

Adult Placement Agency Inspection Report 28 February 2017



Positive Futures Families Matter Shared Lives Service

Type of service: Adult Placement Agency
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Tel no: 02890741271
Inspector: Rhonda Simms

www.rqia.org.uk

Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care

1.0 Summary

An announced inspection of Positive Futures Families Matter Shared Lives Service took place on 28 February 2017 from 9.45 to 15.45.

The inspection sought to assess progress with any issues raised during and since the last care inspection and to determine if the agency was delivering safe, effective and compassionate care and if the service was well led.

Is care safe?

During the inspection the inspector found a range of evidence to indicate that the agency was delivering safe care. The agency maintains a stable provision of appropriately trained and supported carers who understand the needs of the people they support. The arrangements to protect people supported include the provision of safeguarding training which reflects the most up to date regional guidance. There are established systems of person centred assessment, and review of needs, wishes, and risks which contribute to the safety of care delivered to people supported. There were no recommendations or requirements made as a result of the inspection.

Is care effective?

During the inspection the inspector found a range of evidence to indicate that the agency was delivering effective care. The agency has systems in place to ensure an effective response to the assessed needs of people supported. People supported are involved in the development of care and support plans which are reviewed regularly with HSC Trust professionals. The quality monitoring arrangements include consultations with people supported, their representatives and carers, and provide a system of audit and service improvement. The agency maintains effective communication with people supported, relatives and key stakeholders including the HSC Trust. The inspector received feedback which indicated that service provision had resulted in positive outcomes in the lives of people supported. There were no recommendations or requirements made as a result of the inspection.

Is care compassionate?

During the inspection the inspector received feedback and found evidence which indicated that the dignity and promotion of independence of people supported are upheld through service delivery. There was evidence of the agency's maintenance of systems to ascertain the wishes and feelings of people supported, and involve them in decision making. There were no recommendations or requirements made as a result of the inspection.

Is the service well led?

During the inspection the agency was found to be delivering a well led service where clear management and governance systems are maintained to meet the needs of people supported. The inspector found that carers are aware of their roles, responsibility and accountability within the organisational structure. There are effective working relationships with key stakeholders including people supported, relatives, carers and the HSC Trust. There were no recommendations or requirements made as a result of the inspection.

This inspection was underpinned by The Adult Placement Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007.

1.1 Inspection outcome

	Requirements	Recommendations
Total number of requirements and recommendations made at this inspection	0	0

This inspection resulted in no requirements or recommendations being made. Findings of the inspection were discussed with Elizabeth Palmer, registered manager, as part of the inspection process and can be found in the main body of the report.

1.2 Actions/enforcement taken following the most recent care inspection

There were no further actions required to be taken following the most recent inspection.

2.0 Service details

Registered organisation/registered person: Positive Futures/Ms Agnes Philomena Lunny	Registered manager: Mrs Elizabeth Anne Palmer
Person in charge of the home at the time of inspection: Mrs Elizabeth Anne Palmer	Date manager registered: 01/12/2010

3.0 Methods/processes

Prior to inspection the following records were analysed:

- Previous inspection report
- Records of notifiable incidents
- Correspondence with RQIA.

During the inspection the inspector spoke with the registered manager, the Families Services Manager, and one Families Matter Shared Lives social worker. Prior to the inspection the inspector spoke to one HSC Trust professional. As part of the inspection the User Consultation Officer (UCO) spoke with two carers and two relatives, by telephone, on 13 March 2017 to obtain their views of the service provided by Positive Futures.

As part of the inspection and at the request of the inspector, questionnaires were distributed for completion by Families Matter Shared Lives carers; seven were returned. At the request of the inspector, questionnaires were distributed for completion by people supported and/or their representatives; two were returned.

Feedback received by the inspector and the user consultation officer during the inspection process is included throughout this report.

