

Shine Fostering

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Suite 2, 109 George Lane, South Woodford, London E18 1AN

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Shine Fostering is an independent fostering agency that has been operating since 2013. The current manager registered with Ofsted on 26 September 2016.

The agency provides short-term, long-term, emergency and parent and child placements.

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.

At the time of this inspection visit, the agency had nine fostering households. The agency provided placements for 10 children, five of whom were in a parent and child placement.

Inspection dates: 12 to 16 July 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 5 June 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

This agency has provided unlawful placements to one child on three separate occasions. These placements do not meet the legal requirements for foster care placements. The failings in leaderships and management, and the protection of children, mean that the overall experiences and progress of children are inadequate.

The current foster carers, children and their social workers talk highly about the agency. They report that the agency makes excellent effort to give children the opportunities to engage in creative activities, have positive experiences and make progress in their lives. Examples of progress include some children achieving 100% school attendance, gaining qualifications and improving their communication skills.

The agency has an effective wraparound service. This includes an education co-ordinator, a children's mentor/advocate and a mental health consultant nurse. These professionals provide additional support to foster carers and children.

The promotion of emotional well-being and mental health support to children and foster carers is strong. All foster carers are trained as mental health first aiders. Similarly, the foster carers who provide parent and child placements are trained in therapeutic parenting.

Children's physical health is not always promoted well. The agency does not always have healthcare plans for children who have identified medical conditions. An example of this is the lack of a healthcare plan for a child who suffers with epilepsy. The inconsistencies in the information about children's medication create additional risks.

Leaders and managers at the agency do not always carefully consider the health risks specific to babies and unborn babies as part of matching. For example, a parent and a baby and a pregnant mother were placed in a smoking household.

The records for matching placements with suitable carers are not thorough. The matching form does not evidence that leaders and managers consider carers' fostering experience and training as part of the matching process.

The agency does not always promote stability in the lives of children. For example, one child has had eight different placements with this agency during a period of less than 17 months. This includes two placements that lasted only two days.

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

The agency's practice of providing unlawful placements with the non-approved foster carers places children at risk of harm. One child was placed in three unlawful foster placements. On one occasion, the child was placed with a staff member who occasionally works for the agency, and on other occasions with a nominated carer who was undergoing a fostering assessment to become a foster carer, and an unassessed prospective supported lodgings carer. This demonstrates that the agency failed to meet regulatory requirements and placed the child at risk of harm.

There are gaps in the processes for the assessment and approval of foster carers. These gaps, combined with poor matching, undermine the suitability of placements. For example, parent and child placements are made with foster carers who have not been specifically assessed for this type of placement.

Risk management practices are reactive and do not sufficiently safeguard children. Risk management plans are completed following incidents and not completed proactively when the risks are identified. For example, the risk management plan for one child with an identified risk of suicide was not completed until after he attempted to end his life.

Similarly, the agency does not complete specific risk management plans for children who are at risk of going missing from care. This does not safeguard children effectively. For example, one child with an identified risk of going missing from care, self-harmful behaviour and suicide left her foster home through a window at night and self-harmed. This resulted in the placement ending.

Discussions about safeguarding children take place between foster carers, their supervising social workers, and the mental health nurse. However, the lack of written risk management plans undermines the consistency of safeguarding children. Furthermore, safer care plans are also not always completed in a timely manner.

Foster carers receive training on relevant topics and specific training on safeguarding children. However, staff do not receive training on the full range of risks to children, such as safeguarding them from female genital mutilation, honour-based violence, forced marriages and radicalisation. Consequently, staff are not suitably trained to recognise and respond to these types of risks.

Safer recruitment processes are not sufficiently robust. Recruitment checks do not include identity checks, audit trails of all the names that the person has used, and evidence that all names are declared for Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks. This demonstrates poor and unsafe recruitment practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leaders and managers do not carry on and manage the fostering agency with sufficient care, competence and skill. They do not operate the agency in line with fostering regulations. While they provide some extra services of a high quality, they

have failed to demonstrate a basic compliance with regulations. This inspection identified multiple failures that resulted in 14 requirements being made.

