

Firsthand Lothian Child Care Agency

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Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 15 March 2017

Service provided by:
Firsthand Lothian

Service provider number:
SP2003003714

Care service number:
CS2004080017

About the service

Firsthand is a Child Care Agency which offers regular respite to lone parent families and families with children with a disability. Firsthand offers respite in the family's home.

Firsthand is a registered charity and received funding to operate the service. The service states that:

"Firsthand Lothian exists to support disadvantaged families and children with disabilities to achieve their full potential. Our skilled staff and volunteers help build resilience by working with families in their community, providing support, respite care, guidance and information."

The service is currently registered with the following conditions:

1. Facilities to be provided: The introduction or supply of child carers.
2. Operating hours: Flexible hours of operation will be in place. The service will not operate an overnight service.
3. Staffing: The agency is responsible for ensuring that staff have the necessary skills and experience for the work that they are to perform and are vetted in accordance with regulatory requirements.

What people told us

Four families gave us feedback on the service before we completed the inspection. The families gave very positive feedback about the quality of the service and highlighted some area where the service could have shared more information with them, for example specific policies and procedures. Parents said that they were able to meet staff before they started working with their child and they "felt this was very good, meeting up before. So my child knew them." Parents said they were confident that the staff have the skills and knowledge to meet their child's needs and commented that they "respected (their) child and listened to what they wanted". Families' told us that the service always asked for feedback and ways they could improve. Families confirmed that they had emergency contact information for the service for out of hours support.

Self assessment

The self assessment was well completed giving examples of service strengths and areas for service development from their quality assurance systems.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	6 - Excellent
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

What the service does well

The service gathered key information about children and accessed appropriate training to ensure that staff could meet their individual needs well. Families told us that the service ensured that staff met them and their children before care started this helped the children to feel safe and included. The families told us that staff were respectful and had the skills and knowledge to provide high quality care for their child. We saw that staff attended care group meetings and developed care plans to ensure that children and young people's needs were met. We saw that they set achievable targets for children and supported them to learn and develop through regular support. The service had systems in place to ensure that any changes in needs were recorded to ensure consistency of care to help the children and young people feel safe and respected. Children were encouraged to give feedback through a variety of methods to help them have a voice in assessing the quality of staff and the service, this helped them to feel included.

The website included useful signposting information for the families to ensure they could access appropriate support.

We reviewed the services recruitment processes and found that they were following best practice guidance to ensure children and young people's safety. We saw that probationary periods were used to ensure that the correct people were being employed in the service to effectively meet the aims of the service. The service provided a thorough induction which included reviewing case studies to explore important issues like child protection, behaviour management and appropriate communication. This helped the new staff to be well informed about expected behaviour and organisational values which helped them to provide quality care. The service shared current best practice guidance with the staff team to ensure that the care provided was of a high quality and assessed their practice regularly. The managers used observations of practice as well as feedback from children and their families to assess staff practice and support them to further improve.

We saw that training was audited to ensure that any gaps were identified and addressed to meet children and young people's needs and further develop the staff team. Regular meetings took place which gave staff the opportunity to discuss practice issues and learn about changes in the sector to ensure they were working to current best practice guidance.

The aspects of service provision reviewed as part of the inspection process resulted in an excellent grade for the quality of care and support provided to children and families.

What the service could do better

The service could develop their outdoor play policies and resources to encourage children to have access to regular fresh air and physical play opportunities using documents like 'My World Outdoors.'

The service could develop a system for formal care plan reviews for children who attend for longer than six months.

The service could explore the topic of restraint further in the behaviour management policy to We spoke about reviewing the recruitment documentation to add information about any actions taken as a result of checks, for example if a reference was returned with incomplete information what further information was sought to ensure children's safety.

The service could further develop how they share their policies and procedures for example using their website so that families have access to the current version at all times.

We discussed checking all applicants against the SSSC register to ensure that no concerns have been submitted by organisations for people whether they have been registered before or not.

We spoke about reviewing the policies and procedures to show how appropriate physical reassurance can be given to children.

The service said they planned to liaise with SSSC about their staff eligibility to join the register and would put plans in place to ensure that they complied with timescales and developed appropriate training support for staff.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
8 Jan 2014	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment Not assessed Staffing 6 - Excellent Management and leadership 6 - Excellent
1 Mar 2011	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership Not assessed
26 Mar 2009	Announced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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