

Perpetual Care/Perpetual Fostering

Perpetual Fostering Limited

31 Chorley New Road, Bolton BL1 4QR

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

This fostering agency is privately owned. It was registered in April 2005. The service operates primarily in the north-west of England, but does have a number of fostering households in the Midlands. At the time of this inspection, 18 approved fostering households were providing foster placements for 23 children. The agency currently provides the following types of foster placements:

- emergency
- short term
- long term
- respite
- parent and child

The manager was registered with Ofsted in 2016.

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: 4 to 8 October 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: 12 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive care that offers them a sense of permanence and belonging. They feel part of their foster families' lives. The quality of the relationships supports children to overcome adversities that they have previously experienced in their lives. As a result, they make progress in all areas of their lives. This progress includes achieving in education, learning to sustain attachments and developing emotional resilience. A local authority social worker said of a foster carer: 'I feel the carer really loves her and wants her to do well.'

Foster carers receive a high level of support from supervising social workers. This support includes weekly calls, regular visits and structured supervision. Foster carers spoke highly of the help and advice they receive, and said that they feel valued by the agency.

Since the last inspection, the matching of children's needs to foster carers' skills has improved. Children's needs are carefully considered prior to placement and this positive experience has enabled children to quickly settle into their new homes. A local authority social worker commented: 'The placement has gone from strength to strength.'

Children enjoy everyday family life. They are also given opportunities to experience new activities that may previously have been denied to them. These include camping, meals out and music lessons.

Foster carers support children to manage their emotions and develop positive self-regard. They are patient with the children, develop trusting relationships with children and have positive working relationships with other professionals. This offers children holistic care that enables them to thrive with their foster families.

Children and foster carers are at the centre of the agency's activities. A particular strength of the agency is its team approach to meeting children's needs.

Not all children receive services from other agencies in a timely manner. The manager has followed this up on behalf of children, but has not been successful in securing the services required. Some children have been waiting many months for some services.

Children are supported to prepare for adulthood by their carers. However, not all children who are eligible have an up-to-date pathway plan. This restricts children's

understanding of the support and services they will receive once they reach adulthood.

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

Children who were spoken to said that they feel safe with their foster carers, and that they are supported to stay safe. They said that they feel listened to, and that their views are taken into account. One child commented: 'I now wake up feeling happy and not sad.'

Since the last inspection, allegations and complaints have been appropriately dealt with by the managers. The agency makes suitable referrals to other agencies that are tasked with safeguarding children. Managers also follow advice from other agencies when conducting investigations.

Children are spoken to in private by the visiting supervising social workers. Children's overall presentation and their views about their foster carers are regularly reported on.

Children are supported and encouraged to manage their emotions. They develop skills for resolving conflict and learn how to maintain positive relationships. Foster carers are open to receiving advice and support from professionals in order to improve the care offered to children.

Foster carers have appropriate, safe care policies in place that provide information about expectations and family rules. These documents are shared with children and this supports the children's understanding of safety in the home. In addition, specific risk assessments are in place that provide advice for foster carers to enable them to keep children safe. The positive relationships that exist between children and their foster carers enable children to talk about any worries or concerns they may have.

Children and foster carers have been well supported through periods of national and local restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The agency has been flexible in its approach to maintaining contact and providing visits. It has embraced technologies to ensure that foster carers and children continue to receive timely support and children remain protected.

At the last inspection, a requirement relating to the safe recruitment of staff was made. This requirement has been met.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has an in-depth knowledge of the foster carers and the children placed. She understands the plans for children and how the foster carers are providing care to support those plans. She is dedicated and passionate about the service, and is child centred in her approach.

The manager makes herself accessible to the foster carers and ensures that supervising social workers are providing timely support. A particular strength of the agency is that foster carers feel listened to, and feel confident that their views are acted on.

Staff feel well supported by the manager, and receive regular supervision. In addition, reflective discussion improves practice and encourages professional development. Records of these discussions are clearly recorded, and any shortfalls identified are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are addressed.

The manager has appropriate monitoring systems in place to ensure that the care offered is improving the lives of the children placed. Local authority social workers spoken to were very positive about the agency. One social worker said: 'They are a very child-focused agency.' Local authority commissioners were equally positive about their experience of dealing with the agency.

A requirement made at the last inspection relating to the statement of purpose has been met. The latest copy is now available on the agency website, and has been submitted to Ofsted.

The agency has an experienced panel and panel chair in place. The panel membership provides diversity, experience and knowledge about the fostering task. Training was an identified area for improvement at the last inspection. This recommendation has now been met.

Foster carers have access to a range of mandatory and additional training courses. Any shortfalls in training or skills are quickly identified, and action is taken to address those shortfalls.

A recommendation made at the last inspection has not been met. This relates to foster carers recording the daily lives of children. Although improvement has been made with regard to this, it is not consistent across all foster carers. As a result, this recommendation has been restated.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that information about the child is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 26.6)
- The registered person should ensure that children's physical, emotional and social development needs are promoted. This relates to the service challenging a placing authority, or a relevant person's performance or response, to ensure that children receive services to meet their needs. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 6.1)
- The registered person should ensure that children are prepared for moving into their own accommodation and know about entitlements to financial and other support after leaving care, including benefits and support from social care services. This relates to children having up-to-date pathway plans in place. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 12.1)

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

Unique reference number: SC063316

Registered provider: Perpetual Fostering Limited

Registered provider address: 31 Chorley New Road, Bolton BL1 4QR

Responsible individual: Tahir Khan

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Inspector

Pauline Yates, Social Care Inspector
Sarah Oldham, Social Care Inspector

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