

Be My Family Fostering Agency

11 St. Albans Avenue, Feltham, Middlesex TW13 6RL

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Be My Family is a privately owned, independent fostering agency. It provides a wide range of fostering placements, including emergency, short-term, long-term, permanent and respite. It provides placements for children with additional and complex needs, for brothers and sisters, and for parents with children. At the time of this monitoring visit, the agency had 21 foster carers and 29 children in placement.

This agency was registered with Ofsted in November 2009. The manager was registered at the same time.

Inspection date: 20 August 2020

Date of previous inspection: 5 March 2018

This monitoring visit

Ofsted instigated this monitoring visit due to the high level of standards of care concerns received in the past eight months. Some of these concerns have resulted in children being moved into alternative placements.

This visit was undertaken remotely. A foster carer's annual review, supervision records, personal development plan and their review following allegations were examined. The matching record and referral forms for two children were examined. The record of foster carers' training and support groups was also reviewed.

The inspector held individual discussions with the registered manager, three of the agency's supervising social workers and three foster carers. Email feedback was also received from a social worker and the panel chair. Four other placing social workers were contacted; however, feedback was not received from them.

The visit concluded that the agency continues to benefit from strong leadership. The registered manager has a good grasp of the issues concerning particular foster

carers. Appropriate action is taken to address concerns regarding safeguarding, dishonesty and a lack of transparency. This includes recommending the deregistration of foster carers.

The registered manager has a proactive and 'hands-on' management style. Foster carers and staff described him as being very approachable and supportive. The registered manager reflects and learns from issues. This learning is used to further improve the agency's ways of working. An example of this is the foster carers' electronic daily log system, which keeps the agency updated on important issues.

Great care is taken with matching placements. This system is, however, dependent on local authorities fully sharing all available information. The strengths and weaknesses of each placement are identified. A support plan assists with ensuring the stability of each placement.

Supervising social workers have a range of expertise, which includes systemic therapy, counselling and mental health. All are experienced social workers and they benefit from small caseloads. This enables foster carers to receive bespoke individualised training and cluster training in small groups.

Foster carers benefit from a wide range of training. However, not all foster carers receive training in the positive care and control of children. This would further assist them with de-escalating problems and disputes.

Alongside general training, foster carers receive specific training related to the needs of children. Examples are training courses on trauma and child trafficking. Foster carers attend a range of safeguarding training, which includes raising their awareness of radicalisation and extremism.

Foster carers and a social worker praised the level of support available. All foster carers spoken to provided very positive feedback. They could not identify any areas for further improvement. A social worker also highlighted that a 'foster carer has been supported to parent therapeutically, which has enabled the young person to 'thrive'.

Foster carers receive a high level of support. Their professionalism is valued, and supervising social workers work extensively with them. This includes systemic questioning, creative thinking, role modelling and coaching. An example of the latter is bespoke training in attending children's review meetings.

Supervisory visits to foster carers' homes are undertaken usually on a monthly basis. There is a consistent, structured approach to these visits. This includes supervisory social workers speaking to children and checking their rooms. Each year, at least one unannounced visit is made to a foster carer's home.

Supervising social workers recognise the need for them to promote the well-being and needs of children. They strongly advocate for particular assistance, an example

being children and adolescent mental health services. Supervising social workers take pride in their work. All of them could give a positive example of how they make a meaningful difference to children's lives.

External feedback confirms that fostering assessments are of a high standard. Foster carer reviews are promptly presented to the fostering panel. Where areas for development have been highlighted in relation to foster carers' progress, clear action plans have been devised to support foster carers with achieving their goals.

This visit concluded that there are no widespread safeguarding concerns. The one recommendation is used to enhance foster carers' existing knowledge and awareness.

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

Recommendations

- Ensure all foster carers receive training in positive care and control of children, including training in de-escalating problems and disputes. ('Fostering services: National minimum standards', 3.8)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the independent fostering agency since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Independent fostering agency details

Unique reference number: SC402560

Registered provider: Be My Family Fostering Agency Ltd

Registered provider address: 11 St. Albans Avenue, Feltham TW13 6RL

Responsible individual: Olga Karazanova

Inspector

Sharon Payne, social care inspector

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