

Fosterplus

Fosterplus Limited

Jubilee House, 31-33 Meadow Lane, Long Eaton, Nottingham NG10 2FE

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

This agency has been registered since 2008. It is owned by a private company. It offers a range of placements including respite, bridging, emergency, long- and short-term, unaccompanied minors and permanency. At the time of this inspection, there were 48 children and young people placed in 34 fostering households.

Inspection dates: 23 to 27 July 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The independent fostering agency provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the independent fostering agency contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of last inspection: 18 May 2015

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

What does the independent fostering agency need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Demonstrate from written records, that the fostering service consistently follows good recruitment practice. ('Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards', 19.2)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children and young people receive outstanding care and support from their foster carers. From their starting points, their confidence grows significantly. They feel fully integrated into their foster carers' families. They often remain in close contact with their carers after leaving care and regard themselves as fully part of their fostering families.

A key strength of this agency relates to its matching of placements. Extremely careful consideration is given to all potential new placements. This leads to exceptionally stable placements. Over a quarter of children/young people have been placed with carers for over five years. Examples of the excellent matching include the examples below.

- Unaccompanied minors being placed with carers from the same country, who share the same first language and awareness of cultural issues. One set of carers actively assisted a young person to locate his birth parents and is now in regular contact with them. The placing social worker commented: 'The carers found his parents after many years of no contact. They went above and beyond their roles to do this for him. It is an amazing placement.'
- Providing training to one set of carers to be able to meet the complex health needs of a child. This was done with hospital staff prior to the child moving into the foster placement. The placing social worker said: 'Nothing is too much trouble for the carers. They have embraced the complex needs of the child and this has made the placement a real success.'
- Enabling a sibling group to remain together through exceptionally detailed consideration and matching with a suitable carer. The highly complex needs of these children have been exceptionally well met by the carer.
- Carers work with extreme sensitivity with birth family members and support contact to an exceptional level. Placing social workers and birth parents speak highly of carers from this agency and their commitment to contact.

All children and young people have formal educational provision in place. The agency employs an education coordinator. She works extremely closely with agency staff, carers and local authorities to secure suitable education. This person has excellent monitoring and tracking systems in place. She provides practical support and advice to carers and agency staff on educational matters. As one placing social worker commented: 'The support around education has been amazing from the agency. It has worked alongside us all of the time.'

Another key outstanding feature of this agency relates to how well it supports children and young people with life-story work. A supervising social worker worked

with one young person to create a hugely detailed and comprehensive life story book. The young person said: 'We worked together and she really helped me to make sense of my past. I have a book and a memory stick with it on. It was so interesting to do and I love it.'

Carers speak with absolute passion about the progress made by the children and young people placed with them. They act as strong and positive advocates for them. One carer has made detailed memory books for the two siblings placed with her. The placing social worker stated how well this evidences the extremely positive progress both children have made and how well issues of identity have been supported.

Children and young people receive a welcome pack on arrival in placement. This includes toys and games specifically chosen to reflect their likes and interests. This demonstrates an agency and staff totally committed to meeting children's needs and making them feel valued.

Carers prepare young people exceptionally well for their eventual move to adult life and living independently. They support young people to take age-appropriate risks and help them to develop independence skills. The agency strongly supports young people to remain living with their carers into adulthood, where appropriate and agreed with the placing authority.

The complaints procedure is clearly explained to children and young people. However, children and young people generally feel able to resolve any issues or worries with their carers. The manager has made improvements to the recording and monitoring systems for any complaints made. The requirement set at the last inspection has been fully met.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children and young people feel safe with their carers. Detailed risk assessments reflect their current and changing needs. Carers understand the actual and potential triggers for risky behaviour and respond promptly and sensitively. Over time, children and young people learn how to manage their behaviour and have a better understanding of their emotions.

