

# Infinity Foster Care

Infinity Foster Care Ltd

Infinity Foster Care, Cranbrook House, 61 Cranbrook Road, Ilford, London IG1 4PG

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

This privately owned independent fostering agency is based in Ilford, Essex. The service aims to provide short-term care, bridging placements, long-term care, respite care, emergency care and sibling placements. The service provides foster care for disabled children, and several parent and child placements.

At the time of this inspection, the fostering agency had 11 approved fostering households with 13 children in placement. This is the fostering service's first inspection following its registration with Ofsted in August 2019. The manager was registered at the same time.

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: 23 to 27 August 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 **good**

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

**Date of last inspection:** not applicable

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** not applicable

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** not applicable

## Inspection judgements

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

This service provides good foster care placements. The outcomes for children are positive. They develop secure attachments with their foster families and have a strong sense of belonging. Children feel loved, respected, and listened to. One child told the inspector, 'I feel happy staying with this family. I feel excited and believe that my foster parents are like my own mum and dad.'

Children feel able to raise a complaint if they are unhappy with any aspect of their care. However, the agency has not made the procedure accessible in the children's guide. This means that the complaints procedure is not accessible to children to refer to at any time if required.

The fostering agency continues to develop strategies that help children to have a say in shaping the service. For example, the service employs a Young People's Ambassador. The role of this individual is to engage with children and complete consultation exercises. As a result, children's views, wishes and feelings about the fostering agency are regularly secured.

The fostering agency's matching process is effective. Managers ensure that careful matching meets individual children's needs well. Foster carers are very much involved in this process. Care plans are well adhered to by all parties. This helps to promote placement stability.

Children have good experiences and make steady progress from their starting points. The fostering agency carefully considers children's religious, racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds when determining the suitability of a placement. As a result, placements are often an exact match in terms of children's diverse backgrounds.

Children attend school and college regularly and are making steady progress. Staff and foster carers are good at liaising with teachers, which helps to promote children's learning. As a result, staff and foster carers are well informed about children's educational needs and the levels of progress children are making.

The fostering agency encourages children's physical, emotional and social well-being. Children who have health problems or disabilities, including physical or sensory impairment or learning disabilities, are provided with appropriate support. For example, children are helped to access speech and language specialists and consultant paediatricians. This bespoke help ensures that children's complex health needs are met.

Children benefit from the fostering agency's protocols and procedures in the prevention of COVID-19. This preventive work has helped to keep children and foster carers safe throughout the pandemic.

The preparation of older young people for their transition to adulthood is good. They benefit from the input of their foster carers and the staff, who help to prepare them to manage their lives more independently.

Children have contact with their siblings, family members and others when it is safe for them to do so. The fostering service manages arrangements for contact carefully. Staff ensure that there is a consistent focus on the impact of contact, and that arrangements are always in the best interest of children.

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

Children are protected from harm and abuse. For example, there have been no incidents or risks associated with children misusing drugs or alcohol, displaying self-harmful behaviour, offending, going missing from care, being involved in child criminal exploitation or being sexually exploited. Foster carers support children to understand the risks posed to them by internet use. However, staff do not always ensure that risk assessments and individual safe-care policies identify and address known and potential risks to children's safety.

Managers and leaders monitor all safeguarding incidents. However, not all notifications of key events are forwarded to Ofsted as required. This hinders regulatory oversight of significant events.

Children who make allegations receive good support. For example, there has been one allegation made against a foster carer. This allegation was thoroughly investigated, so as to ensure that all protective measures were in place.

The assessment, preparation and supervision of foster carers have a strong focus on child protection, and this supports their safe care of vulnerable children. Foster carers receive regular and consistent child protection training. Unannounced home visits are another mechanism used to monitor the safety of children. Staff routinely conduct two unannounced visits to each fostering household every year. This oversight helps to ensure that foster carers continue to have the right level of support to promote children's welfare.

