into the local supported flat as part of their transition to independence.

Young people stated that this was working well for them, that they felt there was just as much support when they moved on, if they needed it.

Outreach support continued to be provided to one young person who had moved to a tenancy in Glasgow.

The staff combined a high level of professionalism with involving young people as active partners in the work. Young people were thus essentially responsible for the high quality grades received.

Areas for Improvement

The manager intended to continue to promote the quality of staffing through regular Practice teaching, with the influx of new thinking from students.

There was also a commitment to having the latest research, policy and government guidelines available. Staff development was ongoing through involving young people and following the Council's Performance review and development procedures.

Grade awarded for this statement

6 - Excellent

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

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 Commission re-grading the Quality Statement within the Management and Leadership Theme as unsatisfactory (1). This will result in the Quality Theme for Management and Leadership being re-graded as Unsatisfactory (1).

Summary of Grades

Quality of Care and Support - 6 - Excellent	
Statement 1	6 - Excellent
Statement 4	6 - Excellent
Quality of Environment - Not Assessed	
Quality of Staffing - 6 - Excellent	
Statement 1	6 - Excellent
Statement 3	6 - Excellent
Quality of Management and Leadership - Not Assessed	

Inspection and Grading History

Date	Type	Gradings
1 Feb 2010	Unannounced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment <i>Not Assessed</i> Staffing 6 - Excellent Management and Leadership <i>Not Assessed</i>
26 Jun 2009	Announced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment 6 - Excellent Staffing 6 - Excellent Management and Leadership 6 - Excellent
5 Dec 2008	Announced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment 6 - Excellent Staffing 6 - Excellent Management and Leadership 6 - Excellent

15 Sep 2008	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good
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Terms we use in our report and what they mean

Action Plan - When we inspect a service, or investigate a complaint and the inspection report highlights an area for improvement; either through recommendations or requirements, the action plan sets out the actions the service will take in response.

Best practice statements/guidelines - This describes practices that have been shown to work best and to be achievable in specific areas of care. They are intended to guide practice and promote a consistent and cohesive approach to care.

Care Service - A service that provides care and is registered with us.

Complaints - We have a complaints procedure for dealing with any complaint about a registered care service or about us. Anyone can raise a concern with us - people using the service, their family and friends, carers and staff.

We investigate all complaints which can have more than one outcome. Depending on how complex the complaint is, the outcomes can be:

- upheld - where we agree there is a problem to be resolved
- not upheld - where we don't find a problem
- partially upheld - where we agree with some elements of the complaint but not all of them.

Enforcement - To protect people who use care services, the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 gives the Care Commission powers to enforce the law. This means we can vary or impose new conditions of registration, which may restrict how a service operates. We can also serve an improvement notice on a service provider to make them improve their service within a set timescale. If they do not make these improvements we could issue a cancellation notice and cancel their registration.

Disclosure Scotland- Disclosure Scotland provides an accurate and responsive disclosure service to enhance security, public safety and protect the vulnerable in society. There are three types or levels of disclosure (i.e. criminal record check) available from Disclosure Scotland; basic, standard and enhanced. An enhanced check is required for people whose work regularly involves caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children or adults at risk; or to register for child minding, day care and to act as foster parents or carers.

Participation - This describes processes that allow individuals and groups to develop and agree programmes, policy and procedures.

Personal Plan - This is a plan of how support and care will be provided. The plan is agreed between the person using the service (or their representative, or both of them) and the service provider. It is sometimes called a care plan mostly by local authorities or health boards when they commission care for people.

How you can use this report

Our inspection reports give care services detailed information about what they are doing well and not so well. We want them to use our reports to improve the services they provide if they need to.

Care services should share our inspection reports with the people who use their service, their families and carers. They can do this in many ways, for example by discussing with them what they plan to do next or by making sure our report is easily available.

People who use care services, their relatives and carers

We encourage you to read this report and hope that you find the information helpful when making a decision on whether or not to use the care service we have inspected. If you, or a family member or friend, are already using a care service, it is important that you know we have inspected that service and what we found. You may find it helpful to read previous inspection reports about his service.

The Care Commission

We use the information we gather from all our inspections to report to Scottish Ministers on how well Scotland's care services are performing. This information helps us to influence important changes they may make about how care services are provided.

Reader Information

This inspection report is published by the Care Commission. It is for use by the general public. You can get more copies of this report and others by downloading it from our website www.carecommission.com or by telephoning 0845 603 0890.

Translations and alternative formats

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

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هه بایتسد یم یونابیز رگید روا رولکش رگید رپ شرازگ تعاشا هی

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

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Telephone: 0845 603 0890

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Improving care in Scotland

Action Plan

Service Name	Clackmannanshire Adoption Service
CS number	CS2004083967
Service Provider:	Clackmannanshire Council
Address:	Lime Tree House, Castle Street, Alloa FK10 1EX
Care Commission Officer	Mary Soutar
Date Inspection Concluded:	11 August 2010

Requirements and Recommendations	Action Planned	Timescale	Responsible Person
<p><u>Quality Theme 1, Statement 1 Recommendation</u></p> <p>The service should publish their Participation Strategy to ensure all people who use the service are clear about ways in which they can be involved in assessing and improving quality of provision. This is in order to comply with National Care Standards; Adoption Agencies, Standard 32: Providing a good quality service</p>	<p>Copies to be sent to all foster carers. Copy to be published on COIN (internal electronic circulation) and Clacksweb.</p>	<p>By 01.12.10</p>	<p>Carol Johnson Policy Officer Children's Services, Team Manager Fostering & Adoption Team, Service Manager</p>

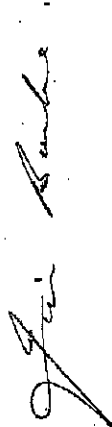
Action Plan (continued)

Requirements and Recommendations	Action Planned	Timescale	Responsible Person
<p><u>Quality Theme 1, Statement</u></p> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>The work of other Local Authorities in relation to post adoption contact with birth families should continue to be progressed. This is in order to comply with National Care Standards; Adoption Agencies, Standard 7.1 Keeping in Touch</p>	<p>Work on this is ongoing. Post adoption job description and remit has been provided and will be placed in Adoption portfolio</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Team Managers Children and Families and Fostering and Adoption Team</p>

Action Plan(continued)

Requirements and Recommendations	Action Planned	Timescales	Responsible Person
<p>Quality Theme 4 Statement 4</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>The agency should ensure the progress of new staff through the induction programme is clearly recorded.</p> <p>National Care Standards: Foster Care and Family Placement Services 13.2</p>	<p>Recording of Induction Programmes</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Team Manager Fostering & Adoption</p>

Action Plan (continued)

<p>Name: Jim Burke</p> <p>Designation: Senior Manager</p> <p>Signature: </p> <p>Signature: _____</p>	<p>Date: 23.09.10</p>
<p>In signing this form, you are confirming that you have the authority to complete it on behalf of the service provider.</p>	

Action Plan

Service Name	Clackmannanshire Fostering Service
CS number	CS2004084406
Service Provider:	Clackmannanshire Council
Address:	Lime Tree House, Castle Street, Alloa FK10 1EX
Care Commission Officer	Mary Soutar
Date Inspection Concluded:	11 August 2010

Requirements and Recommendations	Action Planned	Timescale	Responsible Person
<p><u>Quality Theme 1, Statement 1 Recommendation</u></p> <p>The service should publish their Participation Strategy to ensure all people who use the service are clear about the ways in which they can be involved in assessing and improving quality of provision.</p> <p>National Care Standards. Foster Care and Family Placement Services Standard: 13.7 Management and Staffing</p>	<p>Copies to be sent to all foster carers. Copy to be published on COIN (internal electronic circulation) and Clacksweb.</p>	<p>By 01.12.10</p>	<p>Carol Johnson Policy Officer Children's Services, Team Manager Fostering & Adoption Team, Service Manager.</p>