The following records were provided to the inspector during the inspection:

- Recruitment and Assessment of Shared Lives Carer Policy 2015
- Pre-approval checks
- Shared Lives carers' agreements
- Placement agreements
- Post approval induction for carers
- Referral matching and introduction policy and procedure 2015
- Records relating to content of training, attendance at training, training evaluations and workbooks
- Records of monitoring visits undertaken by Families Matter Shared Lives social workers
- Adult safeguarding policy and procedure 2016
- Incident reports including learning from incidents
- Incident management policy
- Examples of record keeping maintained by the agency
- Risk assessments
- Risk management policy 2016
- Policy on restrictive practice 2014
- Review records of care provided
- Carer household health and safety inspection reports and checks
- Team meeting minutes
- How Happy Are You people supported feedback forms
- Carer consultation records
- Families Matter Shared Lives Newsletters
- Shared Lives carers' handbook 2017
- Handbook for people supported 2017
- Quality monitoring visit reports
- Corporate Plan 2014-17
- Service managers Annual objectives
- Person Centred Plans for people supported
- Policy on record keeping and confidentiality
- Statement of Purpose 2016
- Annual Quality Review 2016-17
- Challenging bad practice policy
- Records of meetings with HSC Trust
- Whistleblowing policy and procedure
- Panel minutes
- Support group records
- Sample carer home file
- Risk register
- Complaints leaflets
- Complaints return

4.0 The inspection

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 service is operated by Elizabeth Palmer, registered manager, and two social workers.

Shared Lives Carers provide weekend or short term planned support in order to provide existing carers with a short break (respite) and to provide individuals with opportunities to have new experiences. Long term placements are provided when an adult requires long term accommodation, similar to a fostering arrangement.

The agency has currently placed 22 adults within 27 placements. Within this report, adults in receipt of a service from the agency will be referred to as 'people supported', in accordance with their wishes.

4.1 Review of requirements and recommendations from the most recent inspection dated 24 February 2016

The most recent inspection of the agency was an announced care inspection dated 24 February 2016. There were no requirements or recommendations made as a result of this inspection.

4.2 Is care safe?

During the inspection arrangements for the recruitment of carers were reviewed by the inspector. The agency has a policy in place relating to the recruitment and assessment of carers. The inspector found that agency social workers ensure that appropriate pre-approval checks are completed in accordance with regulations; an example of the completed checklist used was seen by the inspector. The inspector saw carer agreements completed by all carers prior to the commencement of an adult placement.

The agency has in place a structured induction programme for carers which is implemented in accordance with the agency's referral, matching and introduction policy and procedure. The inspector saw a range of post approval training evaluation forms completed by carers. The inspector was advised that evaluation forms completed by carers in the induction process form the basis of discussion and provision of information as appropriate to carers. Induction training includes safeguarding, health and safety, first aid, medication management, and information specific to the person who will be supported. The inspector saw a sample information handbook and home file provided to all carers, which includes key policies and procedures and support contact information for inside and outside of business hours.

The UCO was advised that introductions between the people supported and carers are carried out over a period of time prior to the placement commencing. The relatives and social workers were also included in these meetings to ensure that everyone involved was satisfied with the match.

The inspector was advised that the agency does not provide placements at short notice or in emergencies, unless the carer has already been inducted and matched to provide care for the person requiring support.

The registered manager discussed the arrangements for the provision of training to carers. The inspector was advised, and saw evidence to indicate the agency provides training sessions in a format suitable to meet the needs of carers. Areas covered by training include safeguarding, managing money, medication management, human rights, positive behaviour, health and safety, moving and handling, infection control, and sharing information.

The inspector viewed a range of workbooks and evaluation questionnaires completed by carers after training, which enable the agency to evaluate the effectiveness of training sessions. The inspector was provided with information packs which detailed all areas presented to carers at training. It was noted that the carer's commitment to taking part in training is stated in the carer placement agreement.

The UCO was advised that the induction for carers was very detailed and that they were provided with information regarding the service by the agency. The carers interviewed by the UCO confirmed that training takes place both as part of their induction and on a regular basis. Carers indicated to the UCO that training was of a high quality and the agency provides a choice of locations, dates and times to suit the carers. Examples of training received by the carers included first aid, safeguarding, home safety and financial management. The UCO was also informed that carers have received additional training to suit the needs of the person supported.

The agency has in place a system to ensure that all carers receive appropriate placement monitoring visits and that records are retained. The inspector was provided with a range of completed placement monitoring visit reports, including announced and unannounced visits to carers. Carers providing long term placements receive three monitoring visits each year, one of which is unannounced; carers providing short term placements receive two monitoring visits each year, one of which is unannounced. The inspector noted that a range of subjects are covered by monitoring reports, including areas which could impact on the provision of safe care to people supported.

