

Quality Fostering

Quality Fostering Limited

1st & 2nd Floor (at the rear of), 45 Russell Street, Leamington Spa CV32 5QB

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

The fostering service was registered in April 2007. It is part of a private organisation. The fostering service provides long-term, short-term, respite, emergency and parent and baby placements. The foster agency regularly provides care for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2013.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 7 to 11 February 2022

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: 22 May 2017

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 develop a genuine sense of belonging and receive good-quality individualised care provided by their foster carers. Children are treated as valued members of the family and they speak positively about their foster families. The ethos of this agency is to provide children with a sense of permanence and belonging in a family environment. Consequently, children benefit from living in stable and secure foster homes for significant periods of time. A child told the inspector, 'I really enjoy living in my home. I can always talk to my carer. I feel part of the family.'

The registered manager ensures that matching processes are thorough and well planned. Foster carers told the inspector that they have all the relevant information regarding children. Some children arrive unaccompanied from overseas and seek asylum. The registered manager works hard to support these children and to identify their needs. For example, children benefit by receiving support from interpreters and are carefully matched with experienced and knowledgeable foster carers. This individualised and well-considered planning helps children to settle and make progress.

Foster carers understand the importance of children's education and are strong advocates for children's academic and social success. For example, a foster carer advocated strongly on a child's behalf to ensure that he received consistent and appropriate support in school. The foster carer shared specialist health information with teachers to ensure that the child's bespoke behaviour management approach was embedded in his school. This is symptomatic of the good parenting ethos provided by foster carers.

The agency supports children to 'stay put' with their foster families when they reach adulthood. This provides the children with much-needed stability. Staff provide foster carers and children with appropriate support to ensure that this process is well managed. Children and their foster carers have clear plans for these arrangements. The inspection found that children 'staying put' remain settled and continue to make good progress.

Foster carers understand the importance of children spending time with those who are important to them. As a result, children build and repair relationships with their family. This promotes children's cultural identity, their mental and emotional well-being, and sets the foundations for long-term support.

Foster carers continue to encourage children to lead full and active lives. Children enjoy a wide range of activities, clubs and hobbies. For example, one child is a member of a local bowling club and enjoys taking part in tournaments. Other children told the inspector that they enjoy bike rides and trips to local parks. Children also enjoy attending annual events organised by the fostering agency. Staff collate memory books which capture special memories and occasions. The variety of

enjoyable experiences helps children to develop a positive sense of identity and increases their self-esteem.

Children live healthy lifestyles. Foster carers and staff ensure that there is good promotion of their physical, emotional and social well-being. Children have timely access to primary healthcare services and they receive advice and support from specialist services when appropriate.

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

Children are protected from harm and abuse. Staff and foster carers are alert and curious about risks to children. They share child protection concerns quickly with relevant safeguarding agencies. Staff and foster carers ensure that the safety and well-being of children are paramount.

Individualised and up-to-date risk assessments contain clear guidance for foster carers to manage risk. Overall, there are proactive and effective working relationships between professionals to keep children safe. However, on one occasion, staff did not work alongside a local authority to review a child's safety plan in a timely manner. This did not directly compromise the child's safety.

The registered manager did not inform Ofsted of a significant incident involving a child. This prevented the regulator from providing additional oversight to ensure that appropriate action is taken to safeguard children.

Children make good and sustained progress in reducing their challenging behaviours. For example, incidents of children who go missing from their foster homes are rare and incidents of challenging behaviours continue to reduce over time. This good progress is an indication of the strong and trusted relationships between foster carers and children. However, the inspection identified some shortfalls in the recording of incidents when children go missing. For example, records lack detail and do not always demonstrate what steps foster carers or agencies take when children go missing. In addition, not all children receive an independent interview when they return home. This is a missed opportunity for external agencies to provide oversight and learning from these incidents.

Foster carers' homes are safe and secure. Staff routinely conduct checks that ensure that homes are well maintained and comfortable and that there are no health and safety concerns. Where safety issues arise, staff and managers take effective action to resolve them.

Foster carers and staff support children to take age-appropriate risks. For example, some children have suffered or have been exposed to risk because of serious incidents in the community. Over time, foster carers support children to explore friendship groups and to become increasingly independent in line with their safety plans.

Staff provide foster carers with proactive and well-informed support to manage children's challenging behaviours and emotional distress. As a result, there have been no incidents of restraint for a significant period.

