



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

Care Standards Act 2000

Inspection Report

NewFocas Ltd

Buckley

Type of Inspection – Full

Date(s) of inspection – 26 February 2018

Date of publication – 4 April 2018

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Summary

About the service

North East Wales Foster Care Service Ltd (NewFocas) is an independent foster care agency that provides therapeutic placements for children and young people (hereafter referred to as young people) between 0 to 18 years of age. There were 17 young people living in 14 foster households at the time of the inspection. The responsible individual for the service is Kevin Denton and the registered manager is Amanda Starkey.

What type of inspection was carried out?

This was a planned, announced inspection and all three quality areas were considered. The inspection was carried out by 2 inspectors and took place at the Buckley office on Monday 26th February 2018 between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm.

The following sources of information / evidence were used to formulate this report:

- We spoke with the registered manager.
- We spoke with the managing director.
- We spoke with three therapeutic social workers for the service.
- We examined six young people's files.
- We examined 12 foster carer files.
- We read two foster carers' form F assessments.
- We read the records of the last two fostering panel meetings.

We viewed a sample of the agency's paperwork including the statement of purpose, the young persons' guide, quality monitoring reports, foster carers' review reports, a sample of supporting foster carers records, supervision records and staff team meeting minutes.

We issued questionnaires to the following;

- 10 foster carer households, 2 were returned.

- 10 children and young people, none were returned.
- 10 placing local authority social workers, none were returned.
- 10 panel members and one were returned.
- 10 staff members, five returned.

What does the service do well?

The children and young people living at the foster homes are compatible, safe and well cared for by foster carers who are in turn supported by the agency. The agency recruits, assesses, prepares, supports and trains foster carers that supports their knowledge and understanding to provide good outcomes for children and young people.

What has improved since the last inspection?

- The service has introduced an outcome record to evidence that the agency / foster carers provide positive outcomes for children.
- All children have been attending education for the past 12 months.
- Updates on significant events which relate to notifications are provided within the original notification to make it easier to follow the incident and to provide this in turn provides effective audit trail.
- Children and young people are consulted around what their targets are for the next six months and are supported to achieve them.

What needs to be done to improve the service?

We made the following recommendations to improve the service:

- To include details of the agency's position regarding the Welsh language 'Active Offer' in the statement of purpose, young people's guide and all other relevant documentation.
- To ensure that the annual quality of care report is completed and submitted to the CIW annually and according to timescale.

Well-being

Children can carry out activities, hobbies and interests that matter to them. We read within children's files that they were supported to make healthy lifestyle choices to keep them fit and healthy. For example, one child's file confirmed that when they expressed an interest in wanting to attend cadets this was facilitated by their foster carer who enquired regarding the activity, paid for the membership and the young person attended the activity sessions. They continued to do so to the present day as we had confirmation from the supervising social worker regarding this. This demonstrates that children are encouraged and supported to make choices and decisions.

Children and young people are provided with helpful information about the carers that they are going to before they move. We read within records that, dependent on their situation, some children visit their carers prior to being placed with them in order to support change and in having well-planned introductions. We found that the staff team were persistent and creative about getting information to children for example, in some circumstances, depending on the age and the child's situation, they used phone calls and mobile devices, even when emergencies limited the time available they would visit them. Having information about where children are going reassures and empowers children and young people and supports the service to invest in the placement from the start and therefore achieve good outcomes for children.

Children and young people feel well cared for and part of the family. We read that a child had commented on the agency's feedback form that they really 'loved' living with the foster parents and that they had a good relationship with everyone living in the house. Additionally, we read a record from a social worker that described a carer for a child as welcoming and warm, and was excellent in their practice with the child and that they had settled really well. These examples show that children are happy, safe and confident that they are being cared for properly.

Children have a wide range of opportunities, help and support. We read within records

and were told by a therapeutic social worker that children and their carers were supported with the children's emotional and behavioural difficulties and that carers were sensitive to their needs and had high expectations of what they could achieve. We read that carers included children and young people fully and provided them with security, warmth, opportunities and good experiences. For example, one of the children attended a weekend service that the carers and their birth family were involved with and the young person also attended and simultaneously got to carry out their drumming activity / hobby whilst attending the service with their carers and family. By being part of the family and involved in the carers' interest and beliefs, the young person found their interests and talent; and they continued to drum regularly and wished to be in a rock / pop band. We read that children attended dance classes, football training and football games and also enjoyed ice skating and family holidays. As a result, children have various support networks to support them to discuss their anxieties, experiences and are confident to talk to individual who want to make a difference in their lives.

All children have attended educational provision that is suitable for them. We read in records that all children attached with the agency were in education, even where distance was a significant issue. For example, there were concerted efforts to support a child who was not attending school regularly and their carers were fully involved in facilitating this and played a key role in getting the child back into education by driving the young person to their education location every morning and collecting them at the end of the day. Children are supported and encouraged with their educational activities to increase their knowledge for a better future.

The views and experiences of children, young people and foster carers are captured periodically by the agency. Records by children, young people and their carers evidenced good levels of satisfaction with the service overall and that the registered manager, responsible individual and directors were highly visible and had an effective leadership team. Children, young people and their foster families are satisfied that agency is providing good level of support.

