

# Wholistic Fostering Ltd

Wholistic Fostering Limited

34 Brook House, Brook Street Business Centre, Brook Street, Tipton DY4 9DD

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

A small private company operates this fostering agency. The agency currently has five children placed with foster carers. Seven households with 10 carers have been approved. The registered manager is appropriately qualified and experienced.

**Inspection dates:** 5 to 9 August 2019

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The independent fostering agency provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 12 March 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## **Inspection judgements**

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

Foster carers are supported and prepared well to meet the needs of the children they have placed with them. Matching is appropriately conducted by the manager and staff. They ensure that foster carers have all the information regarding children that they need to care for them. This has resulted in good stability for the majority of children the agency place.

Children form strong bonds with their foster carers. As a result, children develop in confidence and self-esteem. Foster carers support children well to gain the skills that they need to be able to manage their difficult feelings. One child's independent reviewing officer commented that he had 'never seen this child so calm'.

Children are progressing well in their foster placements. They are achieving good outcomes in all areas of their development. This is because foster carers are committed to meeting the individual needs of the children they have placed with them.

Foster carers have high aspirations for children and support them well in their education. Children are thriving in school. For example, one foster carer has sourced and paid for extra tuition for her child. As a result, he is now achieving higher than his expected targets in school.

Children's health needs are met well by foster carers and the agency. The manager and carers effectively work with others as part of a team to support the children that they care for. The agency is proactive in ensuring that children receive the specialist help, such as psychological support, that they need.

Foster carers support children to have positive experiences with their birth families. This includes inviting parents and brothers and sisters, where appropriate, into their home to allow them to have a more relaxed and informal time together.

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

Children are supported to feel safe in their foster homes. Foster carers and agency staff identify, understand and manage risk well. This helps to ensure that children are kept safe.

Children do not go missing from their foster homes. There have been no safeguarding concerns since the last inspection. Foster carers are fully aware of the procedures that they need to follow to safeguard children. Safeguarding and safer caring are explored in foster carer assessments and during foster carers' supervisions. This ensures that safeguarding processes are discussed and kept under review to promote children's welfare.

Foster carers receive a range of behaviour management and safeguarding training, which includes online safety, radicalisation and child sexual exploitation. This ensures that they are knowledgeable about the concerns that may pose a risk to children and are able to act to safeguard them.

Foster carers are well prepared and able to manage complex behaviour well. For example, they promote positive behaviour, to good effect, using reward charts and other such behaviour management tools. This helps children to understand and manage their behaviours better.

Recruitment of staff, panel members and foster carers ensures that they are all safe to work with children.

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

This is a small family-based agency consisting of the registered manager and responsible individual. They use independent assessors, when required, to assess prospective foster carers.

The fostering panel is not fulfilling its quality assurance function. It does not always provide detailed scrutiny of assessments. For example, on one occasion, discussions regarding a foster carer's background were not evidenced as being thoroughly discussed and explored by panel members. There is also no formal overview of the findings from panel to improve the quality of assessments. As a result, the agency is not benefiting from the independent overview that the fostering panel can deliver.

Panel members' skills are not diverse. There is currently no representative from education, health or a foster carer sitting on panel to adequately reflect the issues under consideration.

Although the manager receives informal supervision from an external source, there is no independent oversight or accountability into the running of the agency. There are also no clear arrangements in place to identify who is responsible when the manager is absent. Currently, the manager is always on duty. This is unsustainable.

Managers are monitoring children's outcomes, but are not evaluating the quality of care provided by the agency. The agency is consolidating and strengthening its recording and monitoring systems. However, the systems for the governance of the agency are in their infancy and, as yet, do not fully support this.

Policies, procedures and the foster carer handbook are wordy and, at times, unclear and inaccurate. For example, the policy relating to panel is not an accurate interpretation of the regulations regarding membership. Recording of health and safety checks and the matching of children is also unclear and does not demonstrate the rationale behind decisions that have been made. This has the potential for confusion and delay in measures being put in place to adequately care for children.

Foster carers are welcomed, prepared and assessed well. Reports are generally of a good quality and foster carers say that they feel well prepared to care for children they have placed with them.

Foster carers receive a wide range of training to meet children's needs. This ensures that foster carers have the skills they need to care for children well. Foster carers receive regular supervisions and are unanimously positive about the support that they receive. The manager ensures that she speaks with children during these visits to gain their views. As a result, children feel that any concerns they may have will be

taken seriously and addressed.

Managers are child focused and prioritise children's needs. They place children at the forefront of everything they do. The children's guide for older children has recently be reviewed. This provides children with an excellent understanding of living in foster care and promotes a positive image and understanding of being a child who is looked after.

The manager knows the children well. She is passionate and is a strong advocate for children. She escalates concerns and actively challenges other professionals when this is deemed necessary. This was particularly evident for one child who was waiting for a psychological assessment to begin. This ensure that children's needs are met without delay.

The manager and foster carers work well in partnership with other professionals. This ensures that children receive coordinated care. Placing social workers are all very positive about the level of care and support that their children receive.

## 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
The fostering panel must oversee the conduct of assessments carried out by the fostering service provider, and give advice, and make recommendations, on such other matters or cases as the fostering service provider may refer to it. (Regulation 25(4)(b)(c))	30/09/2019
The registered person must maintain a system for improving the quality of foster care provided by the fostering agency. (Regulation 35(1)(b))	30/09/2019

### Recommendations

- Ensure that the number, skills, knowledge and experience of persons on the central list are sufficient to enable the fostering service to constitute panels that are equipped to make competent recommendations to the fostering service provider, taking into account the nature of the children and carers that the service caters for. (Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards, page 31, paragraph 14.8)
- Ensure that managers, staff, volunteers and foster carers are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The level of delegation and responsibility of the manager, and the lines of accountability, are clearly defined. (Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards, page 50, paragraph 25.4)
- Ensure that clear arrangements are in place to identify the person in charge when the registered manager, or local authority fostering service manager, is absent (Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards, page 50, paragraph 25.5)
- Ensure that there are explicit policies in place to enable foster carers and staff to keep clear records about children in placement and the work of foster carers with those children. (The Children's Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services: page 52, paragraph 5.75)

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people 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:** SC476942

**Registered provider:** Wholistic Fostering Limited

**Registered provider address:** 34 Brook House, Brook Street Business Centre,  
Brook Street, Tipton DY4 9DD

**Responsible individual:** Michael Dennis

**Registered manager:** Patricia Nettleford

**Telephone number:** 01922 622233

**Email address:** [info@wholisticfostering.co.uk](mailto:info@wholisticfostering.co.uk)

## **Inspectors**

Sue Young, social care inspector

Gareth Leckey, social care inspector



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