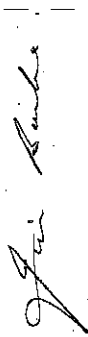
Action Plan (continued)

Requirements and Recommendations	Action Planned	Timescale	Responsible Person
<p><u>Quality Theme 1, Statement 2 Recommendation</u></p> <p>The system for Agency Decision Maker approval of carers operating outwith their registration should be further developed to include specific timescales for follow up and review.</p> <p>National Care Standards Foster Care and Family Placement Services: Standard 11.8</p> <p><u>Quality Theme 1, Statement 4</u></p> <p>An annual report detailing the work of the service including feedback given by foster carers, children and young people and other stakeholders should be produced.</p> <p>National Care Standards, Foster Care and Family Placement Services, Standard 13.7 Management and Staffing</p>	<p>Jim Burke Senior Manager Social Policy to liaise with Deirdre Cilliers Head of Social Policy to further development of current systems and possible delegation of overall responsibility to Jim Burke.</p> <p>This is in the Team Plan and has been distributed to all relevant parties.</p>	<p>By 30.11.10</p> <p>March 2011</p>	<p>Team Manager Fostering and Adoption Team Jim Burke Senior Manager</p> <p>Team Manager Fostering & Adoption</p>

Action Plan(continued)

Requirements and Recommendations	Action Planned	Timescales	Responsible Person
<p><u>Quality Theme 4, Statement 4, Recommendation</u></p> <p>The service needs to further develop and implement quality assurance systems which recognise the importance of consultation with all stakeholders. National Care Standards, Foster Care and Family Placement Services Standard 13.3</p>	<p>Stakeholder questionnaire to be taken to Support and Development Group for comment and then circulated to relevant parties. Foster Carer Consultative Group to be involved and age appropriate survey to be sought.</p>	<p>By 01.12.2011</p>	<p>Team Leader Fostering and Adoption Team Joan Lyle Service Manager</p>

Action Plan (continued)

<p>Name : Jim Burke</p> <p>Designation: Senior Manager</p> <p align="center">  Signature </p> <p align="right">Date: 23.09.10</p>
<p>In signing this form, you are confirming that you have the authority to complete it on behalf of the service provider.</p>

Inspection report

Clackmannanshire Fostering Service Fostering Service

Child Care Services
Lime Tree House
Castle Street
Alloa
FK10 1EX
01259 225000

Inspected by: (Care Commission officer)	Mary Soutar
Type of inspection:	Announced
Inspection completed on:	11 August 2010

	Page Number
Summary of this inspection report	3
Section 1: Introduction	
About the Care Commission	5
About the National Care Standards	6
What is inspection?	7
How we decided what to inspect	9
What is grading?	10
About the service we inspected?	11
How we inspected this service	13
Section 2: The inspection	16
Section 3: Other information	
Other Information	27
Summary of Grades	28
Terms we use in our reports and what they mean	29
How you can use this report	31
People who use care services, their relatives and carers	31

Service provided by:
Clackmannanshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002713

Care service number:
CS2004084406

Contact details for the Care Commission officer who inspected this service:

Mary Soutar
Telephone 01786 406363
Email enquiries@carecommission.com

Easy read summary of this inspection report

There is a six point grading scale. Each of the Quality Themes we inspected, is graded using the following scale:

We can choose from six grades:



We gave the service these grades

Quality of Care and Support  4 Good

Quality of Staffing N/A

Quality of Management and Leadership  4 Good

This inspection report and grades are our assessment of the quality of how the service is performing in the areas we examined during this inspection.

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

What the service does well

Clackmannanshire Council Fostering Services provides good support to Foster Carers to assist them in meeting the needs of children and young people in their care. They involve Foster Carers in reviewing all aspects of the ongoing development of the service.

What the service could do better

The service should further develop their systems for monitoring carers operating outwith their registration. Approval by the Agency Decision Maker should be followed up by clear timescales for review.

What the service has done since the last inspection

The profile of Foster Carers has been raised within the service. They are involved in joint training with Social Workers and in the review of policies, procedures and all documentation relating to their role. They are consulting with young people in foster care and are using this information to improve the quality of care and support they receive.

The new worker has improved the assessment process for carers by providing written updates on the process. The staff team have developed their practice and are more confident in carrying out their roles.

Conclusion

We found that Clackmannanshire Council Fostering is providing a good service, supporting Foster Carers in meeting the needs of children and young people in placement.

Who did this inspection

Lead Care Commission Officer

Mary Soutar

Other Care Commission Officers

Lynne Nimmo

Lay Assessor

N/A

Please read all of this report so that you can understand the full findings of this inspection.

About the Care Commission

We were set up in April 2002 to regulate and improve care services in Scotland.

Regulation involves:

- registering new services
- inspecting services
- investigating complaints
- taking enforcement action, when necessary, to improve care services.

We regulate around 15,000 services each year. Many are childminders, children's daycare services such as nurseries, and care home services. We regulate many other kinds of services, ranging from nurse agencies to independent healthcare such as hospices and private hospitals.

We regulate services for the very young right through to those for the very old. Our work can, therefore, affect the lives of most people in Scotland.

All our work is about improving the quality of care services.

We produce thousands of inspection reports every year; all are published on our website: www.carecommission.com. Reports include any complaints we investigate and improvements that we ask services to make.

The "Care services" area of our website also:

- allows you to search for information, such as reports, about the services we regulate
- has information for the people and organisations who provide care services
- has guidance on looking for and using care services in Scotland.

You can also get in touch with us if you would like more detailed information.

About the National Care Standards

The National Care Standards (NCS) set out the standards that people who use care services in Scotland should expect. The aim is to make sure that you receive the same high quality of service no matter where you live.

Different types of service have different National Care Standards. When we inspect a care service we take into account the National Care Standards that the service should provide.

The Scottish Government publishes copies of the National Care Standards online at: www.scotland.gov.uk

You can get printed copies free from:

Booksource
50 Cambuslang Road
Cambuslang Investment Park
Glasgow
G32 8NB
Tel: 0845 370 0067
Fax: 0845 370 0068
Email: scottishgovernment@booksource.net

What is inspection?

Our inspectors, known as Care Commission Officers (CCOs), check care services regularly to make sure that they are meeting the needs of the people in their care.

One of the ways we check on services is to carry out inspections. We may turn up without telling the service's staff in advance. This is so we can see how good the care is on a normal day. We inspect some types of services more often than others.

When we inspect a service, typically we:

- talk to people who use the service, their carers and families, staff and managers
- talk to individuals and groups
- have a good look around and check what quality of care is being provided
- look at the activities happening on the day
- examine things like records and files, if we need to
- find out if people get choices, such as food, choosing a key worker and controlling their own spending money.

We also use lay assessors during some inspections. These are volunteers who have used care services or have helped to care for someone who has used care services.

We write out an inspection report after gathering the information. The report describes how things are and whether anything needs to change.

Our work must reflect the following laws and guidelines:

- the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001
- regulations made under this Act
- the National Care Standards, which set out standards of care that people should be able to expect to receive from a care service.

This means that when we register or inspect a service we make sure it meets the requirements of the 2001 Act. We also take into account the National Care Standards that apply to it.

If we find a service is not meeting these standards, the 2001 Act gives us powers that require the service to improve.

Recommendations, requirements and complaints

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

- 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 Act 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 Care Commission.

Complaints: We have a complaints procedure for dealing with any complaint about a registered care service (or about us). Anyone can raise a concern with us - people using the service, their family and friends, carers and staff.

