

Banya Family Placement Agency

Banya Family Placement Agency Limited

Unit 1, 6 and 7, 286a-288 Croxted Road, London SE24 9DA

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Banya Family Placement Limited is a privately run agency with a large geographical spread that supports children nationally. At the time of this inspection, the agency had 118 approved foster carers. The agency was providing placements for 141 children. The agency provides a full range of fostering services, including emergency, respite, short term, long term, parent and children placements and staying put.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 24 February 2021.

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 March 2022

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The independent fostering agency provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the independent fostering agency contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of last inspection: 11 September 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Agency staff are committed to providing the best quality of care for children. Over the years, they have recruited a wide range and diverse group of foster carers. The process for matching children with carers is extremely well thought out. This includes asking for more detailed information from placing local authorities to ensure that the children's individual needs can be met. This practice has contributed to children benefiting from long-term and/or stable placements with minimum disruption.

Children experience a sense of belonging. Foster carers are well trained and supported to understand how to meet children's different and complex needs. This includes those arising from their medical conditions, culture and identity. For example, the agency has access to a group of specialists in these areas, who can work directly with children on things that matter to them the most.

New children placed by the agency receive a very warm welcome. The newly revamped children's guide is informative and fun. The agency staff routinely share the pack with the children when they move in. This helps children get to know about the agency as well as helping them get to know the senior managers. Because of this, the children know what to expect and who they can go to if they are worried.

The agency staff know the children extremely well. There are a wide range of systems in place to listen to and engage with children effectively. Children's views are considered when planning activities and in helping to develop new ways of involving more children in these ideas. Recent events have focused on helping children to learn new skills, as well as helping them to keep themselves safe.

Children are seen as a priority. Skilled foster carers work closely together with the agency staff to promote children's well-being. They actively involve the children in their plans and support them to attend meetings. Care plans are closely monitored, and children's achievements are recognised, celebrated and rewarded. This approach helps the children to feel valued and encourages them to make further progress.

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

Senior leaders and managers have created a culture at the agency that focuses on safeguarding children. Every process, system, case record, meeting and discussion takes children's safety into account. This includes a thorough and safe approach to staff recruitment, the assessment of foster carers, specialist training for agency staff and foster carers and detailed written records about children. Because of this, there are few significant incidents.

Agency staff and foster carers show genuine concern for children's welfare. For example, when children go missing, their responsive approach ensures that the right action is taken and that the wider network of professionals is kept updated. The agency staff also go out of their way to follow up on these incidents with children directly. This helps them to understand the reasons for this behaviour and put plans in place to reduce the risk of, or prevent, a reoccurrence.

Children's safety and well-being is closely monitored by the agency. The introduction of an internal safeguarding board provides further opportunity for agency staff and managers to discuss concerns and agree what action to take. This includes ensuring that the correct procedures are followed and what support is required to prevent placements from breaking down. This process helps to identify gaps in practice and strengthens the existing safeguarding arrangements.

The agency has thorough procedures for managing complaints and allegations. All incidents are taken seriously and appropriate action taken. This includes working closely with other agencies to address issues and to reflect on and identify learning from incidents. Where foster carers' practice falls short of what is expected, plans are put in place to safeguard children and put their needs first.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Senior leaders and managers are extremely aspirational for children, agency staff and foster carers. They have a clear vision and are continually looking for new and creative ways to develop the service. The work they do is fully supported by a committed and stable staff team who work very hard, across the country, supporting foster carers and children. Their 'one team' approach is evident in the high-quality and consistent service they provide, which is really valued by everyone.

Since the last inspection, there have been some changes within the organisation and in the management arrangements. This has resulted in some foster carers leaving the agency, staff redundancies, a management buyout and changes in senior roles. However, while all these events have been unsettling, the leaders and managers have minimised the impact of this by focusing on the overall ethos and values of the service.

The new registered manager has worked for the agency for some time. Her knowledge of the service and support from the responsible individual has helped her to adjust to her new role. Together, they have high expectations and are using the monitoring and compliance systems effectively to improve practice. This includes ensuring that the agency is adhering to regulations. However, during the pandemic, the agency failed to notify Ofsted of confirmed COVID-19 cases. They have also, at times, submitted notifications late and/or lacking information.

Leaders and managers have created a culture where foster carers are supported to learn and develop. This includes arranging regular support and mentoring groups, as well as offering a comprehensive training programme. During the inspection, foster

carers spoke positively about these opportunities and said they had contributed to their decision to continue fostering, as well as helping to prevent placements ending.

The process for recommending prospective foster carers for approval is robust. The fostering panel is led by an experienced chairperson who manages the process extremely well. This includes supporting the learning and development of panel members and helping to identify themes to inform policy and practice. This, together with the panel's focus on quality and safeguarding, is a real strength of 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>If any of the event 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>	<p>30 April 2022</p>

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: SC033818

Registered provider: Banya Family Placement Agency Limited

Registered provider address: Banya Family Placement Agency Limited, 3rd Floor, 67 Wingate Square, Clapham Old Town, London SW4 0AF

Responsible individual: Nyasha Gwatidzo

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Inspectors

Amanda Harvey, Social Care Inspector
Suzy Lemmy, Social Care Inspector

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