Incidents of children and young people going missing from care are minimal. This reflects their strong attachments to their carers and sense of security. One young person historically had been reported as missing from home on a regular basis. Through the tenacity and commitment of the carer and agency staff, such concerning behaviours stopped. The young person has transformed their life with the carer's support and now has a very promising future ahead of them.

Carers also ensure that children and young people feel safe and protected from risks associated with bullying, exploitation, radicalisation and self-harm. Carers receive training to assist them in identifying and responding to any such concerns. They learn how to reduce risks. Children and young people report that they feel extremely safe and well cared for. They understand why their carers put boundaries in place

for them and they respond positively.

All agency staff, managers and carers receive training on the secure base model. This provides a framework for therapeutic caregiving, which in turn helps children and young people to develop greater security and resilience. Such innovative practice is making an exceptional difference to the lives and experiences of children and young people placed with this agency.

Since the last inspection, considerable work has been carried out to improve the recording of allegations made about carers. Panel minutes now clearly reflect the discussions held ahead of making recommendations when an allegation has been made. Carers are routinely provided with a copy of the outcome of any investigations. The two recommendations made at the last inspection have been fully met.

The agency has clear recruitment and selection procedures in place. The manager is supported by the human resources team with such matters. From a sample of four recruitment files, one did not contain clear details to explain gaps in employment for one agency member of staff. The manager quickly gained clarification on this, but a recommendation has been set.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is hugely inspirational, confident and ambitious for children and young people placed. She is held in extremely high regard by agency staff, senior managers, carers and involved agencies. She is totally committed to ensuring that all children and young people make significant and positive progress.

The manager inspires a culture where all staff and carers aspire to provide the best possible care and support to children and young people. She has made changes to the systems for monitoring and tracking outcomes. She leads by example and demonstrates a commendable understanding of all children and young people placed and their carers.

She has outstanding management oversight of all aspects of how this agency is run. She regularly audits case files to ensure that all necessary information is present and accurate. She undertakes second opinion visits to applicants. This is to ensure that assessments have been completed robustly prior to being presented to the fostering panel.

Independent assessment managers have recently been appointed. Their role will be to oversee all independent social work assessments of prospective foster carers. The organisation is also in the process of setting up an independent quality and risk audit committee/panel. This reflects an agency and organisation keen to learn from independent scrutiny of how it operates. There is a strong and commendable learning culture and ethos within the agency.

The fostering panel has a diverse, highly experienced and skilled membership. The panel chair has performed the role for this agency for 14 years. Panel minutes

reflect the detailed consideration of all assessments and reviews presented. The agency decision-maker also demonstrates an outstanding understanding of their role and responsibilities. Minutes and records of the fostering panel are excellent.

Carers report exceptionally high levels of satisfaction at the support they receive. One carer stated: 'The agency feels like a big family and is very supportive of me.' Other carers refer to their supervising social workers as 'exemplary' and 'amazing'. Carers receive high-quality and relevant training. They also receive practical support from agency staff to complete their training, support and development standards. Supervisions consider how they are meeting children and young people's complex needs and provide support for carers in their roles.

The agency's statement of purpose has been revised since the last inspection. This reflects its aspirations to recruit a more diverse group of foster carers. Work continues to be done to increase the number of carers from a wider background. The requirement set at the last inspection has been fully met.

A commissioning officer from one placing authority spoke very positively about this agency. The commissioning officer carries out annual visits to the agency to consider records for children and young people placed. They stated that the manager operates in a very open and transparent manner, and is able to clearly evidence how the care and support the agency provides is improving outcomes and progress.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the independent fostering agency knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the national minimum standards.

Independent fostering agency details

Unique reference number: SC384584

Registered provider: Fosterplus Limited

Registered provider address: Wavendon Tower, Ortensia Drive, Wavendon,
Milton Keynes MK17 8LX

Responsible individual: Joanne August

Registered manager: Jennifer Huggins

Telephone number: 01332 793 060

Email address: askus@fosterplus.co.uk

Inspector

Tracy Murty, social care regulatory inspector



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018