The UCO was informed that unannounced monitoring visits are carried out on a regular basis by the agency and, when possible, include the person supported to gain their views of the placement. The UCO was also informed that the agency regularly contacts the relatives to ensure their satisfaction with the placement.

The agency's provision for the welfare, care and protection of people supported was examined by the inspector. The inspector viewed a policy maintained by the agency in relation to the safeguarding of adults, which reflects most up to date guidance. Safeguarding training information and hand-outs provided to carers and seen by the inspector reflect the regional guidance and 'Adult Safeguarding Operational Procedures' September 2016. The inspector was advised that carers receive safeguarding as part of induction and on an ongoing basis to reflect best practice; records confirmed this. Carers' understanding of safeguarding training is assessed by evaluation and analysis of training events; records of responses are maintained.

The inspector noted that safeguarding issues are discussed and recorded as part of monitoring visits and review meetings. The agency has appointed a safeguarding champion within the senior management team. The information pack provided to carers includes details of how to contact the agency social worker, or report concerns directly to the HSC Trust, including out of hours arrangements.

The registered manager and agency social worker discussed two safeguarding incidents, the agency's response and co working arrangements with the HSC Trust. Records reviewed by the inspector indicated that safeguarding concerns were appropriately responded to and plans agreed with the HSC Trust were implemented.

The inspector examined the safety of the agency’s arrangements to identify and manage risk to people supported. The agency maintains a risk management policy, positive behaviour management policy and restrictive practice policy. The inspector examined appropriate risk assessments completed with individual people supported in conjunction with the HSC Trust, which are regularly evaluated and reviewed. It was noted by the inspector that human rights considerations are included in risk assessments, particularly where a restrictive practice is indicated. Records of monitoring visits and review meetings seen by the inspector included areas of risk management, including health and safety aspects of the carer’s home environment.

Comments made by carers and relatives:

- ‘No concerns at all.’
- ‘They made a great match as my XXX and the carers have similar interests and get on so well together.’
- ‘There’s good communication but it’s not overkill.’
- ‘I’m very impressed.’

Of questionnaires returned by carers, four were very satisfied’ that care is safe and three were ‘satisfied’. Of questionnaires returned by people supported/relatives, two were ‘very satisfied’ that care is safe.

Areas for improvement

No areas for improvement were identified during the inspection.

Number of requirements	0	Number of recommendations	0
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4.3 Is care effective?

The agency’s arrangements for appropriately assessing and meeting the needs of people who use the service were examined during the inspection. The full nature and range of service provision is laid out in the Statement of Purpose (2016), Carer Handbook (2017) and Handbook for People we Support (2017).

The inspector reviewed a range of care plans for people supported, known as the ‘Person Centred Care Plan’, and risk assessments. The registered manager and agency social worker informed the inspector that care plans and risk assessments are developed with people supported and their relatives in conjunction with referral information provided by the HSC Trust referring social worker. Referral forms seen by the inspector contained the wishes of the person supported/their relative to avail of an adult placement. The inspector noted that care plans included the wishes and signatures of people supported and /or their relative.

The inspector was provided with placement agreements for people supported which provide details of the placement offered. Records maintained by agency social workers outlined arrangements for the carer and person supported to participate in a series of introductory meetings, as appropriate.

Records and feedback from the registered manager and agency social worker indicated that reviews of care and support plans take place three months after the commencement of a placement, and then annually, or if indicated by a change in circumstances. Records indicated that Trust key worker, person supported, relative and adult placement carer are invited to attend the review. The views of people supported are captured for the review by the completion of the 'How Happy are You' questionnaire, produced in an appropriate format. The inspector noted that care plans were updated accordingly in response to changes in the needs or wishes of people supported, and carers advised in writing.

The UCO was advised that prior to a placement commencing the carer was provided with a risk assessment and care plan regarding the needs of the person supported and the agency amends the information as and when required. The UCO was advised that multi-disciplinary reviews take place annually to discuss the placement. Relatives and carers attend the meeting and the person supported is given the opportunity to attend if they wish to do so. If appropriate, the social worker meets separately with the person supported to obtain their views.

The inspector examined a range of records maintained by agency social work staff in accordance with agency policy, legislation and standards. It was noted that records are clear, professionally written and include contribution from people supported.