We investigate all complaints. Depending on how complex it is, a complaint may be:

- upheld - where we agree there is a problem to be resolved
- not upheld - where we don't find a problem
- partially upheld - where we agree with some elements of the complaint but not all of them.

How we decided what to inspect

Why we have different levels of inspection

We target our inspections. This means we spend less time with services we are satisfied are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care. We call these low-intensity inspections. Services where there is more concern receive more intense inspections. We call these medium or high intensity inspections.

How we decide the level of inspection

When planning an inspection, our inspectors, or Care Commission Officers (CCOs) carefully assess how intensively each service needs to be inspected. They do this by considering issues such as:

- complaints
- changes to how the service provides care
- any notifications the service has given us, such as the absence of a manager
- what action the service has taken in response to requirements we have made.

The CCO will also consider how the service responded to situations and issues: for example how it deals with complaints, or notifies us about incidents such as the death of someone using the service.

Our inspections take account of:

- areas of care that we are particularly interested in (these are called Inspection Focus Areas)
- the National Care Standards that the service should be providing
- recommendations and requirements that we made in earlier inspections
- any complaints and other regulatory activity, such as enforcement actions we have taken to improve the service.

What is grading?

We grade each service under Quality Themes which for most services are:

- **Quality of Care and Support:** how the service meets the needs of each individual in its care
- **Quality of Environment:** the environment within the service (for example, is the service clean, is it set out well, is it easy to access by people who use wheelchairs?);
- **Quality of Staffing:** the quality of the care staff, including their qualifications and training
- **Quality of Management and Leadership:** how the service is managed and how it develops to meet the needs of the people it cares for
- **Quality of Information:** this is how the service looks after information and manages record keeping safely.

Each of the Quality Themes has a number of Quality Statements in it, which we grade.

We grade each heading as follows:



We do not give one overall grade.

How grading works.

Services assess themselves using guidance that we given them. Our inspectors take this into account when they inspect and grade the service. We have the final say on grading.

The Quality Themes for this service type are explained in section 2 The Inspection.

About the service we inspected

Clackmannanshire Council Fostering Service provides a fostering and family placement service for children and young people aged from birth to eighteen years and their families, who are assessed to be in need of this service. As well as short break and respite care arrangements, there are also permanent care arrangements made for children who are unable to return to their birth families and therefore need an alternative family to care for them until they reach adulthood.

The Agency recruits and supports carer families to provide a fostering service to a range of children throughout the area.

The service is based within Lime Tree House, Castle Street, Alloa, FK10 1EX. The service has in the past operated a 'three council approach' to recruitment, assessment and matching for fostering and adoption services, alongside Stirling and Falkirk Councils.

The service was registered on 23 November 2005 under Part 2 of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001.

The stated aims and objectives included the following:

"... to ensure that all children and young people, who require one, have access to a foster care placement that is appropriate to their needs and takes into account their religious persuasion, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background ...".

At the time of inspection the service supported 21 foster care families registered to provide long term, short term care and/or respite care.

There were seven children in long term (permanent) placements, 43 children in short term placements and two children were receiving respite care. There were no children in short break placements.

Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of Care and Support	4 - Good
Quality of Staffing	N/A
Quality of Management and Leadership	4 - Good

This inspection report and grades are our assessment of the quality of how the service is performing in the areas we examined during this inspection.

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

You can use the "Care services" area of our website (www.carecommission.com) to find the most up-to-date grades for this service.

How we inspected this service

What level of inspection did we make this service

In this service we carried out a medium intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections where we have assessed the service may need a more intense inspection.

What activities did we undertake during the inspection

This report was written following an announced inspection that took place between 28 July 2010 and 6 August 2010. Feedback was provided on 11 August 2010. The inspection was carried out by Care Commission Officers, Mary Soutar and Lynne Nimmo.

As requested by us, the care service sent us an annual return. The service also sent us a self assessment form.

During this inspection we gathered evidence from a variety of sources, including the relevant sections of policies, procedures, records and other documents including:

- Personal plans of people who use the service
- Foster carers reviews
- Minutes of Consultative Group Meetings
- Team meeting minutes
- Training records
- Staff supervision records
- Clackmannanshire Council's website
- Evidence from the service's most recent self assessment

Discussions with various people including:

- The management team
- Supervising Social Workers
- Foster Carers
- Children in foster care
- Children's Social Workers

All of the above information was taken into account and used to inform this report.

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

Each year we identify an area, or areas, we want to focus on during our inspections. We still inspect all the normal areas of a care service; these are extra checks we make for a specific reason.

For 2010/11 we will focus on:

- Quality assurance for care at home and combined care at home and housing support services.

You can find out more about these from our website www.carecommission.com.

Fire safety issues

The Care Commission no longer reports on matters of fire safety as part of its regulatory function. Where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant Fire and Rescue service to their existence in order that it may act as it considers appropriate. Care service providers can find more information about their legal responsibilities in this area at: www.infoscotland.com/firelaw

Has the service had to take any actions as a result of or since our last inspection?

Where the local authority make arrangements with a voluntary organisation in respect of a child for whom they are responsible, they must enter into a written agreement. This is in order to comply with The Fostering of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996 regulation 16 (2). Timescale for implementation: Ongoing.

Action taken on the Requirement

An agreement has been developed by Clackmannanshire Council however the three councils are working together to develop a joint agreement.

The requirement is:

Met

The Local Authority must enter into a written agreement with all Foster Carers. This is in order to comply with The Fostering of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996 regulation 8. Timescale for implementation: Within 1 month of receipt of this report.

Action taken on the Requirement

All Foster Carers have signed agreements.

The requirement is:

Met

Actions Taken on Recommendations Outstanding

Most recommendations from the last inspection have been met. The remaining recommendations are partially met and have therefore been included in this report.

The annual return

We use annual returns (ARs) to:

- make sure we have up-to-date, accurate information about care services; and

- decide how we will inspect services.

By law every registered care service must send us an annual return and provide us with the information we have requested. The relevant law is the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, Section 25(1). These forms must be returned to us between 6 January and 15 February.

Annual Return Received

Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

We received a fully completed self assessment document from the provider. They identified what they thought they did well, some areas for development and any changes they planned. The service provider told us how people who used the care service had taken part in the self assessment process.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

On this occasion it was not possible to obtain the views of the children living in foster care, however children observed in placement were comfortable and relaxed in their surroundings and in their relationships with carers.

Taking carers' views into account

Foster Carers provided very positive feedback on the quality of support received from their Supervising Social Workers. They also felt their views were listened to and valued from staff at all levels of the organisation.

Foster Carers confirmed they welcomed the opportunity to participate in working groups and were pleased that managers had acted on their request to restart the support groups.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 4 - 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

There is very good evidence that the agency actively seeks the views of people using the service. The information they obtain is then used to help develop and improve the service.

The agency recognises the knowledge and experience of Foster Carers who play a valuable role in co-facilitating preparation courses for applicants. Their contribution is valued by applicants who feel this provides them with a realistic view of the challenges and rewards of fostering enabling them to make an informed choice about proceeding with their application. Through questionnaires applicants share their opinions of these sessions.

Foster Carers feel confident their views are valued by staff at all levels in the organisation. They use forums such as support groups, Foster Carers Consultative Committee and individual supervision sessions to express their views.

Foster Carers spoke positively about the support groups. They are pleased the programme has been restarted following a break due to staff moving on and school holidays. Through this forum they express their views and raise issues or questions they would like taken to the Consultative Committee.

Foster Carers identify their individual training needs and contribute to the development of the annual training plan identifying courses such as giving evidence in court, skills to foster and first aid. Following each training event carers complete feedback forms. This information is collated and used by staff to continue to develop the training programme.

