

# Inspection Report Adult Placement Agency

19 May 2022



## Positive Futures – Families Matter Shared Lives Service

Type of service: Adult Placement Agency  
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Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care

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## 1.0 Service information

<b>Organisation/Registered Provider:</b> Positive Futures	<b>Registered Manager:</b> Ms Alison Milford
<b>Responsible Individual:</b> Ms Agnes Lunny	<b>Date registered:</b> 29 June2021
<b>Person in charge at the time of inspection:</b> Ms Alison Milford	
<b>Brief description of the accommodation/how the service operates:</b> Families Matter Shared Lives Service offers people with a learning disability, acquired brain injury or autistic spectrum condition short breaks or longer stays with approved individuals or families (known as Shared Lives Carers).  The agency has placed 24 people supported by 43 Adult Placement Carers.	

## 2.0 Inspection summary

An announced inspection was undertaken on 19 May 2022 between 09.15 a.m. and 11.30 a.m. conducted by the care inspector. This inspection focused on carer recruitment and induction, adult safeguarding, notifications, complaints, whistleblowing, deprivation of liberty safeguards DoLS, the involvement of those supported, monthly quality monitoring, Dysphasia and Covid-19 guidance.

It was good to note a number of compliments received by the agency, some of which include:

- “I would not get through life without Positive Futures.”
- “I’m well supported in my carer’s role.”
- “A really good level of support.”
- “A good support, we can call them at anytime”

Good practice was identified in relation to the involvement of those supported, Covid-19 and quality monitoring arrangements. There were good governance and management arrangements in place. Carers we spoke with demonstrated effective caring values and a desire to provide those supported with good quality, personalised care. Carers knew the choices and preferences of those people supported well, and benefited from a well led service. There was a clear leadership and management structure in place which helped to ensure carers were clear about their role and responsibilities. The agency was well organised and had a range of systems in place to ensure its function and to support effective communication.

The inspector would like to thank the manager, staff, those supported and APA carers for their support and feedback during the inspection.

### 3.0 How we inspect

RQIA's inspections form part of our ongoing assessment of the quality of services. Our reports reflect how they were performing at the time of our inspection, highlighting both good practice and any areas for improvement. It is the responsibility of the service provider to ensure compliance with legislation, standards and best practice, and to address any deficits identified during our inspections.

As a public-sector body, RQIA has a duty to respect, protect and fulfil the rights that people have under the Human Rights Act 1998 when carrying out our functions. In our inspections of adult placement agencies, we are committed to ensuring that the rights of people who receive services are protected. This means we will seek assurances from providers that they take all reasonable steps to promote peoples' rights. Users of adult placement agencies have the right to expect their dignity and privacy to be respected and to have their independence and autonomy promoted. They should also experience the choices and freedoms associated with any person living in their own home.

Having reviewed the model *"We Matter" Adult Learning Disability Model for NI 2020*, the Vision states, 'We want individuals with a learning disability to be respected and empowered to lead a full and healthy life in their community'.

RQIA shares this vision and want to review the support individuals are offered to make choices and decisions in their life that enable them to develop and to live a safe, active and valued life. RQIA will review how service users are respected and empowered to lead a full and healthy life in the community and are supported to make choices and decisions that enables them to develop, and live safe, active and valued lives.

Our reports reflect how services were performing at the time of our inspection, highlighting both good practice and any areas for improvement. It is the responsibility of the service provider to ensure compliance with legislation, standards and best practice, and to address any deficits identified during our inspections.

The inspection focused on:

- consultation with the those supported, the APA carers and the agency manager to find out their views on the service
- reviewing a range of relevant documents, policies and procedures relating to the agency's governance and management arrangements.

### 4.0 What people told us about the service?

We spoke with a selection of APA carers prior to the inspection. Information was provided to APA carers and those supported on how they could give feedback on the quality of service provided and this included questionnaires. A number of questionnaires were returned in which people stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service provided. Carers' outcomes were consistently good, and their feedback confirmed this. We also had the opportunity to meet a person supported at the agency office during this inspection and have included the comments received:

- "Good services"
- "I enjoy my placement and the activities."

- “No complaints but would speak to the manager.”
- “Excellent Carers.”
- “I have choice over my activities.”
- “They listen to me and support me well.”

