

# By the Bridge North West

Inspection report for independent fostering agency

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	08/03/2012

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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

By the Bridge North West is a branch of a privately run national fostering agency. It has carers located in several local authority areas in the North West of England and West Yorkshire who provide long-term, short-term and emergency foster care placements for children and young people from birth up to age 17. Young people who reach the age of 18 are able to continue living with their foster carers as young adults. The agency provides families for children with complex and challenging emotional and behavioural needs, including parent and child placements, respite placements and families for children with complex health needs. By the Bridge offers placements to children who need therapeutic fostering families.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** An agency demonstrating and exceeding the characteristics of a good judgement where children and young people are making significantly better progress and achieving more than was expected in all areas of their lives.

**Good:** An agency where children and young people, including those with the most complex needs, have their individual needs met and their welfare safeguarded and promoted. They make good progress and receive effective services so they achieve as well as they can in all areas of their lives.

**Requires improvement:** An agency that may be compliant with regulations and observing the national minimum standards but is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of a good judgement. It therefore requires improvement to be good. There may be failures to meet all regulations or national minimum standards but these are not widespread or serious; all children's and young people's welfare is safeguarded and promoted.

**Inadequate:** An agency where there are widespread or serious failures which result in children and young people not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

## Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome: **Good**

- A very high percentage of children with complex and challenging emotional and behavioural needs make good or excellent progress across all aspects of their development.
- Placement matching and stability are key strengths, with many children benefitting from secure, stable placements, in which they develop safe and strong relationships with their carers and a sense of belonging. This enables them to thrive.
- Robust recruitment, assessment and preparation of foster carers results in the provision of foster carers who are committed and mostly well prepared to meeting the diverse

needs of children who have suffered early abuse and trauma.

- Children live with foster carers who receive good levels of support including a minimum of weekly phone calls and monthly visits. The agency provides monthly supervision groups, therapeutic workshops and individual therapeutic parenting advice sessions for foster carers, supporting them to meet a child's emotional and psychological needs. Carers value this support immensely and say it enables them to support children effectively through difficult times.
- Children feel well cared for and loved. They feel they are listened to and they can influence their day to day care as well as the overall development of the service through regular feedback after events and at the children's forum. They enjoy the many events arranged by the agency and feel they benefit from belonging to an agency that enables them to meet up with other fostered children.
- Partnership working is good. Other professionals speak highly of the quality of the service and the effectiveness of communication in promoting children's safety and improving their outcomes. The agency challenges other professionals appropriately when children are not getting the service to which they are entitled.
- Managers are visible and well known to children and foster carers who report that all managers and staff have their best interests at heart.
- The agency provides and encourages carers to avail of a very good and comprehensive training programme aimed at helping carers develop skills in meeting children's emotional and psychological needs and providing therapeutic fostering. Not all foster carers complete training within the agency's required timescales and this means there are some foster carers who do not have the skills and understanding to fully meet the complex needs of a small minority of children. The agency works with these families to develop their skills and increase their engagement with training and group supervision.
- The number of children who contribute their views to foster carer reviews and their own statutory reviews is relatively low. The agency needs to do more to promote their engagement in this and to ensure they are able to speak to a professional they trust, in confidence, about their placement.
- The Registered Manager and the Responsible Individual know the strengths and weaknesses of the service and are taking action to address shortfalls. Areas for development relate to practices that have slipped or are not sufficiently robust. They impact on a minority of children or have minimal impact on larger groups of children.
- Practice shortfalls include: not all incidents where it is suspected that a child is at risk of sexual exploitation are reported to Ofsted, although they are managed safely; children's views are not strongly represented in foster carer reviews and other feedback; children do not always receive up to date information about a foster family before they move in, especially in an emergency; the arrangements for moving children's belongings in the event of an emergency are not always given sufficient priority; records about children's safety and progress do not always demonstrate the agency is providing effective advice and support that promotes good outcomes, even though overall, outcomes are good; not all foster carers who look after children with highly complex emotional and psychological needs have been fully trained to do so and the arrangements for supporting those carers are not always sufficient to meet a child's needs.

