

SWIIS Foster Care Limited

SWIIS Foster Care Limited

15 Warwick Road, Old Trafford, Manchester M16 0QQ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

SWIIS Foster Care Limited is a national independent provider of foster care services. This report relates to one branch of the agency, which is based in Manchester, with a satellite office in Rawtenstall, Lancashire. The agency recruits, assesses and approves foster carers who provide a range of placement types. This includes emergency, short-term, long-term and mother and baby placements.

Inspection dates: 3 to 7 December 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: 28 September 2015

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This independent fostering agency is good because:

- Foster carers receive timely and ongoing support from the agency. This significantly contributes to the long-term placements that children and young people enjoy and enhances their life chances.
- The agency makes child-centred decisions about the care of young people. This is underpinned by managers encouraging and maintaining a learning environment among staff and foster carers.
- Children and young people are able to build trusted relationships with foster carers and they feel listened to. The quality of these relationships offers children and young people a sense of belonging with their foster carers.
- Foster carers know and understand well the children and young people they care for. This understanding underpins foster carers' actions to keep children and young people safe.

The independent fostering agency's areas for development:

- Recordings by staff and managers of the rationale for some decision-making are not always clear. Some records are descriptive and not evaluative in nature.
- Managerial systems for ensuring that local authorities provide necessary documents and services to children and young people are not sufficiently effective. The current means of escalating such requests are limited.
- Some policy documents lack clarity for foster carers when they are faced with challenging behaviours from children and young people. As a result, it is not clear which approach is to be used and under what circumstances.

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

Statutory requirements

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

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals and improving the quality of foster care provided by the fostering agency. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b))	28/02/2019
The fostering service provider must prepare and implement a written policy on acceptable measures of control, restraint and discipline of children. (Regulation 13 (1))	31/01/2019

Recommendations

- Where a child goes missing and there is concern for their welfare, or at the request of a child who has been missing, the fostering service arranges a meeting in private between the child and the responsible authority to consider the reasons for their going missing. (National Minimum Standards, standard 5.8)
- The manager regularly monitors all records kept by the service to ensure compliance with the service's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. Immediate action is taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring. (National Minimum Standards, standard 25.2)
- Children are carefully matched to a foster placement. Foster carers have full information about the child (as set out in standard 3.9). (National Minimum Standards, standard 11.2)
- The fostering service has and implements a written policy that clarifies the purpose, format and content of information to be kept on the fostering service's file, on the child's files and on case files relating to foster carers. (National Minimum Standards, standard 26.1).
- Entries in records, decisions and reasons for them, are legible, clearly expressed, non-stigmatising, distinguish between fact and opinion and third party information and are signed and dated. (National Minimum Standards, standard 26.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and young people make good progress while living with their foster carers. This includes making progress in education, achieving greater emotional stability, managing their relationships and making safer decisions. The receipt of child-centred care helps fostered children to build secure and trusting relationships with others.

Foster carers offer nurturing and welcoming homes that children and young people feel part of. Some young people spoke about feeling 'loved', and many choose to call their foster carers 'mum' and 'dad'. These supportive family environments nurture children and young people's talents and strengths, and foster carers are ambitious for them to achieve.

Children and young people expressed feeling that they 'belong' with their foster families, and this sense of permanence contributes to their emotional growth and feelings of self-worth. A particular strength of the foster carers and agency is the number of children and young people that enjoy long-term placements beyond 18 years of age.

The good-quality care that children and young people receive from foster carers is underpinned by the support offered by supervising social workers. All carers spoken to value this support and feel that there is 'always someone to talk to.' One social worker commented, 'All the workers are really, really good at supporting the carers. They are one of the best agencies I have ever worked with.'

When children and young people move on from their foster carers in an unplanned way, the managers seek to learn from those incidents to improve the services they offer. Supervising social workers and managers have good insight into children and young people's needs and the strengths of the foster carers. However, the rationale for matching children to foster carers is not clearly documented. This reduces managerial insight into the factors contributing to the success and the breakdown of placements.

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

Over time, children and young people become safer in the decisions they make. Through the trusting relationships that carers establish, young people are more open about their experiences and to listening to the advice that they are given.

When young people go missing, foster carers follow protocols and procedures and they go looking for young people. This latter act contributes to young people feeling cared about and valued.

However, young people are not always offered return home interviews following incidents of missing from home. Although the managers are proactive in requesting these from the local authorities, this challenge is not effective.

Children and young people benefit from clear and consistent boundaries that foster carers offer. Through these structured environments and the warm and nurturing relationships foster carers establish, young people begin to positively manage their emotions. As a result, contact between children and young people's families improves and young people learn to establish and maintain positive peer relationships.

Recruitment and assessment of foster carers are appropriately carried out by the agency. There are suitable challenge and scrutiny by the fostering panel and agency decision-maker. These processes contribute to children and young people being cared for safely.

Managers respond to complaints and allegations in a timely manner. However, managerial investigations and enquiries are recorded over a number of files and are not comprehensively maintained. Outcomes are not clearly recorded, complainants are not sent an outcome letter and learning from these enquiries is not evident.

Foster carers manage challenging behaviours well. They are effective at using their understanding of children and young people to de-escalate situations. On occasion, some carers have used physical intervention and restraint when young people present a significant risk to themselves or others. However, the agency's policies are not clear about this form of intervention, and managers are not appropriately trained. This limits managerial scrutiny, challenge and oversight.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is appropriately qualified and experienced and was registered to manage the service in June 2018. She provides effective leadership and sets high expectations of foster carers and staff in providing good-quality care to children and young people.

Managers provide a supportive environment for staff and create a culture that is child focused in its decision-making and service delivery. The managers and staff are open to learning and they work proactively with other agencies. Foster carers feel that the support offered to them is timely and proactive.

When young people falter in their progress or express discontent with their care, staff are highly sensitive and reflective in their approach with foster carers. This enables foster carers to make the necessary changes and contributes to the longevity of placements that most children and young people enjoy.

Workload allocation ensures that staff are able to offer timely and ongoing support to foster carers, and this is appropriately increased based on the needs of the child or young person. Recently introduced monitoring systems alert managers to any changes in children and young people's progress and assist with overall planning of the service.

There are extensive systems in place that the managers use to monitor the quality

of service provided. This monitoring is not frequent enough to address the lack of return home interviews in a timely way and has not always addressed the lack of clarity in recordings by staff. In addition, children and young people's local authority plans and documents have not always been secured at the beginning of their placements.

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: SC043551

Registered provider: SWIIS Foster Care Limited

Registered provider address: Connaught House, 80–81 Wimpole Street, London W1G 9RE

Responsible individual: Keith Stopher

Registered manager: Wendy Keillor

Telephone number: 0161 228 7442

Email address: keith.stopher@swiis.com

Inspectors

Pauline Yates, social care inspector

Shabana Abasi, Her Majesty's 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.

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 2018