Children and young people are supported to express their views through the LAC process and during foster carer reviews. They benefit from the independent support offered by Who Cares. This enabled one young person to remain in placement when she disagreed with Social Workers who felt it was in her best interests to move.

Young people have the opportunity to meet and express their views to council officials and senior managers during a 'Meet the Bosses' event. In this forum they are able to identify issues which concern them. One area highlighted was the delay in some Social Workers returning calls. As a result Senior Managers have made a commitment to young people that all calls will be returned within twenty four hours.

Areas for Improvement

Although the agency has developed a participation strategy which is reflected in practice, it is still in draft format. (See recommendation 1)

In response to feedback from 'Meet the Bosses' the Local Authority are establishing systems to monitor the experience of children and young people in their care and hear their views.

Plans to organise a session for children and young people who foster and those in long term placements did not come to fruition due to lack of interest however staff plan to revisit this proposal.

Grade awarded for this statement

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Recommendations

1.

The agency should publish their Participation Strategy to ensure all people who use the service are clear about ways in which they can be involved in assessing and improving the quality of provision.

National Care Standards, Foster Care and Family Placement Services: Standard 13.7 Management and Staffing.

Statement 2

We enable service users to make individual choices and ensure that every service user can be supported to achieve their potential.

Service Strengths

Foster Carers receive very good support from the adoption and fostering team. Staff respond to calls and make and keep appointments.

Foster Carers are very good advocates for children. Any issues affecting children in their care, such as lack of progress with plans, are raised with the service. They are confident in approaching senior managers where necessary.

Foster Carers are meeting with the Senior Manager, Child Care Services to sign their revised Foster Carer agreement. They have been fully consulted about the revised document and are comfortable the agreement clearly outlines the responsibilities of both carers and the Local Authority.

Supervising Social Workers receive very good support from managers. As a result they are growing in confidence, knowledge and skills and becoming more effective in their roles.

The panel are very clear about their role in relation to quality assurance. They provide very useful feedback on the quality of reports submitted. This information is fed back to team managers to inform staff training and development and monitored by the service manager.

The proactive approach of the legal team provides Social Workers with step by step guidance through the permanence planning process. This ensures that reports are of the required standard to promote good outcomes for children. Both Social Workers and Foster Carers have received permanency planning training and this is beginning to improve practice and outcomes for some children.

Of the children tracked at this inspection we found that most have regular contact with their Social Worker and/or Social Work Assistant. Information is shared between social work staff ensuring workers have an accurate picture of the child and their needs.

Both Social Workers and Foster Carers support the agreed level of contact between children and the important people in their lives such as parents or siblings.

Children and young people benefit from the support of psychological services. This may be through one to one work with children or young people or by advising and guiding their Foster Carers.

Areas for Improvement

Some foster carers are operating outwith their registration. Systems are in place to assess and obtain approval from the Agency Decision Maker, however, for some carers this is a long term situation. Where these arrangements continue the registration category should be considered by the panel. (See recommendation 1)

It was recognised that where this resulted in an overcrowding situation there is the potential for this to result in difficulties in the long term. In one such situation the panel were asked to make a decision on permanence plans where children are very settled and happy in placements yet are living in overcrowded accommodation. Senior managers are monitoring the progress of plans for children however in doing so they should ensure situations such as this do not recur.

The organisation of some files could be improved to ensure LAAC paperwork, referral forms and risk assessments can be easily accessed. Including a chronology within the file would be helpful, particularly when cases transfer between teams or Social Workers.

The manager is liaising with the council's communications team looking at the provision of a dedicated phone line and email address for fostering enquiries.

The local authority is considering the future of advocacy services for children and young people within the area. They propose to adopt a model which increases the involvement of young people who have been 'looked after' by the authority.

Grade awarded for this statement

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Recommendations

1.

The system for Agency Decision Maker approval of carers operating outwith their registration should be further developed to include specific timescales for follow up and review.

National Care Standards Foster Care and Family Placement Services: Standard 11.8.

Statement 4

We use a range of communication methods to ensure we meet the needs of service users.

Service Strengths

Through the council website and information packs people considering applying to foster are provided with useful information. This includes a foster carers story, general information about children who require foster care and details of allowances.

As an additional support for new carers, staff use their knowledge to link them with experienced carers. Some new carers find this beneficial.

The agency is working to raise the profile of foster care within the area. They have placed adverts in the local press and radio, set up information points in local supermarkets and held a poster competition for primary school children.

Carers are informed about inspections and are encouraged to participate in them. Inspection reports are distributed to all carers and discussed during support groups. They are also readily available to the public on the Clackmannanshire Council website.

Age appropriate packs provide information to children and young people moving into foster care. They are also provided with a useful insight into who they will be living with through Foster Carer profiles.

Panel members are knowledgeable and experienced. They have access to both medical and legal advice allowing them to clarify issues and make informed decisions. A useful annual report is produced about their work containing statistical information on registrations of foster carers and children registered for permanency.

Areas for Improvement

The service plans to offer children and young people in foster care the opportunity to meet as a group.

Carers are provided with a handbook to which they can refer to for guidance and details of policies and procedures. The service has identified this requires to be updated.

The fostering service should produce an annual report to inform recruitment and the ongoing development of the service. This could also be used to identify the need to recruit carers for specific groups such as children with a disability or teenagers. (See recommendation 1)

Grade awarded for this statement

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Recommendations

1.

An annual report detailing the work of the service including feedback given by foster carers, children and young people and other stakeholders should be produced.

National Care Standards, Foster Care and Family Placement Services: Standard 13.7 Management and Staffing.

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 4 - 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

As previously recognised in Quality Theme 1, Statement 1 we found the service provides a range of ways for foster carers, children and young people to influence the development of the service. For example: carers have been consulted on the revised written agreement, fostering procedures and the participation strategy. A copy of the team plan has also been circulated and is on the agenda for discussion within the support group.

Foster Carers have the opportunity to participate in completion of the annual self assessment and provide their views on grading.

Through the support groups and Consultative Committee Foster Carers have influenced the decision making process in relation to a number of issues including the format of the review panel.

Staff have changed their working patterns to enable them to facilitate the support group, a role previously undertaken by the senior.

Following the departure of the Senior, the Manager's hours have increased on a temporary basis. Having a management presence over four days per week has ensured that progress made has been sustained and continues to be built on. This has been beneficial to staff and the service as a whole. Increased staff confidence is also reflected in improved working relationships with carers. This, in conjunction with the processes and systems which are now in operation, enables staff and carers to work more effectively together to support children.

Areas for Improvement

The agency has developed questionnaires for Foster Carers which they intend distributing on annual basis. They are also developing exit questionnaires inviting young people leaving foster placements to have their say. The local authority is developing processes to enable them to more effectively monitor the experience of children and young people living in foster care. Reviewing Officers will meet with children and young people following LAC reviews and reflect their views and experiences within reports to senior officers.

While providing a useful forum for raising operational issues with senior managers the Foster Carers Consultative Committee involvement in setting the strategic direction appears limited. The local authority should further support the development of this group to enable participation to be more firmly embedded in a system of ongoing review. Membership of the committee should be expanded to include additional carers and perhaps a representative from health services.

Grade awarded for this statement

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 2

We involve our workforce in determining the direction and future objectives of the service.

Service Strengths

We found the team more confident and knowledgeable about their roles, responsibilities and plans for the future of the service. They have a better insight into the areas they need to develop and are accessing relevant training and development opportunities. Despite staff absences they are operating more effectively as a team supporting one another and sharing knowledge, ideas and opinions.