Care and Support

The preparation, assessment, support and training of foster carers focus on the needs of children and young people. Initial training was comprehensive and delivered by leaders and managers in the agency. New carers gained an in-depth understanding of children and young people living away from their families and were supported with the knowledge to meet their multifaceted needs. We saw that foster carers received good-quality training throughout the year and also support was available at any point. Foster carers and the children they cared for had regular contact with social workers of the agency and records of visits to the foster carers and the children confirmed this. We spoke to a number of foster carers and read the two questionnaires returned to CIW and they were complimentary of the social workers, and the leadership team. They gain good skills and insights into fostered children's and young people's needs through the training that they have received around attachment, child sexual exploitation and behaviour management.

Children and young people receive good help and support to understand how to protect themselves from harm. They can talk to their social workers, carers and their carers' supervising social workers. They were confident that their concerns were listened to and addressed and children and young people know how to complain about their care and how to get help if they are being harmed, but they had not needed to do so. Children and young people who are currently in placement had been asked for their feedback about their care. Foster carers were fully aware of, and sensitive to, potential and actual abuse in children and young people's lives. In our discussions with foster carers, they had an open attitude to disclosures and know how they would deal with safeguarding and the need to protect children and young people. Their preparation training, attachment and behaviour management training had equipped them with good skills in this area. The agency plans to extend these skills by providing specific safeguarding training. Children can be assured that their carers have the right training in order to be able to positively understand and respond to their difficulties'.

The agency operates a safe fostering service with safe families. There is robust vetting

and checking of potential carers at the assessment stage as well as safe recruitment and vetting of all staff and panel members. Vetting of carers was tailored to the specific circumstances of each carer household. For example, single carers' regular visitors and potential back-up carers were vetted. Wherever concerns arose about individuals through this vetting, the agency made child-centred and safe decisions about suitability. This meant that safe care was promoted relevant to the wide-ranging circumstances of carers. Staff and managers ensured that safer care agreements, health and safety checks, seeing children without their carers and unannounced visits, all helped to ensure children's and young people's safety. Children and young people can be confident that people who care for them are checked thoroughly before becoming foster carers.

Leadership and Management

The fostering agency recruits a good range of carers who can meet the diverse cultural, linguistic needs of children. The agency provided clear initial information to potential carers about the complexity of the fostering task and careful and informative discussions had taken place with potential carers about the demands of the role and the skills required for fostering. This ensured that good-quality carers were going through assessment and were approved. We read within panel minutes that the fostering panel promotes safe, secure and stable placements through active engagement with the agency. It carries out a rigorous quality assurance function about the quality of assessments. For example, the panel had requested that assessors improve and extend the take up of appropriate references to cross-reference with potential carers' motivations and history. The panel also reminded assessors to evaluate potential carers' motivations to foster. Children and young people can be assured that appropriate people are approved to become carers.

The registered manager, responsible individual and directors are a highly visible and effective leadership team. We observed that they worked collaboratively and reflectively together to ensure that they maintained a sensitive, child-centred ethos in all they do. Their approach to developing and expanding the service was cautious, thorough and effective. The statement of purpose therefore accurately reflects the service provided. The leadership team was effective with its business planning and teamwork, but its effectiveness of making sure the annual quality of care report being completed annually needs to be improved. On the day of inspection the report had not been completed and we were told that internal processes of the agency delayed the report being completed within timescale. We recommended that upon completion of the report the agency submit the report to the CIW. Care issues relating to children and young people were dealt with on a case-by-case basis and lead to a clear evaluation of the strengths and areas of development of the fostering service or action plans and targets for improvements. The agency management team bring a wealth of fostering experience and good local knowledge. The manager, responsible individual and others were focused

on ensuring that children and young people had opportunities to have fun and engage in their community as well as influencing their day-to-day care.

The manager had commissioned a system to track the progress of children and young people, and this was based on a lengthy and generic checklist of outcomes. The agency had only just started to use it, and this would be amended to reflect the CIW fostering outcomes framework. Children and young people's outcomes and needs are at the forefront of this service so that they can achieve the best in life.

How we inspect and report on services

We conduct two types of inspection; baseline and focused. Both consider the experience of people using services.

- **Baseline inspections** assess whether the registration of a service is justified and whether the conditions of registration are appropriate. For most services, we carry out these inspections every three years. Exceptions are registered child minders, out of school care, sessional care, crèches and open access provision, which are every four years.

At these inspections we check whether the service has a clear, effective Statement of Purpose and whether the service delivers on the commitments set out in its Statement of Purpose. In assessing whether registration is justified inspectors check that the service can demonstrate a history of compliance with regulations.

- **Focused inspections** consider the experience of people using services and we will look at compliance with regulations when poor outcomes for people using services are identified. We carry out these inspections in between baseline inspections. Focused inspections will always consider the quality of life of people using services and may look at other areas.

Baseline and focused inspections may be scheduled or carried out in response to concerns.

Inspectors use a variety of methods to gather information during inspections. These may include;

- Talking with people who use services and their representatives
- Talking to staff and the manager
- Looking at documentation
- Observation of staff interactions with people and of the environment
- Comments made within questionnaires returned from people who use services, staff and health and social care professionals

We inspect and report our findings under 'Quality Themes'. Those relevant to each type of service are referred to within our inspection reports.

Further information about what we do can be found in our leaflet 'Improving Care and Social Services in Wales'. You can download this from our website, [Improving Care and Social Services in Wales](#) or ask us to send you a copy by telephoning your local CSSIW regional office.

