

Regional Foster Placements Ltd

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St James Business Park, Cranmer Suite, Grantham Road, Radcliffe on Trent,
Nottingham NG12 2JP

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

This agency has been registered since 2015. It is owned by a private company. It offers a range of placements, including respite, emergency, short- and long-term, permanency, parent and child and sibling groups. At the time of this inspection, there were 38 children and young people placed in 33 fostering households.

Inspection dates: 24 to 28 September 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding

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

Date of last inspection: 25 January 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This independent fostering agency is outstanding because:

- Children and young people make exceptional progress from their starting points, in all areas of their lives.
- Placements are extremely well matched, taking into full consideration the needs of children and young people and the ability of carers to meet those needs.
- Agency staff and managers fully involve children, young people and carers in all aspects of how the agency is run.
- Research informs practice in numerous areas of how the agency operates.
- Staff and carers receive excellent training and development opportunities to increase and enhance their skills and knowledge.
- The agency is led by an inspirational manager. She inspires confidence in staff and carers and leads by example at all times.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

From their starting points, there is abundant evidence of the extremely positive progress made by children and young people. They flourish in their foster placements. They overcome a range of issues, with excellent and consistent support from dedicated carers.

Carers produce monthly reports to demonstrate the progress made by children and young people in a range of areas. The information is then converted into graphs. This provides carers and agency staff with a clear and visual sense of children and young people's progress or any areas of concern. It is then used to inform the plans and work required.

Children and young people take part in interviews for agency staff. They contribute to the Skills to Foster training for new carers. Children and young people provide feedback on their emotional well-being on a regular basis. This supports children and young people to feel extremely valued and central to the care and support they receive, at all times.

Matching is a key strength of this agency. Wherever possible, children and young people meet with their carers before moving in. They receive a child-friendly profile of their carers. They also receive a lovely welcome box. This contains a quilt and other items. This shows an agency intent on making children and young people feel valued from their first contact.

The health needs of children and young people are extremely well met. This relates not only to their physical health, but also their complex emotional and behavioural needs. The agency sources and provides counselling and therapeutic support to carers, children and young people.

A strong focus is placed on ensuring that the educational, training and employment needs of children and young people are met. Carers and agency staff act as strong and positive advocates. They challenge any delay or issues and can articulate the progress made by children and young people in their care. Young people have aspirations for their futures and make excellent progress.

Carers demonstrate a detailed and commendable understanding of the need for children and young people to form peer relationships and to maintain contact with friends and family members. They support contact arrangements to an excellent level. This makes children and young people feel valued and listened to.

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

Children and young people feel safe and protected from harm. Carers demonstrate a

commendable understanding of their complex needs. They understand the need to balance known concerns with the need to enable young people to take age-appropriate risks over time.

Carers and agency staff work very closely and positively with involved agencies and professionals to ensure that children and young people are protected at all times. The agency requests meetings when concerns arise, it chases placing authorities and others for missing information. It understands the necessity of having information to inform risk assessments and safe care plans.

Carers demonstrate a commendable insight into the histories of the children and young people living with them. They have worked supportively to significantly reduce missing from care and self-harmful behaviours. There are numerous examples of how children and young people have been supported to reduce or eliminate concerning or risky behaviours.

Clear and consistent strategies are used to manage behaviours and concerning situations. Carers receive excellent practical and emotional support from agency staff in relation to this. The out of hours service is very responsive to carers' needs. Agency staff go above and beyond their roles to ensure that carers, children and young people receive the support they need, at all times.

An excellent training programme provides carers with the skills they need to keep children and young people safe. This includes training around allegations. Carers feel extremely well supported and understand the protocols and procedures to be followed. Carers also reported that they are able to ask for bespoke training. This reflects the commitment of the manager to supporting carers at all times and in meeting children's and young people's current and changing needs.

The recruitment and selection procedures for carers and agency staff are robust and thorough. They prevent unsuitable adults from working with vulnerable children and young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

This agency is run by a truly inspirational manager. She leads by example and is held in extremely high regard by her own staff and carers, as well as involved agencies and professionals. She sets very high aspirations for the children and young people and expects staff and carers to do the same.

There are excellent monitoring and tracking systems in place. Agency staff act as very positive and strong advocates for children and young people in their care. They routinely challenge placing authorities and others to ensure that children's and young people's needs are met.

Commissioning officers for placing authorities reported consistently high levels of satisfaction at the care and support provided. Comments such as: 'Carers go above and beyond,' and 'children placed have come on in leaps and bounds,' are common statements made.

The fostering panel is made up of a wide range of panel members. Their experience and skills provide robust and appropriate consideration of assessments and reviews. The panel chair is extremely skilled. She has performed the role since the agency was first registered. Improvements have been made to the recording by the agency decision-maker since the last inspection. Decisions are now much more clearly recorded. The shortfall raised at the last inspection has been fully met.

The agency has a detailed statement of purpose in place. The agency is not currently providing male carer support groups but will consider this again, if requested. The requirement made at the last inspection has been met, as reference to male carer support groups has been removed.

Carers reported that they receive excellent support and supervision from their supervising social workers. They feel truly valued and appreciated. No pressure is placed on them to take placements, which leads to excellent placement stability and outstanding outcomes for children and young people placed.

Agency staff similarly feel extremely well supported and valued by the manager. One stated: 'The manager is tremendous. I have been amazed over the years to see the effort that she puts into stabilising placements. It has shown me that this agency is passionate about the children and not about the profits.'

Information about this inspection

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

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

Independent fostering agency details

Unique reference number: SC486607

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Inspectors:

Tracy Murty, social care regulatory inspector
Amanda Ellis, social care regulatory inspector



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