

# Fostering London Ltd

Fostering London Ltd  
15 Hilltop Lane, Chaldon, Caterham CR3 5BJ  
Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

This independent fostering agency was registered in October 2015. This was the first inspection of the agency. At the time of inspection, the agency had seven registered foster carers and three children in placement.

**Inspection dates:** 17 to 20 July 2017

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good

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

**Date of last inspection:** Not applicable

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Not applicable

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** Not applicable

## Key findings from this inspection

This independent fostering agency is good because:

- Child-centred decision-making is evident throughout the organisation. Children's individual needs are met through child-centred planning and care provision.
- Managers and staff demonstrate commitment to achieving high standards of practice. They are dedicated to their roles and strive for the best outcomes for children.
- Foster carers are well trained, and receive high-quality support that equips them to meet the needs of the young people in their care. Foster carers speak highly of the support that they receive from the agency.
- Agency staff and foster carers understand the risks that children face, and have a good understanding of safeguarding. Children's risk-taking behaviour reduces as they settle in placement and benefit from the well-thought-through safeguarding strategies.
- Children benefit from opportunities that they enjoy and that support their positive development. They go on holidays with their carers, participate in clubs and activities and receive support to develop positive peer relationships.

The independent fostering agency's areas for development:

- The registered manager is currently absent; effective interim management arrangements have maintained good standards of practice. However, secure future management plans are required.
- Supervision and appraisal arrangements are not in place for all staff, this means that some staff lack a formal review of their work.
- Staff recruitment is generally robust; however, documentary evidence of staff qualifications is not in place for all.
- The safeguarding policy needs to be reviewed and updated; it fails to include guidance on the mandatory reporting of radicalisation and female genital mutilation.
- The statement of purpose requires review; the copy submitted to Ofsted is out of date.

## 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
Ensure the fostering service provider keeps under review and, where appropriate, revises the statement of purpose and children's guide, notifying the Chief Inspector of any such revision within 28 days. (Regulation 4(a)(b))	22/09/2017
Ensure the fostering service provider reviews and updates the written policy which is intended to safeguard children placed with foster parents from abuse and neglect, and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 12(1)(a)(b))	22/09/2017
Ensure no person works for the purposes of a fostering service unless full and satisfactory information is available in relation to that person in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 1. (Regulation 20(3))	22/09/2017
Ensure that all persons employed by the fostering service receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal. (Regulation 21(4)(a))	22/09/2017

### Recommendations

- Ensure where placement-matching gaps are identified the fostering service works with the responsible authority to ensure the placement plan sets out a written plan of any additional training, resource or support required. (National Minimum Standards 15.1)
- Ensure the written development plan is reviewed annually, for the future of the service, either identifying planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirming the continuation of the service's current operation and resource. (National Minimum Standards 18.2)
- Ensure entries in records are signed and dated and are stored in a clear and easily accessible format. (National Minimum Standards 26.5)

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive thoughtful individualised care that meets their needs. They build trusting relationships with their carers. One child said, 'We talk about anything and everything; she's like a mum.' Carers go the 'extra mile' to ensure that children's needs are met.

Children receive positive experiences; they undertake activities that they enjoy and go on family holidays with their carers. Disengaged children receive support to re-engage with clubs and activities suited to their needs, including air cadets, kickboxing and horse riding.

A thorough children's guide equips children to complain should they wish to. Children know agency staff well; they share their views, and are listened to. They also have access to advocates.

Agency staff and foster carers are committed to children's education. A dedicated educational consultant provides individualised support for children's educational needs. The agency challenges educational establishments appropriately to ensure that children's educational opportunities are maximised.

Children's health and well-being improves in placement. Children develop healthy routines, benefit from a healthy diet and exercise, and receive the specialist physical and emotional health resources that they need. Children who lack self-care skills develop these and begin to take pride in themselves and their appearance.

Children are welcomed thoughtfully into their placements; there are visits beforehand wherever possible. Carers demonstrate a good understanding of children's transitional needs and support these effectively. Likewise, children moving on from placement benefit from thoughtful transition plans, including memory books and appropriate ongoing contact with their foster carers.

Carers from diverse cultures and backgrounds support children's identity and heritage. Children are respected for who they are by carers who understand the importance of developing children's positive identity. Children's achievements are well celebrated by their carers and the agency; award evenings recognise notable achievements; and foster carers and the wider agency recognise and reflect upon children's small, but significant, developments.

