

Triangle Project

Triangle Project

TS3 Pinewood Business Park, Coleshill Road, Marston Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B37 7HG

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Triangle Project is a small early permanence project founded and supported by two voluntary adoption agencies: Adoption Focus and St Francis' Children's Society. Early permanence foster carers are dually approved as adopters with either Adoption Focus or St Francis' Children's Society. The project provides a range of services that include the recruitment, preparation, assessment and approval of early permanence carers.

The project was registered in September 2017. This is the first inspection since it was registered. Up to the date of this inspection, the agency had placed three children with two families.

Inspection dates: 29 October to 2 November 2018

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: N/A

Overall judgement at last inspection: N/A

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This independent fostering agency is good because:

- The assessments of early permanence carers are thorough and analytical.
- Carers are well supported and prepared for their role as early permanence carers.
- Matching and introductions are well planned and meet the needs of the children.
- Children make good progress with carers. They settle well and begin to develop strong attachments.
- The early permanence fostering panel provides a good level of independent challenge and scrutiny.
- There is strong governance from the management team. The manager has good oversight and understanding of the project, and of children's progress.
- Staff are well trained to meet the needs of the children who are placed with the project. They have access to a wide range of specialist training opportunities.
- There is excellent continuity of staff for carers and children. Social workers remain with carers and children throughout their journeys into adoption if that is the agreed plan.

The independent fostering agency's areas for development:

- Children's records are not always individual to each child, or accessible to them should they want to access their files in later years.
- The project has not obtained full and satisfactory information about those who are contracted to work for the service from an external 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
Ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to any person who is employed to work for the purpose of the fostering service in respect of matters specified in schedule 1. (Regulation 20(3)(c)) This relates to those who are contracted to work for the service.	30/11/2018

Recommendations

- Ensure information about a child is recorded clearly and in a way that will be helpful when they access their files now or in the future. ('Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards', page 52, paragraph 26.6)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Early permanence foster carers are dually approved as adopters. They are welcomed, prepared and assessed well. They are given clear information about early permanence at the point of enquiry and throughout the assessment process. If a prospective adopter shows interest in early permanence during the adoption assessment process, matters pertaining to early permanence are further explored.

Assessments reflect the specific nature and requirements of early permanence. Reports are analytical and thorough. Considered assessments and specific training in early permanence help to ensure that carers are suitable to meet the specific needs of the children they will care for. One local authority social worker felt that carers were 'well prepared for early permanence'.

Carers speak highly of the agency and they feel very supported by their supervising social workers. One carer commented, 'Their approach was helpful and very child focused from day one.' Another stated, 'They have been absolutely fantastic. They have gone above and beyond.'

The matching process is clear and considered. Children's needs are matched with the skills and abilities of the carers. Introductions are well planned and meet the needs of the children. This process is supported well by the supervising social workers alongside children's social workers.

Carers are committed to meeting the individual needs of children who are placed with them and build positive and nurturing relationships with them. Consequently, children make good progress in what is often a very short time. They settle well, begin to develop attachments and improve their general health and well-being.

Early permanence carers are fully aware of the importance of maintaining and encouraging positive links with children's birth families. Their willingness to understand and accept the importance of contact for children during this time is thoroughly explored during their assessments and training.

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

Safeguarding is embedded in carers' assessments, approvals, training and supervisions. Early permanence carers receive safeguarding training as part of their preparation and assessment to adopt and to provide early permanence. This training helps them to understand the potential impact of abuse and neglect on the children who they may care for.

Children are safe and protected from harm within their new families. They are not of an age where they are likely to go missing. Carers have all the information that they need to safely care for the children placed with them. Safe care plans and risk

assessments further ensure that all carers have a full understanding of the risks children may face.

Managers view safeguarding as paramount to the well-being of children and the recruitment of permanent staff and carers is robust. However, an independent assessing social worker was employed on one occasion, through an external agency, without managers verifying the external agency's recruitment procedures. Risk was minimal on this occasion, as there was no direct contact with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

This is a small early permanence project founded and supported by two voluntary adoption agencies. The purpose of the project is to speed up a child's journey through care and to minimise the disruption of repeated moves to different families. However, there have been only three placements made with the project over the last 12 months. Managers feel that this is partly due to the current financial situation faced by local authorities.

The management team has a wealth of experience both in adoption and fostering. The agency is well staffed and resourced to meet the needs of the children and early permanence carers it works with. The continuity of staff for carers and children is a strength of the project. Social workers from both founding adoption agencies are seconded into the project. They remain with the carers and children through their journeys into adoption if that is the agreed plan.

There are robust systems for reporting to the board of trustees that ensure there is clear governance of the project. The agency has excellent systems in place to quality assure and monitor the performance of the agency.

Staff receive regular supervision from managers within their respective adoption agencies and with the registered manager from the Triangle Project when a child is placed with early permanence carers. This ensures that the manager has good oversight of all those working for the project.

Although staff are seconded from two separate agencies, they meet regularly as a team to develop a sense of shared ownership. Staff feel well supported and managed. There is effective training of staff to meet the needs of the children who are placed with the project, as staff have access to the wide range of specialist training opportunities provided by the adoption agencies. This is supplemented by further training to develop the staff's knowledge and understanding of fostering.

The project is meeting the aims and objectives of its statement of purpose. There are two children's guides aimed at different age groups that inform children of what to expect when they are placed with early permanence carers. The website is informative and easy to use.

The manager and staff work well in partnership with local authority social workers. One local authority support worker commented, 'We all worked well together.'

Everyone shared information well and all were very clear and happy with the process.' The manager has worked closely with local authorities. He challenges local authorities to ensure that children do not experience unnecessary delay in being placed with their early permanence carers.

The fostering panel is diverse and is knowledgeable about fostering and early permanence. It provides a good independent quality-assurance function. There is strong scrutiny of assessments, and clear recommendations are made. Panel members undergo training to help them fulfil their roles and responsibilities. This ensures that they understand the fostering process and keep up with developments in practice.

Records are clear and accurate. However, children's records are not always individual to each child placed, or accessible to them should they want to access their files in later years.

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: 1258436

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Registered provider address: Kemp House, 152–160, City Road, London EC1V 2NX

Responsible individual: Alison Miller

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Inspector

Sue Young: social care inspector



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