## Areas of improvement

### Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person in respect of a fostering agency must ensure that the fostering service is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its Statement of Purpose. In particular, ensure that children who need a therapeutic placement receive therapeutic care from suitably trained, professional foster parents; and that psychotherapeutic consultancy provided for foster carers is sufficient to meet the needs of the children they care for (Regulation 3 (5))	30/11/2015
The registered person in respect of a fostering agency must ensure that, if any of the events listed in Column 1 of the table in Schedule 7 takes place in relation to a fostering agency, the registered person, without delay, notifies the persons or bodies indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. In particular, ensure that incidents where children are involved or suspected to be involved in sexual exploitation are notified to Ofsted. (Regulation 26 (1))	30/11/2015

### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

ensure that foster carers and staff keep clear records about children in placement and the work of the foster carers with those children. In particular, ensure that records demonstrate how the agency is supporting the foster carer to promote children's progress and development (Statutory Guidance, Volume 4, paragraph 5.75)

do more to obtain children's views on all aspects of their care. In particular, increase children's engagement in the foster carer review process (NMS 1.3)

ensure that children can take up issues in the most appropriate way with support

and without fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. In particular, ensure that children have the opportunity to speak openly and with confidence about their foster carers and the professionals with whom they are involved (NMS 1.6).

ensure that children are given information about the foster carer before arrival, (including photographic information) in a format appropriate to their age and understanding. Where this information is held electronically, do more to make it available to children, including those who are moving to a new foster home in an emergency (NMS 11.3)

ensure that children who are leaving a foster family are supported during the transition to their new placement, to independent living, or to their parental home. In particular, ensure that wherever possible, children are consulted about arrangements to transfer their belongings and that this is prioritised so that children are not kept waiting unnecessarily for their personal belongings (NMS 11.5)

do more to encourage all foster carers to complete the Training, Support and Development Standards within 12 months of approval or as soon as possible, thereafter (NMS 20.3)

ensure that foster carers' ongoing training and development portfolios demonstrate how they are meeting the skills required of them by the agency. In particular, ensure they demonstrate that foster carers have received training to meet the particular individual needs of the children they are caring for. (NMS 20.4)

## **Experiences and progress of, and outcomes for, children and young people**

Judgement outcome: **Good**

The majority of children benefit from stable placements where they make good overall progress in all areas of their development. A number of sibling groups live together where this is in their best interests. For example, a family of six children lived in one fostering household until they recently moved on to permanent placements. This enables children to experience good parenting, from the safety of well-established sibling relationships. It enables professionals to assess the quality, style and depth of attachments between children, which means that care planning for permanency, is firmly grounded in strong evidence.

Where one child from a sibling group is emotionally unsettled and displaying challenging behaviour, the agency takes action to support the continuance of the placement, so that family groups are not separated unnecessarily. When it is necessary to look after children from the same family in two or more foster families, the agency helps children to

maintain contact through visits and phone calls, when this is in their best interests.

Most children make good progress in their education. Many of those with a history of poor attendance and a lack of engagement make particularly good progress, although there are often hurdles along the way, which they are supported to overcome. On average, 95% of children attend school regularly and of these, 18% attend alternative education providers compared to a national average of 5%. This reflects the high number of children in the agency who have challenging behaviour or complex needs that cannot be met in mainstream schools.

Foster carers know that the agency gives high priority to children's education and consequently, instil high aspirations in children. Many children at the end of year 6 have caught up with their peers and are at the expected national average attainment levels. A placing social worker explained, 'Since being with By the Bridge, the children have increased their levels in Maths, English and Literacy and they are thriving.'

Overall, children's attainment levels are slightly higher than those for most looked after children, with 50% of children achieving level 4 or above at key stage 2, compared with 48% nationally. GCSE achievement results are in line with the national average for looked after children but it is recognised that many children take alternative qualifications that are not reflected in these figures. Some children go on to university and all go on to education, employment or training on leaving school. The agency values children's varying achievements. For example, one child achieved best academic performer in Year 7; another achieved her Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award, and others have won awards for running, sheep handling, and fund raising. By recognising and celebrating these achievements, the agency encourages children to develop their interests, skills and self-esteem.