The agency maintains a system of quality monitoring to oversee, audit and review the effectiveness and quality of care delivered to people supported. The inspector reviewed the Annual Quality Review 2016-17 which included the views of people supported, their relatives, adult placement carers, and referring professionals. Progress from areas for action noted on the quality review report of 2015-16 was commented on, analysis of incidents included, and a service improvement plan for the coming year was set out. The inspector noted that the agency had received positive feedback from those consulted with.

The agency maintains a policy on the monitoring and review arrangements of adult placements, and these arrangements are set out in information handbooks for people supported and carers. Quality monitoring of the placement is undertaken on a regular basis by agency social workers, on announced and unannounced basis; records of these visits were reviewed by the inspector. The views of people supported are maintained via monitoring records, review records, the 'How Happy are You' evaluation, and annual satisfaction survey.

Records reviewed by the inspector provided examples of how the agency has responded to the views of people supported, including the use of advocacy services. A recent newsletter produced by the agency for people supported and their relatives provided contact details for a local advocacy service.

The inspector found that the agency has a range of systems in place to promote effective communication between people supported, relatives, adult placement carers and HSC Trust professionals. Methods of communication include: monitoring visits, review meetings, informal contact, carer group consultation, carer support events, training sessions and a regular newsletter. Information provided to carers and people supported/their relatives included guidance on who to contact with concerns or if advice is needed, how to make a complaint, and contact details for the Regional Emergency Social Work Service and RQIA.

The carers and relatives interviewed also informed the UCO about the good communication that takes place between the carers, relatives and the agency regarding the placement. Examples given of communication included holiday arrangements, handovers at the end of short term placements or any health concerns.

Examples of some of the comments made by the carers or relatives are listed below:

- ‘Grateful for the service. It’s my time to chill and I don’t need to worry about XXX.’
- ‘XXX comes back with a smile on her face.’
- ‘Everything’s going ok.’

The inspector found a range of examples of effective communication with HSC Trust professionals, including review meetings and contact records. The inspector was advised that HSC Trust keyworkers have a role in supporting people to express their views as part of the ‘How Happy are You’ survey. As part of the inspection, the inspector received positive feedback from an HSC Trust keyworker regarding the communication with the agency and the quality of care provided by the adult placement to a person supported.

Of questionnaires returned by carers, four were ‘very satisfied’ that care is effective and three were ‘satisfied’. Of questionnaires returned by people supported/their relatives, two were ‘very satisfied’ that care is effective.

Areas for improvement

No areas for improvement were identified during the inspection.

Number of requirements	0	Number of recommendations	0
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4.4 Is care compassionate?

The inspector found evidence to indicate that the culture and ethos of the agency support the values of dignity and respect, independence, rights, equality and diversity, choice and consent of people supported.

The agency maintains a policy in relation to record keeping, information security, and confidentiality; training records indicated that carers receive guidance on this aspect of the caring role. The agency produces a newsletter for carers which provided information on confidentiality in a user friendly format. The inspector saw records which indicated that agency social work staff recently considered confidentiality as part of a recent team meeting.

The agency’s values are outlined in key documents, including information guides for carers and people supported, and the carers’ handbook. Feedback received by the inspector as part of the inspection process from carers, relatives, and agency social work staff, indicated that the needs and wishes of people supported are central to service provision. Discussion with the registered manager and agency social worker indicated that people supported are treated with dignity and respect throughout the matching, introduction, and review processes.

The views of people supported are recorded through ‘How Happy are You’ forms, and reflected in reports of monitoring visits and placement views. A range of documents seen by the inspector contained the views of carers, including monitoring visit reports, review forms, carer and people supported consultation meeting minutes. The inspector was advised that HSC Trust professional key workers are involved in ascertaining and recording the views of people supported through completion of ‘How Happy are You’ forms. The agency provided positive feedback regarding the value of the role of HSC Trust professional key workers in facilitating people supported to express their views in this way.

Records seen by the inspector reflected examples of how the agency has worked to promote the equality and diversity of people supported; for example by maintaining processes where the views of people supported are central to service provision. The inspector received feedback and saw documentation which indicated that the consent of people supported is ascertained and valued appropriately; for example, when considering the shape or future of a placement.