#### **Carer comments:**

- “All the staff are so supportive.”
- “I would have been lost without positive futures.”
- “Training was very good, you do need to do the training.”
- “They would visit a lot, the staff were here a few days ago.”
- “I do know how to raise any concerns or complaints.”
- “I could not have done without them, they have always been there to support me and back me up in any way.”
- “Xxxx is just a loved member of my family.”
- “Xxxx feels loved and valued, part of our family, she has security, she loves that positive futures do little events, that she is known, has interactions with other people and she loves the attention they give her”.
- “Regular contact in person and by phone calls, they always keep me informed, great communication, they make me feel valued. The proactive contact rather than reactive contact is appreciated. They take the time to get to know the young adult.”
- “I think they are brilliant, they set a very high bar for other services. Positive future staff kept in regular contact during Covid-19. Their responsiveness is very good, even if I can’t get someone, because they are at a meeting or something they will get back to me, I don’t need to keep trying.”
- “Last training was remote fire and first aid, smoke alarms were checked in my home and I was asked if I needed a new fire blanket, fire training was online and this was grand”.
- “I feel the team at positive futures have been very flexible in regards to training, by having this online or on a one to one basis.”
- “Regular contact in person and by phone calls, they always keep me informed, great communication, they make me feel valued. The proactive contact rather than reactive contact is appreciated. “
- “They couldn’t treat her sister any better, they treat her like family, they are funny, they understand her and have craic and banter with her, and they are brilliant. They will always stand up when you need them. I have been involved with them for about 20 years.”
- “I know who to contact if I had any concerns but I never had any reason. I couldn’t do without them.”
- “You couldn’t get any better, if I gave a list of requirements of a perfect service they go beyond even that.”
- “My sister has a glow about her, they don’t just like her, and she is loved by them I can relax and know that my sister is safe.”
- “They sat with my sister when she was in hospital to give me a chance to have some sleep.”
- “It’s not just a job for them, they do it for love.”
- “Xxxxx was treated like one of the family, he was taught skills he never had before, he fitted into my home wel.l”
- “Excellent staff, very professional. They had always come back to me when I raised any questions.”
- “I know, how to raise concerns.”
- “They visit every couple of months, but will get a text or phone call every month.”
- “100% very professional, very sympathetic, great at listening, lot of empathy, excellent service staff.”

- “Before covid-19 there was a lot of training, recently completed a yearly review with updates within the last 6 weeks. The training is essential.”

#### Questionnaire Comments:

- “Family matters carers and staff are my lifeline. They arrange care for my \*\*\*\*\* and go over and beyond.”
- “My carers are very good to me and take me out everywhere”
- “I’m part of the family and I like them.”
- “The supported offered by staff is outstanding, nothing is too much hassle”
- “I have been unwell and they have helped get \*\*\*\* an emergency placement and support me.”
- “Shared lives is a great service and the staff are great.”
- “Shared lives is a great support to my family and they are very helpful and always willing to go out of the way, to listen and understand our needs in a compassionate manner.”
- “I appreciate the social workers help that are just a phone call away.”
- “I am kept informed and know how to make a complaint.”
- “The social worker treats us with respect.”
- “Maybe payments can be reviewed.”
- “We continue to be supported by the fantastic team at positive futures and appreciate them very much.”
- “The short term carers provide excellent care to my brother.”
- “We are thankful for the service and it has given my daughter new experiences and time away from me to be independent.”
- “She enjoys cooking with the respite carers and will try exciting things.”
- “Family matters provide and excellent service. The staff are very supportive.”

## 5.0 The inspection

### 5.1 What has this service done to meet any areas for improvement identified at or since last inspection?

The last inspection to Positive Futures Families Matter Shared Lives Service was undertaken on 13 May 2021 by a care inspector; no areas for improvement were identified.

## 5.2 Inspection findings

### 5.2.1 What are the systems in place for identifying and addressing risks?

The agency’s provision for the welfare, care and protection of service users was reviewed. The organisation’s policy and procedures were reflective of the Department of Health’s (DOH) regional policy ‘Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership’ July 2015 and clearly outlined the procedure for staff in reporting concerns. The organisation had an identified Adult Safeguarding Champion (ASC). The ASC had produced their annual safeguarding report which was forwarded to RQIA and was satisfactory.

