

Shine Fostering

Shine Fostering - 1026163

Suite 2, 109 George Lane, South Woodford, London E18 1AN

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Event: 10021594

Information about this independent fostering agency

Shine is an independent fostering agency, founded in 2012. It is a private company, working in partnership with placing authorities to provide foster placements for children and young people who are looked after by the local authority.

The agency provides short-term, long-term, emergency and parent and child placements.

The agency currently has 12 approved foster carers in eight fostering households. At the time of this inspection visit, they were providing placements for 12 children and young people.

Inspection dates: 5 to 9 June 2017

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: 2 December 2013

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This independent fostering agency is good because

- The agency has a small, family feel and children describe feeling like part of one big family in Shine.
- Children benefit from living in stable and consistent placements.
- The agency provides an educational coordinator who is available to support children at personal education plan (PEP) meetings and with any educational issues.
- A children's champion visits children in their foster family and listens to what they have to say.
- The agency runs a number of activities and events, which children, young people, foster carers' children, foster carers and workers all get involved in.
- There is a foster carers' mentor who offers one-to-one support for foster carers.
- A young care leaver supports young people in placement as a mentor. She can talk through difficulties and has an understanding from her own experiences of being in care.
- All foster carers describe feeling supported by the agency, even those who live some distance away.

The independent fostering agency's areas for development

- Further development to the assessment of risks and vulnerabilities in relation to children and young people is required. All areas of known risk must be recorded with strategies to demonstrate how the agency is helping to keep children and young people as safe as possible.
- Some foster carers have yet to complete their Training, Support and Development Standards within 12 months of their approval.
- The agency has not updated the regulator about the conclusion of investigations into significant events or complaints about foster carers.
- On occasion, important information from placing authorities is not on children's records and the agency has not been robust enough in its challenge to the placing authority on this.
- The agency needs to ensure that both placing authorities and foster carers work within the agency's policy when planning and accepting placements for children and young people.

- Some children/young people do not feel included as part of the family in their foster home and on occasion children and young people have not felt that their views are acted upon.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the national minimum standards. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The registered person in respect of an independent fostering agency must ensure that the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster parents is safeguarded and promoted at all times.</p> <p>(Regulation 11(a))</p>	01/09/2017

Recommendations

- Ensure that foster carers are able to evidence that Training, Support and Development Standards have been attained within 12 months of approval and ensure that the prepare to foster courses have robust content about safeguarding children and young people. (national minimum standards, page 40, paragraph 20.3)
- Ensure that a written record is kept, which includes details of the actions taken, and the outcome of any action or investigation, following a notifiable event. This includes the outcome of any child protection enquiries involving a child placed by the fostering service provider, to the Chief Inspector in accordance with regulation 12(3)(c) (national minimum standards, page 38, paragraph 19.2)
- Ensure that prior to the placement of each child, the foster carer is provided with all the information held by the fostering service that they need to carry out their role effectively. The information is provided in a clear, comprehensive written form and includes the support that will be available to the foster carer. The fostering service follows up with the responsible authority any gaps in the information provided to them on the child or the child's family, which may hinder the foster carer in providing a safe caring environment that meets the child's needs and enables them to keep the child, other children in the fostering

household and the foster carer him/herself safe. (national minimum standards, page 32, paragraph 15.2)

- Foster carers are required by their Foster Care Agreement to care for any child placed as if the child was a child of the foster carer's family (regulation 27(5)(b) paragraph 2(a) of Schedule 5). The default position should be that the foster carer does not treat the child differently to their own children. This obligation may sometimes pose challenges in the context of the expectations of the responsible authority as corporate parent, and means that a flexible approach must sometimes be adopted by authorities since many looked after children are sensitive to being treated differently to the foster carer's own children. (The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services, page 12, paragraph 2.11)
- Ensure that the service has and implements clear procedures for introducing children into the foster care placement, to the foster carer and to others living in the household, which cover planned and, where permitted, emergency/immediate foster care placement. (national minimum standards, page 23, paragraph 11.1)
- Ensure that children understand how their views have been taken into account and where significant view or concerns have not been acted upon, they are helped to understand why. This has particular reference to the need to let children know how their views have contributed to foster carer reviews and service development. (national minimum standards, page 8, paragraph 1.2)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Most children have built trusted and secure relationships with their foster carers. The agency has a small, family feel, which both children and staff describe as feeling like 'part of a bigger family', 'part of something'. Children and young people know the agency staff well. One child said, 'The Shine staff are really nice and friendly,' and another said, 'I love Shine, particularly X and Y.' Some children however, do not feel part of their foster family and feel excluded from them. For example, one child said, 'I am grateful, but I feel excluded, outside of the family.'

Children are making good progress from their starting points. For example, one child has stayed in their foster family here longer than in any previous placement and following a series of placement breakdowns. Another has gained in self-esteem and confidence. Children are making progress in education, health, social skills and improving their behaviours.