The fostering service ensures that there is effective partnership working with others when managing child protection enquiries. There is consistent communication with involved professionals, such as the designated officer and the placing authority. Staff attend and make valuable contributions to professional meetings that explore child protection issues.

A local authority social worker said, 'The foster carer is able to consistently provide a safe and secure environment, setting and maintaining appropriate boundaries, structure and guidance. This has been beneficial in helping [the child's name] build his resilience.'

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The leadership and management of the fostering service are strong. Leaders have ambitious visions for the service and there are plans in place to further improve the quality of foster care placements.

Since the fostering service's registration with Ofsted, managers have continued to implement strategies to improve the quality of the service. However, managers are yet to implement an effective recruitment strategy to attract and secure a larger pool of foster carers. This is important if the service is to provide placements that meet the diverse needs of children.

The fostering service's preparation of foster carers is effective. This ensures that prospective foster carers have good insight into the needs of children, young people, and parents, and that they are equipped to meet identified needs.

The training of foster carers is good. Most foster carers have completed identified core training and have received suitable support to enable them to meet development standards within the 12-month time frame following their initial approval. However, not all foster carers have personal development plans. This creates a missed opportunity to ensure that any identified development or training needs are met.

Leaders and managers provide foster carers and staff with excellent support and supervision. A foster carer said, 'I really enjoy working with the team. I feel comfortable, I get really good support and they explain everything. I feel welcomed and appreciated.' The foster carers' annual review process is thorough. This ensures that foster carers remain suitable to care for vulnerable children.

Staff are well supported by managers. They receive effective and consistent training and appraisals and are supported to reflect on their practice. However, managers do not complete supervision for all staff. This is the case for the service's Independent Reviewing Officer. This creates a missed opportunity to formally review this individual's performance and development needs.

The service's fostering panel operates effectively. Its membership is drawn from a range of professional backgrounds. Recruitment to increase the diversity of panel membership is ongoing. For example, the central list does not yet include a representative from the field of health. The panel carries out clear and appropriate analysis of the work that is presented at panel meetings. The quality of foster carers' assessments presented at the panel is of a high standard.

## 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>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.</p> <p>Any notification made in accordance with this regulation which is given orally must be confirmed in writing. (Regulation 36 (1) (2))</p>	1 December 2021
<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>	1 December 2021

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children have access to independent advice and support from adults who they can contact directly and in private about problems or concerns, which is appropriate to their age and understanding. In particular, the registered person should ensure that all children's guides provide clear information about making complaints. (National minimum standard 1.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff, volunteers, panel members and fostering households understand the nature of records, maintained and follow the service's policy for the keeping and retention of files, managing confidential information and access to files (including files removed from the premises). The registered person should ensure that there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record-keeping and take action when needed. This relates to children's risk assessments and safe care policies. (National minimum standard 26.2)
- The registered person should ensure that the fostering service implements an effective strategy to ensure that there are sufficient foster carers to be responsive

to current and predicted future demands on the service. (National minimum standard 13.1)

- The registered person should ensure that foster carers' personal development plans set out how they will be supported to undertake ongoing training and development that is appropriate to their development needs and experience. (National minimum standard 20.5)
- The registered person should ensure that the number, skills, knowledge and experience of persons on the central list are sufficient. This will enable the fostering service to constitute panels that are equipped to make competent recommendations to the fostering service provider, taking into account the nature and carers that the service caters for. The registered provider should consider recruiting a panel member who has expertise in health. (National minimum standard 14.8)

## **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:** 2537401

**Registered provider:** Infinity Foster Care Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Infinity Foster Care Ltd, Cranbrook House, 61 Cranbrook Road, Ilford, London IG1 4PG

**Responsible individual:** Anjum Khan

**Registered manager:** Ashish Goswami

**Telephone number:** 020 3488 1238

**Email address:** info@infinityfostercare.co.uk

## **Inspector**

Sandra Jacobs-Walls, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
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