Discussions with the manager demonstrated that they were knowledgeable in matters relating to adult safeguarding, the role of the ASC and the process for reporting adult safeguarding concerns.

It was noted that carers were required to complete adult safeguarding training during their induction programme and updates thereafter in line with legislation and draft standards.

The manager indicated that they and the carers had a clear understanding of their responsibility in identifying and reporting any actual or suspected incidences of abuse. They could describe their role in relation to reporting poor practice and their understanding of the agency's policy and procedure with regard to whistleblowing.

The agency had a system for retaining a record of referrals made to the HSCT in relation to adult safeguarding. Records viewed and discussions with the manager indicated that no adult safeguarding referrals have been made since the last inspection.

Carers who spoke to us stated that they had no concerns regarding the safety of those supported; they described how they could speak to agency staff if they had any concerns in relation to safety or the care being provided. The agency has provided those supported and carers with information in relation to keeping those supported safe and the details of the process for reporting any concerns.

There were systems in place to ensure that notifiable events were investigated and reported to RQIA or other relevant bodies appropriately. It was noted that incidents are managed in accordance with the agency's policy and procedures.

Carers were provided with training appropriate to the requirements of their role. Review of the training records identified that all training required was up to date.

Two people supported required the use of specialised equipment. Training had been provided and formed part of ongoing care reviews. The manager was aware of how to source training should any equipment be required in the future.

Agency staff had completed Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards DoLS training appropriate to their job roles. Three of the people supported were subject to DoLS and all the required documentation was in place and reviewed. The manager confirmed that APA carer DoLS awareness training will be assessed and will be reviewed during the next inspection.

The manager and staff demonstrated that they had an understanding that those supported who lack capacity to make decisions about aspects of their care and treatment have rights as outlined in the Mental Capacity Act MCA. The MCA requires that, as far as possible, those supported make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When they lack mental capacity to take particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible. MCA training had been completed by all carers as part of their induction programme.

### **5.2.2 What are the systems in place to ensure robust Carer recruitment?**

Records evidenced that recruitment was completed in conjunction with the organisation's Human Resources (HR) department. The review of the agency's recruitment records confirmed that recruitment was managed in accordance with the Regulations and Minimum Standards. The records reviewed evidenced that criminal record checks (Access NI) had been completed for all current Carers.

### 5.2.3 People supported involvement.

A review of the care records of those supported care records and through discussions with the manager and carers, it was positive to note that service users had an active input into planning their care, thus placing them at the centre of care. The care plans contained details about the individual's likes and dislikes and the level of support required, and this assisted the agency and carers to support people in making daily choices and decisions.

There were enough carers to make sure people received the support they needed, including facilitating their chosen activities.

RQIA was satisfied that care was person-centred and delivered in a way that promoted dignity, privacy and human rights. Care plans were person centred and ensured the person was involved in the development and review of their plan as far as possible. The agency completed an annual quality review with those supported and results show positive outcomes, we have noted some of the comments received:

- “Good all is good.”
- “I have privacy and can do things on my own.”
- “I would tell my social worker if I was unhappy.”
- “We go out a lot spending time together.”
- “I’m happy with Xxxx and Xxxx.”
- “They always listen to me and I can talk to them about anything.”
- “I like living with Xxxx and Xxxx.”
- “They always ask my view.”
- “It’s my family.”
- “Xxxxxx lets me decide about my meals.”

### 5.2.4 What are the arrangements for the induction of Carers?

The manager confirmed that an induction programme was available for newly recruited carers. This document was reviewed and found to comprehensively meet the induction requirements in line with regulations and the draft standards.

### 5.2.5 What are the arrangements to ensure robust managerial oversight and governance?

There were monitoring arrangements in place in compliance with regulations and draft standards. Records reviewed showed that monitoring visits were undertaken on a regular basis. This was where an agency staff member visited a carer's home when the person supported was present, so that daily tasks could be observed and it verified that carers were meeting the required standards. Reports relating to the agency's monitoring visits were reviewed and found to be robust.