The inspector found that the agency has a range of processes in place to support communication with carers, people supported and/or their relatives, in a manner which indicates their responses are listened to and valued. Records indicated that agency social workers have regular contact with carers, relatives, and people supported through announced and unannounced monitoring visits and review meetings. In addition, records indicated that agency social workers provide support to carers through support events, training sessions, and visits or phone calls when indicated. Discussion with the agency social worker showed that the agency is sensitive and responsive to the support needs of carers, relatives and people supported.

The inspector found that the agency has published a range of information in a format suitable to the needs of people supported, including an information handbook, annual evaluation survey, and contribution to the review in the form of the 'How Happy are You' form. The agency provided information to the inspector which showed how communication during training sessions has been provided in a manner which meets the needs of carers.

The agency has established and maintained systems to evaluate the quality of services provided, including; announced and unannounced placement monitoring visits, consultation with people supported and carers, quality monitoring visits undertaken by a senior manager and an annual evaluation survey. The inspector read the 'Annual Quality Review 2016-17' report, which included the views of a range of stakeholders including carers and people supported, progress on actions planned from the previous annual quality review, and service improvement plan going forward.

The UCO was informed by all of the carers and relatives interviewed that the people supported provide feedback regarding the placement to their reviews and monitoring visits. The method used depends on the wishes of the person supported.

No concerns regarding the care being provided to the person supported were raised with the UCO. Examples of some of the comments made by the carers or relatives are listed below:

- 'They treat XXX like one of their own and include her in all the family activities.'
- 'XXX looks forward all week to going.'
- 'XXX is made to feel welcome and joins in with what the family are doing.'

Areas for improvement

No areas for improvement were identified during the inspection.

Number of requirements	0	Number of recommendations	0
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4.5 Is the service well led?

The inspector examined management and governance systems in place to meet the needs of people supported. It was noted that the agency maintains a comprehensive range of policies and procedures which are reviewed at least every three years. Policies and procedures are maintained on an electronic system accessible to all agency social work staff, and relevant policies are included in a handbook provided to carer. The Statement of Purpose (2016), Carer Handbook (2017) and Handbook for People we Support (2017) are kept under review.

The agency maintains and implements policy relating to complaints and compliments. The inspector noted that no complaints were recorded during the reporting period of 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.

The inspector saw evidence of review of information with the aim of improving service quality for people supported at the agency. This includes the agency's governance of risk which includes appropriate policies and procedures, regular audit and learning from adverse incidents including safeguarding incidents and incidents notifiable to RQIA.

The management structure of the agency is clearly defined and was well understood by agency social work staff, carers, and people supported. The inspector found that carers were informed of their responsibilities and understood their roles; this was evidence through carers written comments to the agency, through information provided to the UCO and feedback from RQIA questionnaires. Written and verbal guides to roles and responsibilities have been made available to carers through the carers' handbook, the newsletter, training sessions, monitoring visits. The inspector was advised by agency social work staff that carers are encouraged to contact them for advice and guidance at any time. The inspector noted that the agency had recorded comments from carers and relatives who indicated that good support had been available from agency social work staff.

All of the relatives and carers who spoke with the UCO confirmed that they receive good support from the APA's team of staff as well as the social worker of the person supported. Regular communication was confirmed, either through home visits or phone calls to ensure that there were no concerns regarding the placement.

All were aware of whom they should they contact if they had any concerns regarding the placement and were aware of the out of hours support available to them.

Examples of some of the comments made by the carers or relatives are listed below:

- 'Positive Futures are our first point of call if we need help.'
- 'Great support from the agency when needed.'
- 'It's good to meet up with other carers at training days or support group meetings.'

Feedback provided to the inspector indicated that there are effective collaborative working relationships with key stakeholders, including the HSC Trust. An HSC Trust professional provided positive feedback to the inspector regarding their working relationship with the agency.

Of questionnaires returned by carers, four were 'very satisfied' that the service is well led. Of questionnaires returned by people supported, one was 'very satisfied' that the service is well led.

Areas for improvement

No areas for improvement were identified during the inspection.

Number of requirements	0	Number of recommendations	0
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5.0 Quality improvement plan

There were no issues identified during this inspection, and a QIP is neither required, nor included, as part of this inspection report.

It should be noted that this inspection report should not be regarded as a comprehensive review of all strengths and areas for improvement that exist in the service. The findings reported on are those which came to the attention of RQIA during the course of this inspection. The findings contained within this report do not exempt the registered provider from their responsibility for maintaining compliance with the regulations and standards.



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