

# Action for Children Fostering South West

Action for Children

Horner Court, 637 Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol BS7 0BJ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

Action for Children is a nationally registered charity providing a range of children's social care services. Action for Children – Fostering South West provides fostering services for children and young people who need substitute family care, and for whom adoption is not appropriate.

There are currently 31 children and young people living in 34 fostering households.

**Inspection dates:** 22 to 26 October 2018

<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	good
---	------

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

**Date of last inspection:** 22 February 2016

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Key findings from this inspection

This independent fostering agency is good because:

- Since the last inspection in 2016, there have been several changes within the management team. Despite these changes, the quality and effectiveness of the service have remained consistently strong.
- Warm, loving relationships with their foster carers help children and young people to feel safe and secure. This enables them to begin to develop attachments and make sustained progress in their overall development.
- The experienced and qualified staff, along with experienced and loving carers, ensure that placement stability is maintained for most of the children and young people placed by the agency.
- Careful consideration is given to the matching of children and young people with foster families. Recruitment and assessment are of a particularly high standard. As a result, placement disruption is rare. When disruptions do occur, they are managed with the child's best interests at heart.
- Leaders and managers make very good use of clinical supervision from highly qualified professionals. This enhances their practice skills to better support carers, children and young people.

The independent fostering agency's areas for development:

- The registered manager must ensure that there is no delay in the notifying of serious incidents.
- Participation of foster carers, children and young people needs to develop to ensure that all can contribute to the development of the agency.

## 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>Notifiable events</p> <p>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 must without delay notify the persons or bodies indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. (Regulation 36 (1))</p>	21/12/2018

## **Inspection judgements**

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

The agency has consistently provided highly individual, personalised support for children, young people and foster carers. Carers and professionals speak positively of the training and supervision they receive. Consequently, the outcomes for children and young people are consistently positive.

Foster carers, their families, children and young people and professionals say that their family relationships have improved enormously because of the therapeutic support that is provided by the agency's clinical psychologist. Children and young people show marked improvements in their behaviour, education, emotional well-being and stability. In some cases, the agency's skilled and dedicated workforce has helped to avoid family breakdown. This has a major positive impact on children's life chances.

Since the last inspection, the agency has remained relatively small in its size. As a result, all staff personally know the foster carers, children and young people. The skills and experience of the staff team and panel members make them very good at identifying the needs of the children and young people. The panel chair spoke highly of the impact, speaking of the keenness, focus and transparency of the staff and panel members. As a result, placement matches are strong.

Almost all foster carers spoke positively of the recruitment and assessment process. They say that they felt welcomed and supported well. However, for a very small number this process was delayed due to staff shortage. Since then, a highly skilled and experienced recruitment and marketing team ensures that anyone who contacts the agency is responded to promptly. Furthermore, assessments are detailed, well recorded and carried out in a timely and efficient manner.

Foster carers, children and young people are consulted with and their views and opinions are recognised. However, the agency needs to develop processes to further consult to ensure that participation in the development of the agency takes place.

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

The agency maintains a good level of safeguarding training. Independent and external clinical supervision takes place to ensure that a small agency remains up to date with practice developments.

The agency manages risks affecting individual children and young people very well. Detailed and comprehensive risk assessments are kept up to date, which helps the foster carers understand how best to support the children and young people.

Foster carers receive regular announced and unannounced visits by their supervising social worker. They say that they feel very supported at all times of the day and night.

Incidents of children and young people going missing are rare. When this does happen, foster carers and professionals are proactive in their responses and work collaboratively to ensure the safe return of the child or young person. Return home interviews are provided by the most appropriate person in a timely manner, ensuring that the child or young person has the person they know best listening to them.

The fostering agency has a thorough, well-audited system for recruiting staff and panel members. This helps to ensure that children and young people are not vulnerable to adults who may potentially pose a risk to them.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Since the last inspection in 2016, the management team has changed. There has also been sickness that at times depleted the staff team. Despite this, the agency has continued to be managed well.

Leaders and managers have maintained good standards of practice built around a culture of continuous improvement. This is achieved by providing good clinical and reflective supervision, and training by professionals that are skilled and knowledgeable in their field.

Through careful and considered recruitment, leaders and managers have built a dedicated, compassionate and skilled workforce. This means that they provide foster carers with excellent levels of skilled support.

Management monitoring and reviewing are good. The registered manager ensures that all the agency's work is quality assured to achieve consistently good practice. She has monitoring systems to track children's progress over the course of their placements. These remain in their early stages of implementation and require further time to embed to measure their effectiveness.

Leaders and managers work well with other professionals involved with each child and young person. Professionals spoke highly of the registered manager's communication, which results in all parties feeling very well informed of the children and young people's needs and progress.

All notifiable incidents are reported in line with the fostering regulations. However, on three occasions there was delay in submitting the information to Ofsted. A requirement is therefore made.

### **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:** SC031085

**Registered provider:** Action for Children

**Registered provider address:** Action for Children, 85 Highbury Park, London N5 1UD

**Responsible individual:** Christina Brandi

**Registered manager:** Joanna Killick

**Telephone number:** 0117 300 5360

**Email address:** swaafp@actionforchildren.org.uk

## **Inspector**

Linda Bond, 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 children looked after, 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018