Children's health is well promoted. They receive routine and emergency health checks, including vaccinations that have been missed and annual medicals as well as treatment and first aid in accordance with their needs. Foster carers are trained to administer first aid so that children who self-harm or have accidents receive appropriate first aid treatment as necessary. Children in need of specialist health interventions such as those with complex health needs receive the treatment they need from foster carers who have been suitably trained. Children receive education, counselling and treatment that promotes their sexual health.

Children have plenty of opportunities to engage in new hobbies and activities, to make new friends and to participate in a wide range of enjoyable pastimes that reflect their individual interests. They enjoy meeting up with other fostered children at the many events provided by the agency and say it's nice to feel you are part of a group and to know there are many other fostered children, with whom you can be friends. They particularly enjoy the Christmas parties and trips to the Crocky Trail, Blackpool and the Country Show. Those who have been fostered previously by carers from different agencies, say they get more support from this agency, more opportunities to meet up with other fostered children and better preparation for future independence.

Older children value the 'Get a Lifestyle' preparation for independence programme. One

young person explained, 'At 12, I was really scared of the idea of living alone. They've helped me to learn to look after myself and my finances. You become more aware of things. They set support up for you and talk things through. It really helps.'

A core group of children participate in the children's forum. Recruiting more children to the forum remains a challenge for the agency. Those who do attend feel their views are important and know that what they say influences the development of the service and helps to improve the lives of many. They develop self-esteem and confidence. For example, they are proud of the work they have done to raise funds for the charity 'Who Cares?' which supports young people in care who are moving to independent living; and they enjoy helping to design and organise forthcoming events.

Children report they are safe and comfortable in their foster homes. They say they are made welcome, they feel loved and are well looked after. They feel they belong to the family and are part of the fostering agency. A number of children said they like being given the choice to call their foster carers 'mum' or 'dad' if they want to, and this helps them to feel part of the family. One child said, 'They opened their arms to me when they opened their door.'

Although children have the opportunity to contribute to their own statutory reviews and to foster carer reviews, many choose not to. Feedback from children shows they feel they are listened to, both by their foster carers and by the agency. However, a small minority who have moved from unhappy placements say it is difficult to be open and honest with social workers when their foster carer is in the next room. They have stayed in situations where they have been unhappy for longer than necessary and have presented challenging behaviour because their emotional and psychological needs have been unmet. A carefully matched move to a new foster family has resulted in improved emotional stability and improved outcomes all round.

Most, but not all children who have emotional and mental health needs receive the therapy they need from CAMHS. For a small minority of children who live away from their home area, referrals to a local CAMHS team have not been successful. This is despite the best efforts of professionals working in partnership with the foster carers and the agency to secure a mental health service for those children. Consequently, not every child receives the support they need to meet their emotional and psychological health needs.

Although foster carer profiles are written for children and held on the agency's files, these are not always used effectively and some are out of date. Consequently, not all children receive up to date, helpful information about a foster family before placement, especially those who move in an emergency. This means that the opportunity to relieve their anxieties about moving to live with a new family is sometimes missed.

## Quality of service



Judgement outcome: **Good**

The agency recruits foster carers who will go the extra mile to provide loving homes for the most vulnerable children. Advice and information events are held regularly at varying locations so that the agency attracts applicants from families across the region.

From a high number of initial enquiries, only 6% of interested people submit applications and of those, many are signposted to other agencies. This means less than 2% go through to assessment and subsequent approval. This is because the agency specifically recruits foster carers with particular strengths, including resilience, an ability to learn new skills, a desire to give disadvantaged children an enjoyable family life and a willingness to work as part of a team. Growth has been slow and steady since the last inspection, rising by March 2015, to the provision of 142 placements in 64 foster families.

Commissioners recognise the quality of care provided and seek placements for their more challenging children from this agency. Consequently, the number of vacancies is low and in March 2015 stood at 7%. The overall occupancy figures are good, with 85% of placements being consistently full, compared to 56% in all independent fostering agencies (IFAs), nationally.

The calibre of foster carers is high. They demonstrate commitment to and ambition for children. Stickability is a key strength and foster carers provide stable placements and bond with children who have had a number of previous placement moves and long term attachment difficulties. For example, an Independent Reviewing Officer explained, 'No one else could stick with this child. She has long-standing attachment issues. I admire her (the foster carer) and am impressed with her commitment. I've seen many children like *n* whose placements have broken down. It's as good as we could expect from any foster carer.'

