

Fostering Innovations

Fostering Innovations Limited

The Atrium Room 502, 1 Harefield Road, Uxbridge, London UB8 1EX

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

This is a privately owned independent fostering agency based in London. The majority of its foster carers are based in London, while a small number are based in the Midlands. The agency provides foster care placements for short- and long-term respite, foster care placements for asylum-seeking children, unaccompanied minors, children with complex health needs, sibling groups and parents with children. The independent fostering agency registered in July 2016. The registered manager and responsible individual also registered with Ofsted at this time.

At the time of this inspection, the fostering service had 84 approved fostering households and 114 children placed with its foster carers.

Inspection dates: 10 to 14 November 2025

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The independent fostering agency provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 24 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive individualised care from foster carers who know them well and treat them as part of their family. Children experience stability with foster carers, who go on to offer permanency through long-term fostering and staying put arrangements. Consequently, this helps children to settle, feel secure and make good progress from their starting points in respect of their social, emotional and physical development.

A smaller group of children with complex needs benefit from living in a family environment after moving from residential care. Individualised support packages and a multi-agency professional team have helped these children in reducing their episodes of going missing, addressing exploitation concerns and re-establishing school routines.

Children are either in school or being helped to access alternative education support. Foster carers are proactive in identifying local schools for children and are supported by the education mentor. A staff member acts as the lead for children with special educational needs and runs support groups on various subjects to help foster carers navigate the education system and understand what resources are available for children.

A continuing strength of the fostering agency is the care and support provided to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. A significant number of foster carers are experienced in offering this type of care and helping children to make the adjustments in culture, language and expectations regarding being a child in foster care. Children's guides have been translated into different languages, such as Pashtu, Arabic and Kurdish, to help children understand what foster care means and their rights as children in foster care. A support group is run for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

A number of children are living with foster carers who are not of the same background, culture or religion. Foster carers are sensitive to these differences and respect children's needs in terms of diets, religious observances and the challenges of not speaking English as a first language. One commissioner wrote of the fostering agency, 'A particularly positive aspect is that their directors are actively involved in the matching process and maintain direct communication with us.' This ensures that children are living with foster carers who can meet a range of diverse needs.

All children's achievements are celebrated, however small, by staff and foster carers. Celebrations take place at end-of-year awards for children and foster carers. Achievements are communicated through the fostering agency newsletter and discussed in staff team meetings. This activity promotes a sense of achievement and pride in children, boosting their self-esteem and confidence.

Leaders and managers provides opportunities for children to meet with other foster children, foster carers and birth children at social events. The most recent summer

event involved a trip to Brighton beach. Children have opportunities to participate in activities with their foster carers, including trips to Blackpool, theme parks and London attractions. One child described with excitement their recent trip abroad with their foster carers and wish to travel to other countries abroad as a result.

Foster carers and staff work collaboratively with social workers and birth families to ensure that children maintain safe and meaningful relationships with family and friends.

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

Children spoken to say that they feel safe and have a trusted adult who they can speak to if they have concerns or worries. Managers, staff and foster carers know children well and understand the steps to take to reduce the likelihood of harm.

Managers regularly monitor responses to concerns regarding children's safety. Safety plans for children are comprehensive, involving social workers, family members, police and schools, among others, as part of the safeguarding network. When missing episodes occur, foster carers and the agency staff follow missing protocols, and they request professional meetings for children who are regularly missing to ensure their safety. Consequently, there is a good safeguarding culture within the fostering agency, where incidents within the home are rare and episodes of children going missing are few.

When concerns regarding children's safety are identified, such as self-harm, substance misuse or exploitation, staff and managers collaborate effectively with specialist agencies, such as exploitation teams, community drug support services, and adolescent mental health services. Children's safety plans are updated to include the specialist support available. Children take part in individual work with specialists, which contributes significantly to their stability.