Staff are well supported by their manager and benefit from regular support and supervision sessions. The team were consulted on the management structure and able to share their thoughts and opinions.

Senior managers recognising the capacity of existing team members have appointed an additional member of staff to concentrate on the recruitment of Foster Carers. As a result applications are being progressed promptly and progress is being made towards meeting the target of increasing the number of carers by 12 within two years.

Areas for Improvement

As previously highlighted the post of senior is vacant and the manager has been working additional hours on a temporary basis. This has enabled progress to continue and provided continuity for staff. Senior managers need to be mindful of the potential impact of any further reduction in management hours on the service as a whole.

As new Foster Carers are registered the demands on the team will increase. Managers need to consider the capacity of individual staff and the team as a whole to absorb additional work.

Grade awarded for this statement

4 - 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

At an organisational and service level, several systems are in place to monitor and assess the work of the fostering and adoption team. We found that the service made good use of the information from these quality assurance systems to improve the quality of the service they provide. The local authority has an established complaints procedure.

Senior managers monitor the work of all teams on an ongoing basis. They hold regular meetings looking at progress with plans and team performance in relation to specific performance indicators. This includes timescales for responding to enquiries, assessing applications and producing reports.

The agency notifies the Care Commission as required and action plans are submitted following inspections. The agency has worked hard to address the requirement and recommendations made following the last inspection.

Foster carers have several ways they can be involved in the evaluation of the service. Questionnaires are used to gather views at all stages of the preparation and assessment processes. They are encouraged to give their views at meetings and reviews and have input in planning for children. For example they are involved in organising and reviewing introduction plans for children.

The panel play an invaluable role in the quality assurance process. They highlight concerns regarding the content of reports and refuse to make decisions until they are satisfied with the information provided. Their comments are shared with Team Managers, Service Managers and the Agency Decision Maker through panel minutes and feedback forms.

The panel welcome feedback on their processes and respond to issues raised.

Areas for Improvement

There are some recommendations from the previous inspection which have not been fully met therefore they are included in this report. (See recommendation 1)

The agency should further develop opportunities for Foster Carers and other stakeholders to be involved in the self assessment process.

Grade awarded for this statement

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Recommendations

1.

The service needs to further develop and implement quality assurance systems which recognise the importance of consultation with all stakeholders.
National Care Standards, Foster Care and Family Placement Services Standard 13.3

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

N/A

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 Commission re-grading the Quality Statement within the Management and Leadership Theme as unsatisfactory (1). This will result in the Quality Theme for Management and Leadership being re-graded as Unsatisfactory (1).

Summary of Grades

Quality of Care and Support - 4 - Good	
Statement 1	5 - Very Good
Statement 2	4 - Good
Statement 4	5 - Very Good
Quality of Staffing - Not Assessed	
Quality of Management and Leadership - 4 - Good	
Statement 1	4 - Good
Statement 2	4 - Good
Statement 4	4 - Good

Inspection and Grading History

Date	Type	Gradings
28 Sep 2009	Announced	Care and support 4 - Good Staffing 4 - Good Management and Leadership 3 - Adequate
18 Nov 2008	Announced	Care and support 2 - Weak Staffing 2 - Weak Management and Leadership 2 - Weak

Terms we use in our report and what they mean

Action Plan - When we inspect a service, or investigate a complaint and the inspection report highlights an area for improvement; either through recommendations or requirements, the action plan sets out the actions the service will take in response.

Best practice statements/guidelines - This describes practices that have been shown to work best and to be achievable in specific areas of care. They are intended to guide practice and promote a consistent and cohesive approach to care.

Care Service - A service that provides care and is registered with us.

Complaints - We have a complaints procedure for dealing with any complaint about a registered care service or about us. Anyone can raise a concern with us - people using the service, their family and friends, carers and staff.

We investigate all complaints which can have more than one outcome. Depending on how complex the complaint is, the outcomes can be:

- upheld - where we agree there is a problem to be resolved
- not upheld - where we don't find a problem
- partially upheld - where we agree with some elements of the complaint but not all of them.

Enforcement - To protect people who use care services, the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 gives the Care Commission powers to enforce the law. This means we can vary or impose new conditions of registration, which may restrict how a service operates. We can also serve an improvement notice on a service provider to make them improve their service within a set timescale. If they do not make these improvements we could issue a cancellation notice and cancel their registration.

Disclosure Scotland- Disclosure Scotland provides an accurate and responsive disclosure service to enhance security, public safety and protect the vulnerable in society. There are three types or levels of disclosure (i.e. criminal record check) available from Disclosure Scotland; basic, standard and enhanced. An enhanced check is required for people whose work regularly involves caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children or adults at risk; or to register for child minding, day care and to act as foster parents or carers.

Participation - This describes processes that allow individuals and groups to develop and agree programmes, policy and procedures.

Personal Plan - This is a plan of how support and care will be provided. The plan is agreed between the person using the service (or their representative, or both of them) and the service provider. It is sometimes called a care plan mostly by local authorities or health boards when they commission care for people.

How you can use this report

Our inspection reports give care services detailed information about what they are doing well and not so well. We want them to use our reports to improve the services they provide if they need to.

Care services should share our inspection reports with the people who use their service, their families and carers. They can do this in many ways, for example by discussing with them what they plan to do next or by making sure our report is easily available.

People who use care services, their relatives and carers

We encourage you to read this report and hope that you find the information helpful when making a decision on whether or not to use the care service we have inspected. If you, or a family member or friend, are already using a care service, it is important that you know we have inspected that service and what we found. You may find it helpful to read previous inspection reports about his service.

The Care Commission

We use the information we gather from all our inspections to report to Scottish Ministers on how well Scotland's care services are performing. This information helps us to influence important changes they may make about how care services are provided.

Reader Information

This inspection report is published by the Care Commission. It is for use by the general public. You can get more copies of this report and others by downloading it from our website www.carecommission.com or by telephoning 0845 603 0890.

Translations and alternative formats

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

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

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

هه بایتسد یم رونابز رگید روا رولکش رگید رپ شرازگ تعاشا هی

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

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Telephone: 0845 603 0890

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Improving care in Scotland

Inspection report

Clackmannanshire Adoption Service Adoption Service

Child Care Services
Lime Tree House
Castle Street
Alloa
FK10 1EX
01259 225000

Inspected by: (Care Commission officer)	Mary Soutar
Type of inspection:	Announced
Inspection completed on:	11 August 2010

	Page Number
Summary of this inspection report	3
Section 1: Introduction	
About the Care Commission	5
About the National Care Standards	6
What is inspection?	7
How we decided what to inspect	9
What is grading?	10
About the service we inspected?	11
How we inspected this service	12
Section 2: The inspection	15
Section 3: Other information	
Other Information	26
Summary of Grades	27
Terms we use in our reports and what they mean	28
How you can use this report	30
People who use care services, their relatives and carers	30

Service provided by:
Clackmannanshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002713

Care service number:
CS2004083967

Contact details for the Care Commission officer who inspected this service:

Mary Soutar
Telephone 01786 406363
Email enquiries@carecommission.com

Easy read summary of this inspection report

There is a six point grading scale. Each of the Quality Themes we inspected, is graded using the following scale:

We can choose from six grades:



We gave the service these grades

Quality of Care and Support 😊 **4** **Good**

Quality of Staffing N/A

Quality of Management and Leadership 😊 **4** **Good**

This inspection report and grades are our assessment of the quality of how the service is performing in the areas we examined during this inspection.

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

What the service does well

Clackmannanshire Council Adoption agency provides a good service to people interested in adopting children. They make an effort to prevent any unnecessary delays for applicants by arranging attendance at preparation courses provided by neighbouring councils.