Staff increase their visiting patterns to the foster home during periods of challenge and crisis. This supports foster carers to increase their emotional resilience and make sense of children's behaviours. A foster carer told the inspector, 'The agency social worker has been excellent, as I have had a challenging placement. Without her support, I would have struggled. She has been there to listen and guide me. She doesn't just listen and agree to what I have to say, but will also highlight things that maybe I didn't think about.'

Overall, foster carers are provided with a broad range of comprehensive safeguarding training to ensure that children are kept safe. For example, foster carers' training covers a range of subjects, including behaviour management, online safety and child exploitation. This variety of training provides foster carers with the necessary skills and knowledge to manage risks and keep children safe.

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

The registered manager and management team know the agency well and have a good understanding of the strengths and areas of development of the service. Despite this, some shortfalls have been identified during this inspection that had not been identified and addressed by the registered manager and management team. These shortfalls have, to date, not significantly compromised the help and support that children and foster carers receive.

Foster carers value the support provided by the agency. The advice and support provided by the agency, such as regularly supervising social work visits and stability meetings, help foster carers to manage difficult situations. As a result of this support, the number of placement breakdowns is minimal. A foster carer told the inspector, 'The agency social worker is very knowledgeable. He helps me to make sense of the child's needs. I always feel calmer and reassured following his visits. The child also loves spending time with him.' However, this good work is not always reflected in some foster carer supervision records. For example, records lack detail and do not demonstrate the good level of support that foster carers say they receive.

Overall, children's views are well known and are incorporated throughout the agency. The agency actively engages with children to hear their voices and there is a clear vision about how the service wants to incorporate children's voices in the development of the agency. However, the registered manager's monitoring systems do not always capture or evaluate these views.

The management team has clear plans in place to improve foster carers' support networks and systems to consult children. The agency has recently moved to a new

centrally located office. It intends to use this opportunity to expand foster carers' face-to-face training and networking opportunities.

Staff speak positively about working for the agency. They feel supported and supervised regularly by their managers. There is a wide range of training that is available for staff and panel members, demonstrating good commitment to the continued development of staff. However, the inspection found that some foster carers had not received training to help them to fully understand the needs of their children. The impact of this shortfall was lessened as foster carers told the inspector that staff had provided them with sufficient advice and support during visits and regular discussions.

Professional feedback about the impact of the agency on children's progress is overwhelmingly positive. This shows that professionals have confidence in the agency's capacity to provide good care and protection to the children that they are responsible for. A social worker told the inspector, 'The child has made excellent progress. The communication from the agency and the foster carer has been very good. They contribute well to the care plan.'

The quality of foster carers' assessments is good. The agency decision-maker makes reasoned decisions and provides robust independent oversight. The experienced and diverse fostering panel is effective and promotes safe and secure placements. The panel chair, agency decision-maker and responsible individual have plans to drive the development of the agency. As a result, the agency is benefiting from strong, independent oversight.

The registered manager keeps the agency statement of purpose up to date. However, he does not submit an updated copy to the regulator.

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 fostering service provider must—</p> <p>keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose and children's guide,</p> <p>notify the Chief Inspector of any such revision within 28 days. (Regulation 4 (a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the provider should submit an updated statement of purpose to Ofsted.</p>	11 April 2022
<p>The fostering service provider must provide foster parents with such training, advice, information and support, including support outside of office hours, as appears necessary in the interests of children placed with them. (Regulation 17 (1))</p>	11 April 2022
<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. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b)(2))</p>	11 April 2022
<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>	11 April 2022

In particular, the provider must ensure that all notifications identified in Schedule 7 of the regulations relating to significant incidents are reported to Ofsted without delay.	
--	--

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that foster carers' supervision records are detailed and fully reflect the support and advice provided to foster carers by staff. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 21.8)
- The registered person should ensure that children's wishes, feelings and views are taken into account in monitoring and developing the fostering service. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 4.2)
- The registered person should ensure that the fostering service reviews children's safety plans in a timely manner. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 4.7)
- The registered person should ensure that records kept by the fostering service where a child goes missing detail the actions taken by foster carers, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the foster home and any action taken in the light of those reasons. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 5.10)
- The registered person should ensure that children complete an interview when they return home following a missing incident. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 5.7)

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: SC068494

Registered provider: Quality Fostering Limited

Registered provider address: 15 Warwick Road, Stratford-upon-Avon,
Warwickshire CV37 6YW

Responsible individual: Helen Bruwier

Registered manager: Andrew Wallis

Telephone number: 03300 884 654

Email address: andrew@qualityfostering.com

Inspector

Gareth Leckey, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022