On three occasions, leaders and managers have made placement decisions that contravene fostering regulations and the agency's own statement of purpose. They circumvented all their usual procedures and good fostering practices to provide unlawful placements. The leaders and managers did not recognise that these placements were unlawful until the inspector highlighted the fact at this inspection.

Leaders and managers do not have up-to-date knowledge of fostering regulations. They are not aware that the relaxation of some fostering regulations implemented in April 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic ceased to apply on 25 September 2020. This lack of up-to-date knowledge means that the fostering panel meeting on 27 February 2021 was inquorate.

There are weaknesses in the agency's fostering panel. An annual review of the panel is nine months' overdue. The panel has been without a professional with a background in education since November 2019. Some panel members can act as vice-chairs if needed, but no vice-chairs have been formally appointed. The draft minutes of the fostering panel meeting on 19 June 2021 record that the foster carers were informed during the panel meeting that they had been approved. However, this was prior to the agency decision-maker reviewing and ratifying the panel's recommendation.

The management support for staff is weak. Not all staff receive regular formal supervision and annual reviews of their performance. One staff member has not had an annual review since 2018. Furthermore, the panel chair has not had an annual review of their performance since the agency began operating eight years ago.

Record-keeping is insufficient. In addition, the agency does not maintain a staff register and the children's placement register as required.

The monitoring of the agency is weak. Leaders and managers do not have sufficient oversight of the agency to enable them to identify areas for development. For example, they have failed to identify the shortfalls identified at this inspection. The reports on the review of the quality of care are not completed on time and do not include the agency's consultation with stakeholders. Furthermore, the reports are not sent to Ofsted as required.

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>Subject to paragraph (6), the fostering service provider must ensure that the fostering service is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose.</p> <p>Nothing in paragraph (5) requires or authorises the fostering service provider to contravene or to fail to comply with—</p> <p>any other provision of these Regulations. (Regulation 3 (5) (6)(a))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person stopping a provision of unlawful placements.</p>	1 November 2021
<p>The registered provider and the registered manager must, having regard to—</p> <p>the size of the fostering agency, its statement of purpose, and the numbers and needs of the children placed by the fostering agency, and</p> <p>the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children placed by the fostering agency, carry on or manage the fostering agency (as the case may be) with sufficient care, competence and skill.</p> <p>The registered provider must ensure that—</p> <p>where the registered provider is an organisation, the responsible individual,</p> <p>undertakes, from time to time, such training as is appropriate to ensure that they have the experience and skills necessary for carrying on the fostering agency.</p> <p>The registered manager must undertake from time to time such training as is appropriate to ensure that they have the</p>	1 November 2021

<p>experience and skills necessary for managing the fostering agency. (Regulation 8 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b) (3))</p> <p>This requirement specifically relates to the registered person having up-to-date knowledge of relevant legislation and ensuring that the agency is operated in line with the fostering regulations.</p>	
<p>The registered person in respect of an independent fostering agency must ensure that—</p> <p>the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster parents is safeguarded and promoted at all times. (Regulation 11 (a))</p> <p>This requirement specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that risk management plans are in place whenever a risk to a child’s safety and welfare has been identified, and that children are not placed with non-approved carers.</p>	1 November 2021
<p>The fostering service provider must prepare and implement a policy, which is agreed with the local police, setting out—</p> <p>the measures to be followed to prevent children placed with foster parents from going missing from their placement, and</p> <p>the procedure to be followed when a child is missing from a foster parent’s home without permission. (Regulation 13 (3)(a)(b))</p> <p>This requirement specifically relates to the registered person making sure that the agency has a specific risk assessment and risk management plan for individual children who are at risk of going missing.</p>	1 November 2021
<p>The fostering service provider must promote the health and development of children placed with foster parents. (Regulation 15 (1))</p> <p>This requirement specifically relates to the registered person making sure that children with medical conditions have a healthcare plan; that all medication records provide correct information; and that no children under the age of five and no pregnant women are placed with foster carers who smoke.</p>	1 November 2021
<p>The fostering service provider must provide foster parents with such training, advice, information and support, as</p>	1 November 2021