The agency has introduced an excellent database for recording information. It is collating information in respect of children's health, educational attainment and progress. An outcomes tracker provides a tool that helps the manager monitor children's progress or identify any concerns or issues at an early stage. This has helped the manager to see patterns developing and better understand behaviour.

In addition to making progress, children are included in the wider family network of the agency through a range of activities organised especially by the agency for them. For example, an annual 'camp-off,' held every year in the forest and attended by children, foster carers and agency staff. Art sessions, a basketball match, beach trips and rapping are among some of the other activities on offer through the agency over the year.

All children are on roll at school or college or have access to appropriate education. The agency employs a designated worker as an educational coordinator. This worker is an experienced teacher who understands the education system well. She is able to support children in a variety of ways to enhance their education experience. For example, some older children meet with her at the office after school and have one-to-one help with homework or exam practice. She always attends children and young people's personal education plan (PEP) meetings, bringing an understanding of the education system, but also raising with the school their responsibility to take into account the barriers which can disrupt young people's ability to learn. One social worker said that this service helped a young person to catch up with coursework, describing the worker as, 'Amazing, really supportive, she arranged the PEP meeting and helped with gaps in the homework.' Another educational professional stated, 'The educational coordinator has been really proactive, supporting a young person with their English and communicating very well with the school.'

Children and young people are encouraged to be as healthy as possible. They are supported by foster carers and support workers to attend routine health

appointments, such as the dentist, optician and health assessments. Where they have more complex health needs, these are being met with support from the agency in conjunction with the placing authority. This support includes sleep psychologists, an eating disorder clinic, interpreters for health appointments and child and adolescent mental health services. Working together in this way, ensures that children and young people's needs are met through the wider professional network. One worker stated, 'Communication is the best thing about this job, nothing works by itself.'

Children know how to complain. In addition, they have access to a children's champion, who takes time to meet them, get to know them and understand their needs and worries. If children need support and help, then the children's champion can advocate on their behalf. The children's champion has the additional role of supporting and training foster carers to help them to understand the importance of identity, matching and the significance of memories for children in foster care. The children's champion works closely with other staff within the agency to promote bringing children together as part of something greater. Following an introductory visit, the children's champion identifies what children like doing, what their passions are and tries to ensure that they can attend clubs and activities of their choice.

The agency also employs a young people's mentor, whose role is to offer mentoring to children and young people. She helps them with choices, attends their reviews and generally supports them through transitions. The young people's mentor has put together a mandatory independence pack, which takes into account all the important things young people leaving care need to know. The children's mentor role is to support children and young people as much as possible. She stated that her role is 'to ensure they become the best version of themselves'.

Foster carers encourage young people to become independent, starting to teach them skills from the beginning of their placements. One foster carer described how she cooks alongside young people, helping them to learn for themselves. The agency has also been open to young people remaining with foster carers beyond their 18th birthday, under the staying put arrangements. One young person who remains living with his foster carer under this arrangement said, 'My foster carer has helped me keep studying. She has set rules and boundaries for me and helped me focus on the future.'

Children are welcomed into placement by their foster carers, and most children spoken to have the opportunity to meet their foster carers or visit their placement prior to moving in. Where this is not possible, children are welcomed into placement, and planning meetings consider their needs at the earliest opportunity.

Shortly after placement, arrangements are made for the children's champion or mentor to visit and go through the introductory pack with them, making an early connection with them and ensuring that they have numbers where they can access help and support if needed. This helps children and young people to feel welcome and settle in to their foster homes, knowing that they have additional support if needed. The agency website has a cartoon animation made by children and young people explaining all about being in foster care. This is an excellent way of

presenting information for children and young people.

Foster carers are supported to be consistent and provide clear and appropriate boundaries for children and young people. Although at times children and young people have not wanted a restriction, foster carers have worked with this and supported young people to understand why they cannot always have their own way. For example, to ensure safety, foster carers want to know about contact arrangements with birth families. Some children and young people described their foster carers as overly restrictive, for example in respect of dress or choice. On balance, the agency supports children and young people's choices, while also balancing their cultural and religious needs and ensuring their safety. These boundaries help young people to feel respected and to build up trusting relationships with foster carers who are trying to keep them as safe as possible.

Children and young people are well matched in terms of their identity, culture and religion. Where there are not exact matches, foster carers are sensitive to this and work hard to ensure that children feel supported and encouraged to follow their religion or culture and learn more about their own identity, for example by using interpreters, ensuring that dietary requirements are met and supporting children to find a place to practise their chosen religion. All these additional supports and detail to care, allow children to develop a positive self-view and build emotional resilience and confidence. One social worker says, 'The carer has been really good in learning about their culture and cooking foods with them. They have absolutely met language and integration needs.'