Managers provide very good support to the staff team enabling them to develop their confidence, skills and experience.

What the service could do better

The agency is working well in engaging with the other councils to take forward post adoption support.

They are working hard at involving adopters in the development of the service such as having an input into compiling literature for potential adopters.

What the service has done since the last inspection

Management support in the absence of the senior has enabled the ongoing development of the team. As a result their confidence has grown, they are sharing their knowledge and learning and developing as a team.

Conclusion

We found that Clackmannanshire Council Adoption is providing a good service, assessing and preparing adopters to meet the needs of children.

Who did this inspection

Lead Care Commission Officer

Mary Soutar

Other Care Commission Officers

Lynne Nimmo

Lay Assessor

N/A

Please read all of this report so that you can understand the full findings of this inspection.

About the Care Commission

We were set up in April 2002 to regulate and improve care services in Scotland.

Regulation involves:

- registering new services
- inspecting services
- investigating complaints
- taking enforcement action, when necessary, to improve care services.

We regulate around 15,000 services each year. Many are childminders, children's daycare services such as nurseries, and care home services. We regulate many other kinds of services, ranging from nurse agencies to independent healthcare such as hospices and private hospitals.

We regulate services for the very young right through to those for the very old. Our work can, therefore, affect the lives of most people in Scotland.

All our work is about improving the quality of care services.

We produce thousands of inspection reports every year; all are published on our website: www.carecommission.com. Reports include any complaints we investigate and improvements that we ask services to make.

The "Care services" area of our website also:

- allows you to search for information, such as reports, about the services we regulate
- has information for the people and organisations who provide care services
- has guidance on looking for and using care services in Scotland.

You can also get in touch with us if you would like more detailed information.

About the National Care Standards

The National Care Standards (NCS) set out the standards that people who use care services in Scotland should expect. The aim is to make sure that you receive the same high quality of service no matter where you live.

Different types of service have different National Care Standards. When we inspect a care service we take into account the National Care Standards that the service should provide.

The Scottish Government publishes copies of the National Care Standards online at: www.scotland.gov.uk

You can get printed copies free from:

Booksource
50 Cambuslang Road
Cambuslang Investment Park
Glasgow
G32 8NB
Tel: 0845 370 0067
Fax: 0845 370 0068
Email: scottishgovernment@booksource.net

What is inspection?

Our inspectors, known as Care Commission Officers (CCOs), check care services regularly to make sure that they are meeting the needs of the people in their care.

One of the ways we check on services is to carry out inspections. We may turn up without telling the service's staff in advance. This is so we can see how good the care is on a normal day. We inspect some types of services more often than others.

When we inspect a service, typically we:

- talk to people who use the service, their carers and families, staff and managers
- talk to individuals and groups
- have a good look around and check what quality of care is being provided
- look at the activities happening on the day
- examine things like records and files, if we need to
- find out if people get choices, such as food, choosing a key worker and controlling their own spending money.

We also use lay assessors during some inspections. These are volunteers who have used care services or have helped to care for someone who has used care services.

We write out an inspection report after gathering the information. The report describes how things are and whether anything needs to change.

Our work must reflect the following laws and guidelines:

- the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001
- regulations made under this Act
- the National Care Standards, which set out standards of care that people should be able to expect to receive from a care service.

This means that when we register or inspect a service we make sure it meets the requirements of the 2001 Act. We also take into account the National Care Standards that apply to it.

If we find a service is not meeting these standards, the 2001 Act gives us powers that require the service to improve.

Recommendations, requirements and complaints

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

- 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 Act 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 Care Commission.

Complaints: We have a complaints procedure for dealing with any complaint about a registered care service (or about us). Anyone can raise a concern with us - people using the service, their family and friends, carers and staff.

We investigate all complaints. Depending on how complex it is, a complaint may be:

- upheld - where we agree there is a problem to be resolved
- not upheld - where we don't find a problem
- partially upheld - where we agree with some elements of the complaint but not all of them.

How we decided what to inspect

Why we have different levels of inspection

We target our inspections. This means we spend less time with services we are satisfied are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care. We call these low-intensity inspections. Services where there is more concern receive more intense inspections. We call these medium or high intensity inspections.

How we decide the level of inspection

When planning an inspection, our inspectors, or Care Commission Officers (CCOs) carefully assess how intensively each service needs to be inspected. They do this by considering issues such as:

- complaints
- changes to how the service provides care
- any notifications the service has given us, such as the absence of a manager
- what action the service has taken in response to requirements we have made.

The CCO will also consider how the service responded to situations and issues: for example how it deals with complaints, or notifies us about incidents such as the death of someone using the service.

Our inspections take account of:

- areas of care that we are particularly interested in (these are called Inspection Focus Areas)
- the National Care Standards that the service should be providing
- recommendations and requirements that we made in earlier inspections
- any complaints and other regulatory activity, such as enforcement actions we have taken to improve the service.

What is grading?

We grade each service under Quality Themes which for most services are:

- **Quality of Care and Support:** how the service meets the needs of each individual in its care
- **Quality of Environment:** the environment within the service (for example, is the service clean, is it set out well, is it easy to access by people who use wheelchairs?);
- **Quality of Staffing:** the quality of the care staff, including their qualifications and training
- **Quality of Management and Leadership:** how the service is managed and how it develops to meet the needs of the people it cares for
- **Quality of Information:** this is how the service looks after information and manages record keeping safely.

Each of the Quality Themes has a number of Quality Statements in it, which we grade.

We grade each heading as follows:



We do not give one overall grade.

How grading works.

Services assess themselves using guidance that we given them. Our inspectors take this into account when they inspect and grade the service. We have the final say on grading.

The Quality Themes for this service type are explained in section 2 The Inspection.

About the service we inspected

Clackmannanshire Council Adoption Service provides an Adoption Agency for children and young people aged from 0 to 16 years, who are assessed as in need of this service and who live or have a connection with Clackmannanshire. The agency is registered to recruit and support adoptive families.

The service was registered on 23 November 2005.

The stated aims and objectives of the service are:

- To meet the needs of children who, for a variety of reasons, cannot live with their own families.
- To work in partnership with prospective adopters.

The service is based within Lime Tree House, Castle Street, Alloa, FK10 1EX. The Team Manager has day to day responsibility for the operation of the service and support and supervision of the team. The post of Senior Practitioner is currently vacant.

Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of Care and Support	4 - Good
Quality of Staffing	N/A
Quality of Management and Leadership	4 - Good

This inspection report and grades are our assessment of the quality of how the service is performing in the areas we examined during this inspection.

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

You can use the "Care services" area of our website (www.carecommission.com) to find the most up-to-date grades for this service.

How we inspected this service

What level of inspection did we make this service

In this service we carried out a medium intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections where we have assessed the service may need a more intense inspection.

What activities did we undertake during the inspection

This report was written following an announced inspection that took place between 28 July 2010 and 6 August 2010. Feedback was provided on 11 August 2010. The inspection was carried out by Care Commission Officers, Mary Soutar and Lynne Nimmo.

As requested by us, the care service sent us an annual return. The service also sent us a self assessment form.

During this inspection we gathered evidence from a variety of sources, including the relevant sections of policies, procedures, records and other documents including:

Personal plans of people who use the service

Team meeting minutes

Panel minutes

Staff training records

Staff supervision records

Clackmannanshire Council's website

Evidence from the service's most recent self assessment

Discussions with various people including:

The management team

Supervising Social Workers

Adoptive Parents

Children's Social Workers

All of the above information was taken into account and used to inform this report.

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

Each year we identify an area, or areas, we want to focus on during our inspections. We still inspect all the normal areas of a care service; these are extra checks we make for a specific reason.