Foster carers recognise older children's growing autonomy and support them to make safe choices when they are out in the community. Stay-safe work is undertaken with children to provide them with suitable strategies to help keep themselves safe. A youth mentor is available to offer support to children if they require it. They build positive relationships with children, which helps them to address children's fears or any concerns regarding risk-taking behaviour. A therapist offers foster carers consultation to help them understand how early trauma may influence children's responses to boundary setting.

Allegations of harm regarding children in foster care is not a feature of this fostering agency. When allegations do occur, staff and managers respond quickly to ensure that children remain safe. Appropriately qualified and independent persons undertake investigations.

Foster carers receive training that supports trauma-informed approaches to parenting and de-escalation. One foster carer said that the training has helped them to develop 'empathy for children' and engage in 'restorative conversations' with

them. This means that conflicts between foster carers and children leading to escalation in behaviours are reduced.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A strength of this fostering agency is the experience, expertise and knowledge held within the leadership and management team. The current leadership and management team has been involved with the fostering agency since its inception. This has provided stability and consistency to staff and foster carers. Leaders and managers lead by example. They are hands on and visible to staff and foster carers. The culture of the agency is characterised by high expectations and aspirations for all children.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a strong motivation to improve the experiences and quality of care for children in foster care. An example of this is the wrap-around service developed with one local authority for a small number of children with complex needs moving from residential care to foster care. This therapeutic service involves a team of multi-professionals, such as a social worker, psychologist, advanced social work practitioner, education mentor and therapeutic support worker. Leaders and managers ensure that there are sufficient social work staff to work effectively alongside specialist staff in supporting foster carers and children.

Leaders and managers' oversight and monitoring of some of the fostering service's records requires improvement. These include foster carer profiles, foster carer professional development plans and the quality and content of some foster carers' logs. Leaders and managers have successfully addressed shortfalls highlighted at the service's previous Ofsted inspection.

Staff overwhelmingly say that leaders and managers support them well. Staff receive regular and reflective supervision from managers. In addition, reflective group sessions provide opportunities for staff to consider, for instance, the impact of current political discussions regarding immigration on some staff, foster carers and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Appraisals of staff take place on an annual basis. However, the recording of appraisals is not always consistent, with some lacking a detailed management evaluation of staff performance. This is a missed opportunity to provide staff with detailed feedback regarding their performance and any practice issues that need to be addressed.

Foster carers receive regular supervision, training and support to meet children's needs. One foster carer wrote, 'The training and reflective support we receive through the agency have helped us grow, develop and stay informed, which allows us to give the children the highest level of care.' Another foster carer wrote:

'What stands out most about this agency is the specialised care and attention they offer not only to foster carers and children, but also to our birth children.'

This thoughtful and inclusive approach has helped maintain balance within our family and strengthened our ability to provide the best possible care.'

Leaders and managers have collaborative relationships with local authority partners and other professionals. Leaders and managers are proactive in initiating discussions to achieve positive outcomes for children through advocating a multi-agency approach.

The fostering agency panel provides an effective quality assurance mechanism supported by a robust agency decision-making process. There is an effective foster carer review process for considering the continued suitability of adults to care for children.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the process of recording appraisals of all staff involved in fostering work is consistent, taking into account managers identification of skills demonstrated, and individuals' learning and development needs. ('Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards', 23.5)
- The registered person should ensure that where staff are working with children, their annual appraisal takes into account any views of the children the service is providing for. ('Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards', 24.6)
- The registered person should ensure that there is effective monitoring of all records kept by the service to ensure that the quality and content of records comply with the service's policies and practice expectations. This specifically relates to foster carer profiles, foster carer professional development plans and foster carer logs. ('Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards', 25.2)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people 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: 1221446

Registered provider: Fostering Innovations Limited

Registered provider address: The Atrium Room 502, 1 Harefield Road, Uxbridge UB8 1EX

Responsible individual: Karuna Gupta

Registered manager: Seema Kochhar

Telephone number: 02071836997

Email address: fostering.innovations@gmail.com

Inspectors

Colin Bent, Social Care Inspector

Angela Reid, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

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