Children and young people receive good day-to-day care, which is providing them with routines and consistency. These routines and day-to-day care are provided regardless of the challenges which children and young people present, and are helping to support them to feel safe.

The foster carers and agency workers support children to have contact with their birth families where this is agreed and in line with the placing authority care plans. Foster carers have shown flexibility to ensure that this happens and provided transport to ensure that children get to contact on time. This helps children and young people maintain important links to their families and supports their identity.

All foster carers, without exception, stated that they felt supported and had felt very welcomed by the agency. Foster carers described regular supervisions, good training and access to support workers, both during and outside working hours. This good-quality support is undoubtedly helping foster carers to provide good-quality care. Foster carers say that they feel valued and that they work well as part of a wider team.

Assessments of foster carers are thorough and cover the competencies required to meet the needs of children with complex challenges and needs. Where foster carers have previously fostered for other agencies, the impact of combining and updating assessments is confusing and could be misleading. Foster carers felt well prepared and informed throughout the assessment process. One foster carer says of the agency, 'Staff are contactable, there is no hierarchy and the "prepare to foster"

course was good.'

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

Children feel safe living with their foster families and are protected from harm. Foster carers receive training to help them understand the risks to children from previous abuse, sexual exploitation and risks of radicalisation. There are good co-ordinated responses from the agency to reduce the risk of harm to young people, for example supporting children and young people to raise self-esteem and confidence and reduce risk-taking behaviours. The agency is working with placing authorities, professional networks and, where appropriate, families to reduce risks.

Children and young people experience sensitive care, which provides clear boundaries and takes into account their experiences. Carers understand individual needs and make adjustments to help children and young people settle in quickly. Children and young people behave responsibly in their foster homes and the community and rarely go missing or come into contact with the police due to antisocial or criminal behaviour.

Children are able to identify 'safe' adults they can talk to about their concerns. Although they report that adults listen, they do not always feel that their concerns are taken seriously, or that appropriate responses have facilitated changes. Although the agency is seeking and listening to children and young people's views, the feedback to them about how their views have been taken into account, and how this has affected service delivery, is less obvious.

The agency does not always ensure that full information is shared with foster carers in written documents. For example, when a placing authority is not forthcoming with information, such as risk assessments, placement plans or care plans, the foster carers will only have this information shared verbally. The agency has a duty to secure the welfare of children and young people placed with foster carers and safeguard them at all times. The agency completes a risk profile for each child or young person. However, these do not yet give all the known vulnerabilities for children and do not include the actions that should be taken by foster carers to address and reduce risks. For example, some risk factors recorded in children and young people's referral information were not subsequently included in the risk profile. Although no children or young people have been harmed as a result, the agency does not yet always provide written information in respect of children and young people's needs and any potential risks they present to themselves or others. Safe caring policies for safer fostering within the family are in place.

When children or young people go missing from care, foster carers act quickly in conjunction with the agency to report them missing to the police and inform placing authorities. When children and young people return from missing, the agency has requested an independent person to offer children and young people an interview, worked with the police for debriefs and shared information with the placing authority. This helps children, young people and professionals to understand the reasons for being missing and take prompt action to address concerns.

The agency understands and provides good support to help children to manage their own behaviours and feelings safely. Their foster carers and the agency staff provide good role models to them at regular events held by the agency, and by offering consistent care, routines and boundaries.

Foster carers are given good support and supervision to manage challenging behaviour including training courses in this area. Restraint is not routinely used, but the agency is providing training to look at this alongside de-escalation techniques to keep children as safe as possible. This training is targeted towards foster carers where the children and young people they care for potentially present such challenges.

Foster carers have an understanding of, and receive training in, safer caring. This includes how the use of the internet may pose risks for children and young people, such as bullying, child sexual exploitation and the risk of becoming radicalised.

The agency undertakes safe recruitment practice. All necessary checks are on the database for staff, foster carers and panel members. The agency has a new database system, which is an excellent way of recording this data. This helps ensure that all adults employed by the agency who potentially care for or meet children and young people are carefully screened.

The skills to foster training covers key areas of safeguarding, including the risks of radicalisation. In addition, it may benefit from including more detail on child sexual exploitation and more information about managing the challenging needs presented in many fostering placements. Information presented on slides is simple and easy to understand for new foster carers. Foster carers felt well prepared and informed throughout the assessment and preparation process.

Foster carers are offered a range of training, both face-to-face and online training. The training offered to foster carers is bespoke to the individual needs of the children and young people foster carers are caring for. A number of foster carers have not completed the Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDs) within one year of being approved as carers. Despite this deficit, no children or young people have been placed at risk. However, the agency needs to think more creatively about how they encourage foster carers to complete this mandatory training.