For 2010/11 we will focus on:

- Quality assurance for care at home and combined care at home and housing support services.

You can find out more about these from our website www.carecommission.com.

Fire safety issues

The Care Commission no longer reports on matters of fire safety as part of its regulatory function. Where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant Fire and Rescue service to their existence in order that it may act as it considers appropriate. Care service providers can find more information about their legal responsibilities in this area at: www.infoscotland.com/firelaw

Has the service had to take any actions as a result of or since our last inspection?

Agency staff should ensure 'life story' work is undertaken with children who have been adopted. This is in order to comply with: The Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978 Regulation 1. (2)(bb) Timescale: Ongoing.

Action taken on the Requirement

Staff have received training in life story work and resources are available to guide them. The agency has made a commitment that all children being presented for permanent substitute care will have life story work done.

The requirement is:

Met

Prior to placing siblings for permanence an attachment assessment must be undertaken. This is in order to comply with the Adoption Agencies (Scotland) Regulations 1996 Regulation 11(6) Timescale: Ongoing

Action taken on the Requirement

Together and Apart assessments are being undertaken by staff where required.

The requirement is:

Met

Actions Taken on Recommendations Outstanding

Most recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed. Two partially met recommendations are included in this report.

The annual return

We use annual returns (ARs) to:

- make sure we have up-to-date, accurate information about care services; and
- decide how we will inspect services.

By law every registered care service must send us an annual return and provide us with the information we have requested. The relevant law is the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, Section 25(1). These forms must be returned to us between 6 January and 15 February.

Annual Return Received

Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

We received a fully completed self assessment from the provider. They identified what they thought they did well, some areas for development and any changes they planned.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

Due to the age of the children placed for adoption we were unable to obtain their views.

Taking carers' views into account

A limited number of adopters had been approved by the agency since last inspection. However of those who had been assessed and approved, most spoke positively about the experience. They stated staff made and kept appointments and were always contactable. Most felt they were fully informed throughout the process, knew about recommendations and were adequately prepared for attendance at panel.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 4 - 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

Information was gathered from discussion with adoptive parents, staff and managers and examination of documents provided by the service. It was concluded that there are good opportunities for adopters to give their views about the service.

A participation strategy has been developed outlining ways in which adoptive parents can be involved in the service.

Systems in place provide applicants and adopters the opportunity to comment at all stages of the process. This includes after the preparation sessions and panel and following placement of the child. Clackmannanshire Council arranged access to preparation sessions organised by neighbouring authorities to prevent unnecessary delays for applicants. Applicants welcomed the opportunity to hear from both adopters and adoptees during these sessions. They felt fully involved in the assessment process and most were clear about their progress and the recommendation being made to panel. Extended family members welcomed the opportunity to be part of the process and to express their views on literature and books provided for their information.

Where permanency/adoption is deemed to be in children's best interests, birth parents are involved in the process. They are encouraged to seek help and advice from other agencies to support them, for example, to attend meetings or reviews.

Adoptive and foster families work very well together to develop plans for introductions. Children are very well supported during this time of change, with plans being amended to reflect their needs. Adoptive parents continue to be involved in ongoing discussions about continued contact with foster families as necessary for children

Very useful and relevant information is provided to adoptive parents by Foster Carers and other professionals involved with the child both prior to and following placement. The introduction of the post placement meeting allows adopters to obtain anecdotal information about their child's previous experiences.

Areas for Improvement

The participation strategy is still in draft format and should be finalised and fully implemented into practice within a reasonable timescale. (See recommendation 1)

The agency plan to set up a short life working group with approved adopters to put together an adopters handbook.

Although all attendees at panel are given the opportunity to complete a questionnaire on their experience of attending panel, members noted the response rate was poor. It is therefore their intention to review the process to identify how this could be improved.

Grade awarded for this statement

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Recommendations

1.

The service should publish their Participation Strategy to ensure all people who use the service are clear about ways in which they can be involved in assessing and improving the quality of provision.

This is in order to comply with National Care Standards; Adoption Agencies, Standard 32: Providing a good quality service.

Statement 2

We enable service users to make individual choices and ensure that every service user can be supported to achieve their potential.

Service Strengths

People wishing to learn about adoption are provided with useful information through the council website and their information pack. Applicants are further informed during the preparation sessions where the involvement of adopters, adoptees and Foster Carers helps provide a realistic picture of the task.

Social Workers have received permanency planning training and this is beginning to improve practice and outcomes for some children. The proactive approach of the legal team provides Social Workers with clear guidance through the permanence planning process. This ensures that reports are of the required standard to promote good outcomes for children. Social Workers considering placing a sibling group separately give careful consideration to this decision by completing Together and Apart assessments. As a result panels are able to make informed decisions which reflect the needs of individual children. The agency takes account of children's ethnic background, faith and cultural needs when searching for families. They consider all available families within the 3 council consortium before looking further afield.

Adopters know they can access ongoing support from the Local Authority, Scottish Adoption Advice Service (SAAS) and Post Adoption Central Support (PACS). Where ongoing contact with birth families is planned, a written agreement is completed and contact overseen by the Team Manager.

Supervising Social Workers receive very good support from managers. As a result they are growing in confidence, knowledge and skills and becoming more effective in their roles.

The panel are very clear about their role in relation to quality assurance. They provide very useful feedback on the quality of reports submitted. This information is monitored by the Service Manager and shared with Team Managers to inform staff training and development.

Areas for Improvement

While the situation is improving, it is noted there are still some children for whom plans have not been progressed within a reasonable timescale. The Manager of the Adoption Service is therefore arranging regular meetings with Team Managers to monitor progress and timescales.

Grade awarded for this statement

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 4

We use a range of communication methods to ensure we meet the needs of service users.

Service Strengths

We found that staff use a variety of methods to ensure effective communication within the service. Where necessary information is provided in other languages and formats.

Through the website, packs and information sessions people are given honest and realistic information about children who require adoption. This allows them to make an informed decision about whether they wish to apply to be adoptive parents.

Most Supervising Social Workers undertake a thorough assessment of applicants and are therefore able to complete the Form F's in detail. This comprehensive information allows panel members to make informed recommendations about approval of adopters.

Good information is recorded by Social Workers outlining why adoption or permanency is in the child's best interests. They are pro-active in seeking information and keeping birth parents involved and up to date about the progress being made for their child.

Adoptive parents are given enough information about any child they are matched with. This enables them to make a decision whether to proceed or ask for further information. Adoptive parents found visits by the Supervising Social Worker and the child's Social Worker very beneficial at this time as they were able to discuss the match and ask any questions. If they wished, they could meet with other professionals such as the paediatrician to gather further information

Adoptive parents found the information shared by Foster Carers invaluable. This included information about the child's life and routines. Memory boxes were felt to be particularly valuable, providing a very full picture of the child's life. They were able to contribute to this by adding information about themselves once the match was agreed

Adoptive parents and Foster Carers work well together to plan and adapt introductions to meet the individual needs of children. Adopters are able to meet with a representative of the legal team to discuss legal routes. The post placement meeting is valuable as this enables the sharing of information between all parties and allows any ongoing support needs to be identified

Everyone is involved in discussing post adoption contact with the best interests of the child being a primary consideration at all times.

A leaflet on post adoption support has been developed by the agency. This provides adopters with contact details for the agencies available to provide support.

The agency informs the public about their performance by providing copies of their inspection reports on the Local Authority website.

Areas for Improvement

The adoption service should produce an annual report to inform recruitment and the ongoing development of the service.

Some staff provided written feedback to applicants during the assessment process. This is helpful in ensuring a shared understanding of discussion, progress made and planned recommendations. Consideration should be given to adopting this as standard practice.