<p>appears necessary in the interests of children placed with them. (Regulation 17 (1))</p>	
<p>The fostering service provider must not—</p> <p>employ a person to work for the purposes of the fostering service unless that</p> <p>person is fit to do so, or</p> <p>allow a person to whom paragraph (2) applies, to work for the purposes of the fostering service unless that person is fit to do so.</p> <p>This paragraph applies to any person who is employed, other than by the fostering service provider, in a position in which that person may in the course of their duties have regular contact with children placed by the fostering service.</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (1), a person is not fit to work for the purposes of a fostering service unless that person—</p> <p>is of integrity and good character,</p> <p>has the qualifications, skills and experience necessary for the work they are to perform,</p> <p>is physically and mentally fit for the work they are to perform,</p> <p>and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to that person in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 1.</p> <p>Regulation 20 (1) (2) (3))</p>	<p>1 November 2021</p>
<p>The fostering service provider must ensure that all persons employed by them—</p> <p>receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal. (Regulation 21 (4)(a))</p>	<p>1 November 2021</p>
<p>The fostering service provider must maintain and keep up to date the records specified in Schedule 2.</p> <p>The records referred to in paragraph (1) must be retained for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 22 (1) (2))</p>	<p>1 November 2021</p>

<p>This requirement specifically relates to the registered person making sure that the registers of children and staff are kept in the way required.</p>	
<p>Subject to paragraph (5), the fostering service provider must constitute one or more fostering panels, as necessary, to perform the functions of a fostering panel under these Regulations, and must appoint panel members including—</p> <p>one or two persons who may act as chair if the person appointed to chair the panel is absent or that office is vacant (“the vice chairs”) from the persons on the central list.</p> <p>The fostering service provider must ensure that the fostering panel has sufficient members, and that individual members have between them the experience and expertise necessary, to effectively discharge the functions of the panel. (Regulation 23 (4)(ii) (7))</p> <p>This requirement specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that vice-chair(s) have been appointed and that there is a panel member with a professional background in education.</p>	<p>1 November 2021</p>
<p>No business may be conducted by a fostering panel unless at least the following meet as the panel—</p> <p>either the person appointed to chair the panel or one of the vice chairs,</p> <p>one member who is a social worker who has at least three years’ relevant post qualifying experience, and</p> <p>three, or in the case of a fostering panel established under regulation 23(5) four other members. (Regulation 24 (1)(i)(ii)(iii))</p> <p>This requirement specifically relates to the registered person making sure that the fostering panel meetings are quorate.</p>	<p>1 November 2021</p>
<p>Where a person (“X”) applies to become a foster parent and the fostering service provider decide to assess X’s suitability to become a foster parent, any such assessment must be carried out in accordance with this regulation. (Regulation 26 (1))</p> <p>This requirement specifically relates to the registered person making sure that its carers have been fully assessed as part</p>	<p>1 November 2021</p>

<p>of their approval process before any children are placed with them. A specific assessment regarding a provision of parent and child placements must be completed before these placements are made.</p>	
<p>A fostering service provider must not approve X as a foster parent unless—</p> <p>they have completed their assessment of X’s suitability, and the fostering panel has considered the application.</p> <p>A fostering service provider must, in deciding whether to approve X as a foster parent and as to the terms of any approval, take into account the recommendation of the fostering panel. (Regulation 27 (2)(a)(b) (3))</p> <p>This requirement specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that children are not placed with carers whose suitability has not been considered by the panel and approved by the agency.</p>	<p>1 November 2021</p>
<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 fostering agency.</p> <p>The registered person must provide the Chief Inspector with a written report in respect of any review conducted for the purposes of paragraph (1) and, on request, to any local authority.</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 (unless, in the case of a fostering agency which is a voluntary organisation, it is also the placing authority). (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3))</p> <p>This requirement specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that these reviews provide for consultation with the stakeholders and are effective in identifying weaknesses and strengths of the service; that they are conducted in a timely manner; and that they are sent to Ofsted in a timely manner.</p>	<p>1 November 2021</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the agency keeps records that evidence how the matching decisions were made. (‘Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards’, NMS 15.1)

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

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