

# Nurture Fostering Ltd

The Old Fire Station, 340 Lewisham High Street, London SE13 6LE

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

This independent fostering agency provides a range of foster placements, including parent and child placements, short- and long-term placements and placements for disabled children. The agency has seven fostering households, which are providing care for eight children.

The registered manager resigned in March 2021. A new manager was appointed in May 2021. She is yet to make an application to register with Ofsted.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

### Inspection dates: 24 to 28 May 2021

**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      requires improvement to be good

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

**Date of last inspection:** 25 February 2019

**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**

Children make good progress from their starting points, in all areas of their lives. They feel part of the fostering families they live with and, in some cases, the foster families' extended family. This helps children to feel valued and welcomed.

Foster carers are skilled and experienced and are able to offer good-quality placements that meet the diverse needs of children. They demonstrate a good understanding of the needs of children placed with them and feel very much part of the team around the child.

The agency provides very good support for foster carers. Several carers said how much they value this and that there is always someone they can speak to. This support helps carers to provide good foster homes even when situations become challenging.

Foster carers and the agency provide good emotional support for children. Children readily approach their foster carers for emotional warmth. The PACE principles of parenting (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy) are also used to create emotional safety for children.

Some children are doing well in their education. Those who struggle with education are supported by their foster carers who advocate for them when necessary. As a result, all children in the agency are in education.

The agency staff and foster carers listen to children's views and take them seriously. For example, managers advocated on behalf of a child who requested that she spend part of her respite time with her extended family. However, the agency's complaints procedures lack clarity on the process for responding to a complaint.

Children benefit from improved physical and emotional health. Foster carers work closely with specialist medical teams, such as sexual health clinics and child and adolescent mental health services. This expert guidance helps foster carers to understand and respond to children's wide-ranging health needs.

Children maintain relationships with their families. In some cases, their brothers and sisters, while not fostered with the agency, are able to take part in activities organised by the foster carers.

Some children remain with their foster carers under 'staying put' arrangements. This provides children with additional familial support while moving on to higher education, and stability during their transition to adulthood.

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

Stable and secure placements are underpinned by good supportive carers who promote emotional resilience and provide practical support. This means that children understand how to stay safe, and episodes of going missing are low in number.

Children see their foster carers as trusted adults. The positive relationships that children enjoy with their carers mean that they can talk to them about any worries they have. These relationships enable honest conversations to take place with children about safety, including healthy relationships.

Agency staff and foster carers have received training in safeguarding, including areas such as child sexual exploitation, modern slavery and child criminal exploitation. This has helped them to recognise and respond to concerns for children and in turn, this has helped them to protect them.

Agency staff help foster carers to understand children's behaviour and attachment-related issues. They also use behaviour support plans and work with outside professionals to help foster carers support children to regulate their feelings.

Foster carers understand the principles of safe care and implement these in practice. This begins when children first move to live with their foster carers and continues throughout their time in their care. Staff are particularly effective in ensuring that risk assessments are detailed. However, safer care plans are not sufficiently individualised to meet the needs of children.

The placement officer understands the sufficiency needs of the local authorities and the types of families needed for children. As a result, the agency has developed strategies to meet these needs.

Designated officers in the local authority confirmed that the agency has good safeguarding practices in place and acts promptly in a transparent manner if there are any concerns.

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

Leaders and managers are not yet effective. However, they do understand the agency's strengths and areas for development. They have improvement plans in place to address any shortfalls.

The registered manager role has been vacant since 9 March 2021. The agency has appointed a new manager who started their role in May 2021 and is in the process of submitting their application to Ofsted to register. The agency has put in place an interim management arrangement and a three-month transition plan, until the new manager settles into the role.

Foster carers and agency staff have consistently provided positive feedback about the leaders and managers. However, the foster carers are not always supervised by appropriately qualified social workers. This shortfall has not had any negative impact on children's experience and progress, but is in breach of regulations.

Leaders and managers conduct quality of care reviews. However, these do not include direct testimony from children, carers, other professionals and stakeholders. This may limit the agency's learning from practice and feedback to improve the experiences and care of children.

Leaders and managers support foster carers to keep children safe. However, the agency did not notify Ofsted of two safeguarding concerns. Although this shortfall did not place children at risk of harm, it is a regulatory requirement.

Foster carers are very happy with the high level of support they receive from the agency. They feel welcomed and have a sense of belonging as part of a 'family'. However, some of the supervision records do not show the required quality. This may limit the evidence of some of the children's progress.

Staff receive regular supervision. However, some supervision records lack relevant content and reflection. This may potentially impact on children's experience and progress and the quality of support for foster carers.

Recruitment practice for foster carers and staff is safe. The agency has good systems in place for the vetting and recruitment of staff and others working on behalf of the agency. However, not all foster carers have completed the Training, Support and Development Standards within 12 months of approval.

The fostering panel is effective. The panel offers a broad range of experience and diversity. The new panel chair brings a wealth of relevant experience. This will strengthen 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>The registered person must maintain a system for—</p> <p>monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals, and</p> <p>improving the quality of foster care provided by the agency.</p> <p>The system referred to in paragraph (1) must provide for consultation with foster parents, children placed with foster parents, and their placing authority. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that feedback is sought from children, parents and other professionals.</p>	30 August 2021
<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> <p>Specifically, ensure that safeguarding incidents are notified to Ofsted.</p>	30 August 2021

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children can take up issues in the most appropriate way with support, without fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. Children should receive prompt feedback on any concerns or complaints raised and be kept informed of progress. ('Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards', 1.6)
- The registered person should ensure that foster carers are able to evidence that the Training, Support and Development Standards have been attained within 12 months of approval. ('Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards', 20.3)
- The registered person should ensure that appropriate training on safer caring is provided for all members of the foster household, including young people of sufficient age and understanding, and ensure that foster carers understand how

safer caring principles should be applied in a way which meets the needs of individual children. ('Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards', 20.9)

- The registered person should ensure that each approved foster carer is supervised by a named, appropriately qualified social worker who has meetings with the foster carer, including at least one unannounced visit a year. Meetings have a clear purpose and provide the opportunity to supervise the foster carer's work, ensure that the foster carer is meeting the child's needs, taking into account the child's wishes and feelings, and offer support and a framework to assess the carer's performance and develop their competencies and skills. Foster carers' files include records of the supervisory meetings. ('Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards', 21.8)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Specifically, this relates to the quality of supervision given to supervising social workers. ('Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards', 24.4)

## **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:** 1265010

**Registered provider:** Nurture Fostering Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Meriden Hall, Main Road, Meriden, Coventry,  
Warwickshire CV7 7PT

**Responsible individual:** Jillian Valenti

**Registered manager:**

**Telephone number:** 020 8690 9012

**Email address:** [jill@nurture-fostering.co.uk](mailto:jill@nurture-fostering.co.uk)

## **Inspectors**

Juanita Mayers, Social Care Inspector  
Gulcin Ardic, Social Care Inspector

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