



investing in children

## Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

### Foster Care Associates – Central Office

For the purpose of this re-evaluation I had the pleasure of meeting with Charlotte, Brioni, Kyla, Dylan, Brooke, Leighton, Nathan and Lily from the “We Foster to group” and Phil, Julie, Ben, Jolene, Emma, Paul and Julie from the young peoples forum. The young people are all actively involved in the development of Foster Care Associates. Children and young people continue to be central to the process of dialogue within the association.

This report will highlight and identify the positive partnerships that exist between the children and staff at Foster Care Associates – Central Office. Although FCA is continually expanding it ensures that it provides opportunities for dialogue to occur between children, young people and staff.

It is clear from my visits that children and young people play an active role and are encouraged to put forward their views, opinions and concerns to make changes to the service they receive.

### **Evidence of Dialogue and Change**

#### **“We Foster 2”**

The children and young people who foster approached FCA workers and told them that they wanted a group of their own, with FCA workers and other young people who foster. As a result of this dialogue the ‘We foster 2’ group was established for the over 8’s. With their being a group called ‘Little helpers’ for the under 8’s.

The children and young people told me that they have planning meetings where they talk about the placements they have and any problems they may have. Each meeting is based around an activity such as arts and crafts, the time together also allow for them plan what activities they wish to do as a group.

I asked the group to explain to me what changes they have made within the group since the last time they met with Investing in Children.

Dylan informed me **“I thought that not enough people were talking during the meetings so I said that we should change things and help each other to be more confident.”** Charlotte added **“We now have an activity at every meeting so it is not as boring and if we don’t like how the session is going we tell Jackie what changes we want to make and she helps us do them”**.

The group informed me of the work they have been involved in with Jackie to support the FCA panel to think about the feelings of the birth children when interviewing potential carers.

The children and young people devised a questionnaire to ask other birth children what questions they think the panel should ask. The questions that the children and young people devised are as a result of their personal experiences.

**“What would you do if your child and your foster child did not get along?”**

**“Have you talked to your children about the good and the bad things about fostering?”**

**“How would you cope with your child feeling like they had to share you?”**

**“What would you do if you really liked your foster child but your own kid and the foster kid didn’t get on at all?”**

Six volunteers from the ‘We Foster 2’ group met with the panel in order to support them change the interview process for potential carers. The children and young people I met with are very passionate about their group and want the views of birth children listened to. Foster Care Associates clearly are working with this group to create changes in the processes to ensure that birth children are recognised and have a voice. Jackie and her team create an environment where the children and young people feel safe and comfortable to engage with FCA staff in order to change their service to meet the needs of this particular group.

### **Young Peoples Forum**

I met with the members of the Young Peoples on a number of occasions. The group were very keen to inform me how they are listened to within the association. The aim of the forum is for children and young people to come together to discuss how they are feeling, speak with their friends about any concerns they have both with their placement and also the organisation as a whole. Julie highlighted **“when we meet if we have any problems with our foster carer or foster kids we get a letter through the post to fill in, that is different as we used to talk with workers about it first, we now talk to our friends, mention it to the workers and write it all down, its much easier to get what you want to say on paper first.”**

Paul informed that FCA is **“so different to any other foster care place. They actually care about you and take you places, they send out questionnaires to find out what activities you would like to take part in they treat you with respect and when your 17 and in foster care it’s important that people respect you.”**

I asked the group if they felt that Foster Care Associates provided them with the opportunity to express their views and opinions. Emma informed me **“they are great if you need anything they are always available for you to speak to. Like anything if you don’t get on with your foster parents, foster kids or even a social worker they always listen to you and it’s us as the young person who is in control of what is happening to you. This is so different to other foster care places I have been involved in.”**

All the young people I met with were very positive about Foster Care Associates – Central Office. It was evident during my visits that the children and young people feel they have the opportunity to participate in the direction of the association.

The children and young people I met with agree the content of this report. Therefore it is on their behalf that I have no hesitation in recommending FCA Central office continues to be an Investing in Children member.

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