The provider had ensured that the quality assurance systems in place were effectively and positively impacting the quality of the service received by those supported.

The provider had ensured that the quality assurance systems in place were effectively and positively impacting the quality of the service received by those supported. The service delivered was regularly reviewed through a range of internal audits and there was an annual satisfaction survey where feedback from people supported and their carers was sought. A review of the feedback indicated a high level of satisfaction.

We found an effective annual quality assurance survey took place and reviewed the results, outcomes were satisfactory. The service delivered had also been regularly reviewed through a range of internal audits. The provider regularly sought a good range of feedback from people supported and their carers which was consistently positive. We noted some of the comments received from the annual quality survey: (Regulation 25.)

### **Those Supported:**

- “Love everything about living with \*\*\*\* and family.”
- “\*\*\*\* make me happy & I like the area I live in... they are helpful, they help me with problems and are easy to talk to.”
- “I can talk to any of them about anything- they always listen to me”
- “I do loads of stuff with them, which is all so fun. I really like going to McDonald’s, watching movies, cooking, reading & colouring.”
- “I love living here.”

### **Adult Placement Carer/Carer feedback:**

- “I think it was supportive to have the service call over e.g. with Christmas craft and, when able, organising suitable socially distanced activities. While I haven't been able to attend a zoom coffee morning, I think they were a great idea for full time carers to connect during lock down.”
- “The service was very supportive through phone calls, e-mails & delivering PPE to our home when placements started, and bringing Easter and Christmas gifts.”
- “Throughout the lock down we also received positive e-mails and the Take 5 videos were good which\*\* was part of.”
- “I wouldn’t have got through life without Positive Futures.”

### **Social worker feedback:**

- “Social Worker has provided invaluable support to \*\* and \*\* during a very difficult time between the pandemic . Positive Futures is a great support to the family, who know they can call Positive Futures anytime to discuss concerns and who will work with the Trust to try resolve these concerns.”

## **5.2.6 What Covid-19 arrangements were in place to support carers?**

It was established that carers were made aware of covid-19 plans in line with good practice. The agency had provided written guidance in relation to the use of personal protective Equipment (PPE) which was also available in easy read format.

The agency had also shared updated guidance and good practice information relating to Covid-19 about infection prevention and control (IPC) and the safe storage and disposal of PPE.

The agency completed a health and wellbeing audit with carers post Covid -19 and we have noted some of the comments received:

- “Positive futures are a great support to me, they are only a phone call away if I need anything.”
- “Good phone contact and updates regarding Covid-19.”
- “I’m very happy with the service and the support.”
- “Group training allows carers to catch up.”
- “Xxxxxx is very good to ring us to see how we are keeping.”
- “We like when they come to the house.”

### 5.2.7 Are their arrangements in place for carer training? What are the arrangements?

Carers consulted with prior to the inspection spoke positively about the variety and level of training they had received to enable them to fulfil the duties and responsibilities of their role. Carers stated that training was of a good standard. A review of a sample of staff training records concluded that carers had received mandatory and other training relevant to their roles and responsibilities throughout 2021 and 2022.

The manager confirmed that the agency was reviewing DoLS and Dysphagia/swallowing awareness training for carers; this will be reviewed during the next inspection.

We noted some of the comments received following carers training events:

- “Good subject.”
- “Well explained.”
- “First class social worker.”
- “Good videos shown.”
- “Always good to recap.”
- “Slides were excellent.”
- “Training was very useful.”
- “Covered all aspects of health and safety in the home.”
- “Better awareness.”

### 5.2.8 Is there a system in place for identifying service users Dysphagia needs in partnership with the Speech and Language Therapist (SALT)?

The manager confirmed that the agency had received a number of specific recommendations from Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) in relation to current service users. Records in place were reviewed and were satisfactory. The manager confirmed that Dysphagia/swallowing awareness training will be reviewed with carers.

## 6.0 Conclusion

Based on the inspection findings and discussions held, RQIA was satisfied that this agency was providing services in a safe, effective, caring and compassionate manner and that the service was well led by the manager/management team.

This inspection resulted in no areas for improvement being identified. Findings of the inspection were discussed with Ms Alison Milford and other staff as part of the inspection process and can be found in the main body of the report.



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