A small minority of children have unplanned placement endings and the agency works in partnership with foster carers and partner agencies to review and learn lessons from these situations through disruption meetings. At 6%, unplanned endings have increased in 2014 – 2015 but remain low compared to all independent fostering agencies, which report that 12% of placements have unplanned endings.

Children rarely move within 24 hours of a decision to end the placement, and this is only when allegations against carers raise concerns for children's safety. In most cases, by carefully managing placement endings, the agency helps children to move on positively, with dignity. However, arrangements for transferring children's belongings are not always satisfactory and as a result some children have to wait several weeks for their personal belongings to be delivered to their new placement, while others feel rejected because foster carers have not involved them in packing their bags.

Foster carers report the quality of preparation and training is excellent and provides them with the skills and understanding to meet children's needs. For example, the following typifies the very many positive comments received from foster carers: 'The training is always well planned and communicated well in advance. It's extremely interesting and thought provoking. I always get a lot out of it. The last one I attended was 'Junction 31',

delivered by a young adult who was now 26 and had come through the care system from being 6 months old. It was amazing! Really helped us to understand the internal thoughts of the child; how they deal with trauma; and what their actual "bad" behaviour says to us. More workshop / training like these are planned!

The agency provides a wide range of relevant training through a rolling and ever growing programme that supports carers to develop their understanding and parenting skills. This includes training in therapeutic fostering for those carers who wish to pursue this and some carers have gone on to do an advanced certificate or a degree in therapeutic fostering. As a result, many children are thriving in families where the foster carers understand how to meet their needs and are showing good progress, even after a short time in placement. For example, a child who had been frequently missing from previous placements and had missed a significant amount of education has settled very well in his foster family and is responding extremely positively to the structured, nurturing environment provided by a well trained and experienced foster family. He has not been missing for several months, he has 100% attendance at school and his engagement in education, while still problematic, is improving. The child said, 'I used to run away all the time but I've only run away twice from here and I don't do it now. I was getting excluded from my old school but now I'm doing more work.'

The agency has a strong emphasis on training and group supervision and makes its expectations clear to carers from the outset. Despite this, approximately 18% of families have not completed their Training, Support and Development Standards workbooks within 12 months of approval. This does not ensure those carers have the minimum level of knowledge and skills required for the fostering role. Some of these foster families are looking after children with highly complex and challenging behaviour and this means they are not well trained to do so.

The agency provides a therapist who runs regular surgeries and provides advice and guidance to foster families who are struggling to manage challenging behaviour such as self-harm, aggression and other dangerous behaviour. It helps foster carers to understand children's behaviour and to respond more effectively. Many foster families report the benefits of this intervention. For example, one explained that in weekly meetings with the therapist, 'we talk about our care of *n* and any issues we or *n* has and take advice from them to help us in our work. Very often their advice is to carry on with the therapeutic care we are giving *n* because it is clearly having a positive effect... We feel we are never alone and the advice we receive really helps us in our therapeutic care of *n*, to the extent we are starting to see positive changes in his behaviour. Since he has gone back to school in September he has received A\* every day for his effort and behaviour and he is slowly starting to self-regulate his behaviour. We have a long road ahead of us to give *n* the best chance in life as he grows older but what I can say is that with the support we receive from By the Bridge we have a great chance of making a difference to his life.'

The agency therapist left in July 2015 and although a replacement has been recruited, she is not due to start until 2016. This has left a gap in provision and a limited service is being provided by a therapist from another branch of the organisation. While for many families, this arrangement is helpful, it is not sufficient for a small minority of foster

carers who are not therapeutically trained, yet are looking after highly complex and vulnerable children. Consequently, there are a few children who are not receiving the best possible support and care. A professional from a partner agency explained, 'The foster carer is doing a pretty good job; but some of the more therapeutic services are not much in evidence. The foster carer needs more support than is available and we are having to supplement their service with providing advice to the foster carer. We would like to see them giving better support to her in managing behaviour and responding appropriately. The carer needs more therapeutic knowledge. As a therapeutic fostering agency, they are not providing enough therapists and enough help for children.'