Foster carers do receive unannounced visits, but these are not consistently happening for all foster carers within the expected timescales. Such unannounced visits are a key factor in ensuring that children and young people receive a good standard of care, and offer an additional safeguard within their foster home. However, most children spoken to could identify a trusted adult whom they could talk to if they were worried.

The agency has experienced leaders and managers who identify safeguarding risks to children and report them appropriately. They follow up referrals and chase up outcomes of investigations with placing authorities. Several investigations have

taken place since the last inspection. The agency has reported these appropriately and followed up with the local authority for an outcome. Although the agency has notified the regulator appropriately, it has not always been notified of the outcome. This means that the regulator has sometimes not been able to understand what is happening in child protection investigations within the agency or ensure that appropriate actions are undertaken.

The agency has effective links with placing authorities and knowledge of child protection systems. They have made links to the Local Safeguarding Children Board and shared their safeguarding policy with the host local authority.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The agency has strong leaders and managers. A suitably qualified and experienced registered manager oversees the day-to-day running of the service. The responsible individual is very involved in the running of the service and knows the children and young people individually. Both the responsible individual and the registered manager hold social work qualifications and have lengthy experience of working in both child protection and fostering services. Although the agency has clear lines of delegation and responsibility, there is an atmosphere of openness and transparency within the agency. There is no hierarchy, and team members all stated that they felt that the leaders and managers were approachable and accessible. The whole team is passionate and committed about what they are doing as an agency.

There is good monitoring of the service and the quality of care by leaders and managers. The registered manager completes a written report on the quality of care provided and the work of the agency. This report informs development and action plans, which helps the agency to think about how the service can progress and improve. The agency uses feedback to monitor and improve the service and to identify areas for development in training for staff and foster carers. The agency has taken on board the areas for improvement recommended at the previous inspection and taken effective action to improve services in the five years it has been operating.

The agency has not received any direct complaints since the last inspection, although it has acted on issues raised by young people about the care they receive. Although leaders and managers have taken action, some concerns raised have reoccurred, which has been an issue for some young people and may need a more robust approach to be addressed effectively.

Leaders and managers know the children and young people well, and ensure that individual plans for them meet their needs. All staff are visible and present at activities and workshops held for children and young people throughout the year. This helps children and young people to identify leaders and managers, and ensures that they are approachable and accessible. The agency works well with other agencies and professionals. It has built up good working relationships with placing authority social workers in the interests of children and young people.

When placements have not worked out, the agency has called urgent meetings with placing authorities to discuss plans and think about strategies to support placements. One commissioning authority stated, 'The agency arranged a "placement under pressure" meeting, which reset the boundaries and expectations.'

The agency is not yet making robust enough challenges to placing authorities in respect of the arrangements and expectations of planning placements. Foster carers are communicating effectively and often directly with placing authority social workers. In some situations, the agency's position appeared potentially compromised. For example, a placing authority made a direct approach to a foster carer to bring forward the arrangements for a placement. Although no foster carers reported that this was problematic, such arrangements could leave foster carers, children, young people and the agency vulnerable. Clear arrangements for the placement of children must be in place. This protects children, foster carers and the agency. Without these boundaries, the agency and carers are vulnerable to allegations and/or exploitation.

Staff describe good support from leaders and managers, and feel the agency is focused on the needs of children. For example, the agency decision-maker says, 'The team really does place children at the centre of everything that it does.' The staff team feels very cohesive, its members work well together and have an amazing range of skills to offer children and young people. The agency has developed significantly since the previous inspection. For example, it has employed more staff in specialist roles, such as the children's mentor, a foster care mentor and an educational coordinator. Staff feel motivated to work here and provide good services for children and young people.

Leaders and managers match children and young people carefully. The agency is receiving good referral information and ensuring that it is taken into account when considering placements and the needs of other children and young people in placement. The culture within this agency is one of high expectations and aspirations for all children and young people. There are lots of examples of this happening in practice for children and young people, such as organised activities and support in placement.

Foster carers receive regular support and supervision. Annual reviews are taking place and the quality of these is good, with relevant concerns and issues raised. However, some areas of concerns are not being raised in supervisions with foster carers, such as TSDs and children and young people's concerns about placements. Despite this, overall supervisions are taking place regularly and there are good records of these.

The fostering panel promotes safe, secure and stable placements. It is doing its job of gatekeeping the agency's work. The chair is experienced, and the panel members are diverse in gender, backgrounds and skills. The panel is open and transparent, is operating well and gatekeeping the agency and the services provided.

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 difference 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 who 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: SC457831

Registered provider: Shine Fostering

Registered provider address: Suite 2, 109 George Lane, South Woodford,
London E18 1AN

Responsible individual: Khushbir Green

Registered manager: Beverley Miller

Telephone number: 0208 530 7679

Email address: khush@shinefostering.co.uk

Inspector

Christine Kennet, social care 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 looked after children, 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 2017