Placements demonstrate good matching; the agency demonstrates a commitment to seeking well-matched placements and does not compromise matching decisions. There is not always a written plan to address identified placement matching gaps; however, in practice, these are addressed via individualised carer support and training.

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

Foster carers understand children's risks and respond appropriately to provide protection. Where children have a history of absconding, foster carers have clear strategies in place for reporting missing incidents and protecting children effectively. They understand and are alert to the risk of child sexual exploitation that may accompany some children's missing behaviour. Safeguarding strategies are proactive; as a result, children's risk-taking behaviour reduces.

The training of foster carers has a strong emphasis on children's safety. It covers safeguarding, online safety, child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and risks associated with trafficked children. Alongside training, the supervision of foster carers has a focus upon safe care, providing individualised training and testing foster carers' understanding of the strategies in place for maximising children's safety.

All children have individualised safe-care plans that guide carers to respond effectively to children's protection needs. These are always in place at the point of placement, and are reviewed as children develop and their needs change.

Behaviour management is thoughtful and child centred. Foster carer supervision demonstrates regular exploration of children's behaviour and carefully explores strategies for managing any challenging behaviour. A carer said, 'I think the quality of support I receive makes a difference to the quality of care I provide.' Carers demonstrate a good understanding of the behaviour of the children in their care and are able to think behind this behaviour and develop successful care strategies for meeting children's needs.

The reporting of safeguarding concerns is effective; the local authority designated officer reports that the agency 'reports everything to the letter'. Complaints and concerns are thoroughly investigated, with the oversight of the agency panel where appropriate.

The agency has good relationships with placing authorities. A commissioner said, 'The agency are thorough, they are accommodating and creative; placements seem to go really well.' A local authority social worker said, 'Communication is really good; I get daily updates without requesting these. Carer support from the agency appears to be thorough; they have helped the carer to reflect upon the placement and the child's needs.'

The agency's safeguarding policy has not been reviewed recently; the policy fails to provide guidance on mandatory safeguarding reporting of female genital mutilation and reporting responsibilities under the 'Prevent' agenda.

Staff recruitment is, in the main, thorough; however, in some cases regulatory recruitment checks are incomplete, particularly documentary evidence of qualifications of applicants. This is not in line with regulatory requirement and does not maximise the protection of children.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

The registered manager is currently absent from her position. Successful interim management plans are currently sustaining the high quality of practice within the agency. Plans for future management need to be reviewed to ensure that there is secure leadership for the agency in the future. The agency's statement of purpose and business plan have not been subject to recent review or updating.

Agency records are stored inconsistently. A new IT system promises improvement to agency recording; however, this remains in a period of transition and the full benefit of its implementation is yet to be seen.

The manager receives monthly therapeutic consultation that is external to the agency, but no in-house supervision. Freelance staff undertaking key organisational duties also lack formal supervision. Furthermore, staff and panel members have not been subject to appraisal. This means that staff practice has yet to be formally supported and reviewed.

Leaders and managers demonstrate awareness of the agency's strengths and weaknesses, and have taken effective action to prevent shortfalls in the quality of care. They demonstrate commitment to achieving high standards of practice and attaining the best outcomes for children. They challenge external agencies appropriately to secure services and care plans that meet children's needs.

Foster carer supervision evidences child-centred reflective discussion with carers. Supervision does not shy away from discussing difficult issues; it demonstrates the agency's high expectations for children, alongside high-quality agency support for carers.

The agency panel demonstrates excellent quality assurance and ensures that only high-calibre applicants are recommended for approval. Assessments and reports presented to the panel are of a good quality; they enable panel members to effectively reflect upon the information presented to them and explore issues robustly yet sensitively.

New carers speak highly of the training that they receive, both prior to and post approval. They also benefit from high-quality and engaging training provision with an intrinsic emphasis on safeguarding children. Carers speak highly of the agency and the support that they receive. One carer said 'It's like a family unit; we are well bonded and support each other.' Another said, 'I've had to call staff at midnight and three in the morning; they are always there, you never feel you are on your own.'

## **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:** SC488788

**Registered provider:** Fostering London Ltd

**Registered provider address:** 15 Hilltop Lane, Chaldon, Caterham CR3 5BJ

**Responsible individual:** Diana Searle

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## **Inspector**

Lucy Chapman: social care inspector





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