Education advisors work successfully with the virtual school, foster carers and link workers to ensure that children's education is promoted and in most cases, this ensures children's education needs are identified and well met. For example, a very high percentage of children attend full time education and where this is not possible, professionals work together to ensure children get the best possible education. In most cases, the agency challenges schools which send children home without a formal exclusion letter or where they are not providing children with the full time education agreed at their Personal Education Planning meeting. Staff work constructively with partner agencies and foster carers to resolve these issues and to help re-establish children in full time education provision as soon as possible.

Effective training and supervision of independent assessors results in consistently good assessments of foster carers, which the panel chair reports are getting 'better and better'. Assessments provide a good balance between information and analysis and there are few unresolved issues in reports because of the effective quality assurance of reports before they are submitted to panel. This enables panel to gain a good understanding of the family and to make recommendations based on sound and comprehensive evidence. This supports the agency decision maker to make secure suitability decisions and to approve foster carers who have the necessary traits and attributes to provide warm and safe family homes.

Concerns about the quality of care provided by a foster family are rare but are appropriately brought before panel. One family has been deregistered in recent years and chose not to appeal against the agency's decision.

Foster carers report that the quality of support and supervision is excellent. They receive weekly phone calls and monthly visits. Additional support is provided where necessary. A foster carer who went through a very traumatic experience related to her fostering role felt comforted and supported not only by daily phone calls but by a visit from the manager who visited the foster home and waited with the foster carer's own children until she returned from the hospital. She said, 'It meant a lot'. Since the incident, the foster carers have benefited from counselling provided by the agency's therapist. A foster carer summed up the views of many in her statement, 'They are professional, reliable, the training is excellent, the support is total. The manager and her staff are reliable, approachable, and supportive and we cannot fault the organisation.'

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

Judgement outcome: **Good**

Children report they feel safe. They know how to make a complaint and feel they are always listened to. They are able to identify how the agency protects them and promotes their safety. Examples they shared include: locking the medicine cabinet and ensuring alcohol, knives and medicines are kept out of reach, ensuring that car doors have central locking so they are safe when travelling, providing workshops such as 'Dangerous Loverboy' which shows how easy it is to get drawn into sexual exploitation.

Some children reported that learning how to combat bullying through attending training events as part of the 'Get A Lifestyle' programme has helped them effectively stand up for themselves and others who may be subject to bullying, particularly in school. Some report they play an active role in preventing bullying in school, as anti-bullying ambassadors. They recognise they are benefitting from learning about how to stay safe on line and to protect themselves from grooming, sexual exploitation and sexually transmitted infections. These workshops are open to all children over the age of 14 and younger children whose behaviours place them at risk.

Children's safety is at the centre of the agency's practice. A senior safeguarding manager oversees all child protection and safeguarding concerns and the registered manager reports to him each week, providing information about ongoing and new concerns for children's safety. Lessons learned from other branches within the organisation are shared and used to improve safeguarding practice. For example, missing from care protocols have been strengthened so that recent photographs of children are immediately available to share with the police.

The role of the education advisors has been extended to include conducting independent interviews with children on their return from being missing. This service is available where placing authorities are unable to meet their duty to arrange and conduct such interviews and enables children to meet with an independent person promptly, following their return.

Improved partnership working through the development of relationships with local police and safeguarding agencies is further promoting children's safety. For example, a representative from the agency attends regular provider and police meetings that help to raise awareness of local issues impacting on children's safety and share good safeguarding practice. Through this, the agency is building trusting and supportive relationships with other agencies, including the police missing from care co-ordinators and local children's safeguarding teams.

Where missing behaviour or child sexual exploitation are concerns, it contributes to multi-agency meetings and works in partnership to protect children. Not all incidents of children being at risk of sexual exploitation have been notified to Ofsted. This under-reporting of incidents means that information provided by Ofsted to the government is not fully reliable.

