



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

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

Care Standards Act 2000

Inspection Report

Cariad Fostering Ltd

Pencoed

Type of Inspection – Focused

Dates of inspection – Wednesday, 11 May, Tuesday 17 May, Wednesday 18 May, and
Wednesday 25 May 2016

Date of publication – Thursday, 18 August 2016

Welsh Government © Crown copyright 2016.

You may use and re-use the information featured in this publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government License. You can view the Open Government License, on the National Archives website or you can write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk You must reproduce our material accurately and not use it in a misleading context.

Summary

About the service

Cariad Fostering Limited was registered as an independent fostering agency in February 2009. The agency is based in an office in the Sony UK centre, on the Pencoed Technology Park, on the outskirts of Bridgend, near to the M4. The day to day running of the agency is managed by Susan Richardson who is the registered manager and one of the company directors and is suitably qualified as a social worker with many years of experience of managing and working in a fostering agency. The other company director Yvonne Krip is also the responsible individual and is integral to the operation of the agency as the office/finance manager. Cariad is a small agency with eighteen approved foster carers at the time of the inspection. The agency provides a range of services for 'looked after' children between the ages of 0-18 years with twelve children in placement. The agency can provide forty-eight placements. The reason why the placement levels are low is because many of the children and young people in placements are solo placements because of their particular needs.

What type of inspection was carried out?

We (CSSIW) undertook an announced inspection which focussed on the quality of life for children and young people placed with Cariad fostering. We based our findings on:

- Talking to staff, the registered manager and the responsible individual
- Meeting with three foster carers and the young people in placement in their homes
- Examination of three foster carers and five children's personal records
- Examination of three foster panel minutes
- Examination of the self assessment of service statement (SASS) and annual data collection (ADC) and the last review of quality of care report completed in February 2016

What does the service do well?

- The agency is small and staff have an in depth knowledge of the foster carers and children in placement.
- Foster carers we spoke with were highly complimentary of the support they received from the agency, which also included out of hours, and said that staff went the 'extra mile' to support them and the young people in placement
- Matching is a high priority and although the agency has a number of vacancies, some would not be filled because it would not be in the best interest of children that were already placed, to have children placed alongside them. Many of the children were in solo placements because of their particular needs, which was not always supported by the local authority
- The agency provided stable placements and promoted permanency for the young people placed

What has improved since the last inspection?

The quality of training had improved with trainers with particular expertise being used, rather than general training companies and additional panel training had been undertaken

What needs to be done to improve the service?

No areas of non-compliance were reported

Quality Of Life

Overall, we (CSSIW) found that the welfare and needs of young people is central to the care which is provided at Cariad fostering agency. The child centred approach by managers and staff promotes the emotional and physical well being of the children and young people in placement.

Children have a voice and are encouraged to speak up. We found that very good arrangements were in place for ensuring that young people were listened to. The agency actively sought the opinions of young people and carers as part of the foster carer's annual review which gave them an opportunity to voice their views on the care provided. Young people we spoke with said that they spoke frequently with the supervising social workers (SSW's) and the registered manager, who were well known to them. Records of fortnightly supervision visits to foster carers by their SSW's were seen to include aspects of the voice of the child. The registered manager and staff were seen to advocate on behalf of the young people, ensuring that their voices were heard at Looked after Children (LAC) reviews and at Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS) meetings. We saw feedback from a local authority team manager who commented '*I have never experienced an independent fostering provider to advocate so strongly for their carers. It is clear that the agency value their foster carers and children highly.*'

Children are encouraged to achieve educationally as education is viewed as important by the agency and foster carers are given clear expectations about their roles in promoting the educational attainment of young people. This included helping children and young people to develop self-esteem and build positive relationships with schools. Foster carers we spoke with told us of positive outcomes for children as a result of them being referred for specialist services, such as speech therapy. The agency had sourced and paid for teachers to provide home tuition for young people who had significant educational delay.

Children experience warmth, attachment and belonging. We observed children and young people interacting with their foster carers on the home visits we undertook and saw that children and young people were happy, settled and had relationships with their foster carers which were nurturing and caring. We saw a quote from one young person to their foster carer on a mother's day message '*You have supported me so much this year and encouraged me to be the best person I can be. You've taught me to respect and care for others and to always help someone in a time of need. I wouldn't be the person I am today if it wasn't for you. You are my rock.*'

Children and young people are active, positively occupied and stimulated because the agency promotes access to a range of activities which promote their overall health and wellbeing. We saw that young people had a sense of belonging to the agency and had been involved in lots of activities provided by the agency e.g. 'fun' days during the school holidays, BBQ's, trips to the cinema, play centres, ice skating and Christmas parties. We saw evidence that young people were very involved in family activities and able to pursue their individual interests with support from their foster carers. These included several sports clubs, St John's Ambulance and cadets. We were told about several sporting achievements that young people had achieved, which included one young person being the current British under 14 Horse Vaulting Champion, which was an

activity the young person had become involved in since being placed with her foster carer.

Children remain healthy because their needs are anticipated because foster carers are provided with good information about young people's health needs and are given clear information about how these should be addressed. Young people had access to health care as required and were supported to attend any health related appointments. The health care needs of young people were closely monitored by the agency and action taken to address these and to promote healthy living.

Young people remain in control because they are supported with difficult feelings and are helped to develop coping strategies. Several children and young people placed with Cariad had suffered recent traumatic events in their lives involving their birth families and had been supported through painful processes, by their foster carers and the staff and manager. In one example the manager had been undertaking direct life story work and identified the method the young person wanted to use, to support them to express their feelings.

Quality Of Staffing

We did not look at the quality of staffing in detail on this occasion because the inspection focussed on the quality of life for children and young people. However, discussion with foster carers evidenced that they feel confident in the advice and support they receive because staff are competent, experienced and knowledgeable and strive to make a positive difference to the outcomes for looked after children and young people. We will look at this theme in more detail at future inspections.

Quality Of Leadership and Management

We did not look at the quality of leadership and management in detail on this occasion because the inspection focussed was on the quality of life for children and young people. However, discussions with foster carers and staff and records we saw, indicated that the agency provided effective management and leadership, which was robust and based on inclusivity, trust and openness. We will look at this theme in more detail at future inspections.

Quality Of The Carers

We did not look at the quality of the carers in detail on this occasion because the inspection focussed was on the quality of life for children and young people. However, discussions with foster carers and staff and records we saw indicated that the agency had approved carers who provided a nurturing and caring environment where young people thrived. We will look at this theme in more detail at future inspections.

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.