The agency has agreed with neighbouring authorities that written feedback will be provided to the assessing Social Worker where applicants attend preparation sessions outwith their authority.

Adopters recognise that the period following approval can be difficult as they wait for news of a possible match. Staff should therefore ensure there is ongoing contact in line with agency guidelines.

A working group, involving Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils has been set up to look at post adoption support in response to the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007. (See recommendation 1)

Grade awarded for this statement

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Recommendations

1.

The work with other Local Authorities in relation to post adoption contact with birth families should continue to be progressed.

This is in order to comply with National Care Standards; Adoption agencies: Standard 7.1 Keeping in Touch.

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 4 - 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

Following consideration of the evidence sampled, the service is determined to be operating at a good level in respect of this statement. People experience a service that supports participation in the variety of ways; for example questionnaires, involvement in preparation meetings and giving their views about attending panels. A limited number of adoption assessments have been completed over the past year however a preparation course is planned.

The panel produces a useful annual report detailing their work over the previous year. They are revising their procedures in an effort to increase the number of completed questionnaires returned. Adopters commented positively on the experience of attending panel indicating panel members made an effort to make them feel as 'comfortable as they could under the circumstances.'

Adults who have been adopted and people who had adopted are given the opportunity to participate in information sessions and preparation training. They are able to share their experiences and offer advice and views to people who are considering adopting.

Good links continue between GAP and PACS with representatives being invited to participate in training events.

Following the departure of the Senior, the Manager's hours have increased on a temporary basis. Having a management presence over four days per week has ensured that progress made has been sustained and continues to be built upon. This has been beneficial to staff and the service as a whole. Increased staff confidence is also reflected in improved working relationships with adopters and carers enabling them to work more effectively together to support children.

Areas for Improvement

As highlighted in Quality Theme 1, Statement , recommendation 1 the agency should finalise their participation strategy.

The service should continue to involve adopters and stakeholders in the ongoing evaluation and development of the service, including completion of the annual Self Assessment.

The agency is distributing stakeholder questionnaires enabling adopters and other interested parties to provide feedback on the work of the service.

Grade awarded for this statement

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 2

We involve our workforce in determining the direction and future objectives of the service.

Service Strengths

We found the team more confident and knowledgeable about their roles, responsibilities and plans for the future of the service. They have a better insight into the areas they need to develop and are accessing relevant training and development opportunities. Despite staff absences they are operating more effectively as a team supporting one another and sharing knowledge, ideas and opinions.

Staff are well supported by their manager and benefit from regular support and supervision sessions. The team were consulted on the management structure and able to share their thoughts and opinions.

Senior managers recognising the capacity of existing team members have appointed an additional member of staff to concentrate on the recruitment of Foster Carers. This is enabling other team members to take on adoption assessments. As a result the agency is planning a preparation course for new applicants.

Areas for Improvement

As previously highlighted the post of senior is vacant and the manager has been working additional hours on a temporary basis. This has enabled progress to continue and has provided continuity for staff. Senior managers need to be mindful of the potential impact of any further reduction in management hours on the service as a whole.

As new Foster Carers are registered the demands on the team will increase. Managers need to consider the capacity of individual staff and the team as a whole to absorb additional work.

Grade awarded for this statement

4 - 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

At an organisational and service level, several systems are in place to monitor and assess the work of the fostering and adoption team. We found that the service made good use of the information from these quality assurance systems to improve the quality of the service they provide. The local authority has an established complaints procedure.

Senior managers monitor the work of all teams on an ongoing basis. They hold regular meetings looking at progress with plans and team performance in relation to specific performance indicators. This includes timescales for responding to enquiries, assessing applications and producing reports.

The agency notifies the Care Commission as required and action plans are submitted following inspections. The agency has worked hard to address the requirements and recommendations made following the last inspection.

The panel play an invaluable role in the quality assurance process. They highlight concerns regarding the content of reports and refuse to make decisions until they are satisfied with the information provided. Their comments are shared with Team Managers, Service Managers and the Agency Decision Maker through panel minutes and feedback forms.

The panel welcome feedback on their processes and respond to issues raised.

Areas for Improvement

There are some recommendations from the previous inspection which have not been fully met therefore they are included in this report.

Within the last report it was recommended all new staff complete the induction programme outlined within the service policy. Although there are some records this does not clearly indicate progress through the programme and when it is completed.

Grade awarded for this statement

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Recommendations

1.

The agency should ensure the progress of new staff through the induction programme is clearly recorded.

National Care Standards: Foster Care and Family Placement Services 13.2

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

N/A

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 Commission re-grading the Quality Statement within the Management and Leadership Theme as unsatisfactory (1). This will result in the Quality Theme for Management and Leadership being re-graded as Unsatisfactory (1).

Summary of Grades

Quality of Care and Support - 4 - Good	
Statement 1	4 - Good
Statement 2	4 - Good
Statement 4	4 - Good
Quality of Staffing - Not Assessed	
Quality of Management and Leadership - 4 - Good	
Statement 1	4 - Good
Statement 2	4 - Good
Statement 4	4 - Good

Inspection and Grading History

Date	Type	Gradings
28 Sep 2009	Announced	Care and support 4 - Good Staffing 4 - Good Management and Leadership 3 - Adequate
18 Nov 2008	Announced	Care and support 2 - Weak Staffing 3 - Adequate Management and Leadership 2 - Weak

Terms we use in our report and what they mean

Action Plan - When we inspect a service, or investigate a complaint and the inspection report highlights an area for improvement; either through recommendations or requirements, the action plan sets out the actions the service will take in response.

Best practice statements/guidelines - This describes practices that have been shown to work best and to be achievable in specific areas of care. They are intended to guide practice and promote a consistent and cohesive approach to care.

Care Service - A service that provides care and is registered with us.

Complaints - We have a complaints procedure for dealing with any complaint about a registered care service or about us. Anyone can raise a concern with us - people using the service, their family and friends, carers and staff.

We investigate all complaints which can have more than one outcome. Depending on how complex the complaint is, the outcomes can be:

- upheld - where we agree there is a problem to be resolved
- not upheld - where we don't find a problem
- partially upheld - where we agree with some elements of the complaint but not all of them.

Enforcement - To protect people who use care services, the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 gives the Care Commission powers to enforce the law. This means we can vary or impose new conditions of registration, which may restrict how a service operates. We can also serve an improvement notice on a service provider to make them improve their service within a set timescale. If they do not make these improvements we could issue a cancellation notice and cancel their registration.

Disclosure Scotland- Disclosure Scotland provides an accurate and responsive disclosure service to enhance security, public safety and protect the vulnerable in society. There are three types or levels of disclosure (i.e. criminal record check) available from Disclosure Scotland; basic, standard and enhanced. An enhanced check is required for people whose work regularly involves caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children or adults at risk; or to register for child minding, day care and to act as foster parents or carers.

Participation - This describes processes that allow individuals and groups to develop and agree programmes, policy and procedures.

Personal Plan - This is a plan of how support and care will be provided. The plan is agreed between the person using the service (or their representative, or both of them) and the service provider. It is sometimes called a care plan mostly by local authorities or health boards when they commission care for people.

How you can use this report

Our inspection reports give care services detailed information about what they are doing well and not so well. We want them to use our reports to improve the services they provide if they need to.

Care services should share our inspection reports with the people who use their service, their families and carers. They can do this in many ways, for example by discussing with them what they plan to do next or by making sure our report is easily available.

People who use care services, their relatives and carers

We encourage you to read this report and hope that you find the information helpful when making a decision on whether or not to use the care service we have inspected. If you, or a family member or friend, are already using a care service, it is important that you know we have inspected that service and what we found. You may find it helpful to read previous inspection reports about his service.