Recent developments have led to better responses to incidents where children are at risk of sexual exploitation, including helping children to have a better understanding of

grooming through individual and group work. The agency has arranged a forthcoming training event on supporting children at risk of child sexual exploitation, which it is encouraging foster carers to attend. Some foster carers have already done this training and are implementing good strategies to protect children already. These include searching for a missing child and recording number plates when children are observed getting into unknown cars; they notifying the police and placing authority of such incidents immediately, in line with agreed protocols. Foster carers also monitor children's use of social media and report concerns such as inappropriate photographs being shared at school. This enables them to address and reduce unsafe behaviour quickly.

Allegations against carers are always taken seriously and are appropriately shared with the local authority Designated Officer for safeguarding. Social workers report the agency works effectively to protect both the child and the foster carer when an allegation is made.

## Leadership and management

Judgement outcome: **Good**

In accordance with its Statement of Purpose, the agency provide vulnerable children with opportunities and life experiences they have missed out on. For the most part, it provides children with soothing, nurturing care and clear boundaries, delivered in a way that supports their emotional growth and development. It has high aspirations for children and provides carers with guidance and training that supports them to help children develop the life skills, emotional stability and resilience they need for a brighter future. Foster carers and staff know and embrace the company ethos. One explained, 'The management and team at By the Bridge genuinely want the very best outcome for the child and will give you all the training and support you could possibly need to achieve this result.'

The Registered Manager is a knowledgeable, experienced and competent manager who has worked in social work for many years and has been in post since this agency was registered in 2006. She is responsible for the day to day management and monitoring of this branch of By the Bridge. She is appropriately supervised by a social work qualified senior manager.

Staff and panel members are suitably qualified, experienced and supervised. They have access to a rolling staff training programme that provides a wide range of relevant training events, which support them in their respective roles. Panel members are invited to attend any training events organised by the agency so they can keep up to date with messages from research and changes in the sector.

Leaders and managers together monitor the quality of the service and provide quarterly reports for the Board which inform ongoing development and review. Annual reports on all the functions of the fostering agency are drawn together with information from other branches and inform the overall assessment and further development of the organisation. Annual performance data is submitted to Ofsted and demonstrates that the

fostering agency provides a good service compared to national information relating to all fostering agencies.

A national team is responsible for the recruitment and assessment of carers, supported by supervising social workers from this branch. Similarly, matching children to foster carers is completed by a national team, with input from supervising social workers on the strengths of the foster family and potential challenges to a proposed placement. This system works well and in the vast majority of cases, children are well matched to suitable foster families.

The Registered Manager notifies the lead Safeguarding Officer immediately of serious incidents including when a child goes missing and she submits weekly reports on children's safety and outcomes. These inform the development of improved safeguarding practice. This system ensures that senior managers are fully aware of concerns about children's safety. She regularly meets up with other Registered Managers, the Responsible Individual, regional managers and lead personnel in the wider organisation. This promotes national consistency in the quality of the service.

Partnership working is strong and partner agencies report that communication is good and promotes better than expected outcomes for children through effective multi-agency working and close supervision of children's placements. There is good evidence of the agency challenging other professionals to improve their services where the latter are not meeting their responsibilities to children. This includes working with Virtual Head Teachers, therapists and social workers to challenge CAMHS teams and schools.

The capacity to improve is good. Recommendations made following the last inspection have all been addressed, resulting in better monitoring of the service, a clear development plan, good arrangements for helping children to learn how to stay safe and better panel procedures.

Where there are concerns about a foster carer's level of engagement with training or support groups, the Registered Manager visits the carer and reminds them of the agency's expectations. This encourages foster carers to continually develop their skills and reduces the likelihood of any slippage in the standard of care to children.

Children's individual progress is tracked through the statutory review processes and through regular monitoring of children on social workers' caseloads in one-to-one supervision meetings. The quality of recording between statutory reviews is variable. Some records provide little evidence of effective monitoring of children's progress month by month. Some reports are unsigned and undated so it is not clear who has written them or when. Risk assessments and safer caring plans are similarly variable; some lack detail and do not show how risks are mitigated. Nor do records always show how foster carers facing challenging behaviour are advised to manage that. Some therapeutic plans lack depth and they are not sufficiently focused on children's individual needs. This means that children's records do not support the comments made by foster carers, children and other professionals when they say that the agency provides extremely high quality support that promotes good outcomes for children.

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## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to inform children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards and to support services to improve.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the inspection framework and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of independent fostering agencies..