

# Fusion Fostering North East

Fusion Fostering Limited

Suite 34 Hilton Hall, Hilton Lane, Wolverhampton WV11 2BQ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

This privately owned fostering agency registered in August 2017. The agency supports foster carers across a wide geographical area, which includes East Yorkshire and East Midlands.

The placements provided include short-term, long-term, emergency and parent and child placements. At the time of the inspection, the agency provided placements for 45 children living in 26 fostering households.

A manager has been appointed. The manager's application for registration has been submitted to Ofsted.

This inspection involved a blended approach of both on-site and off-site activity. Children and foster carers were spoken to during the inspection.

### Inspection dates: 4 to 8 July 2022

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>good</b>
---	-------------

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:** 23 July 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**

Most children are happy living with their foster carers and have had positive experiences. One child told the inspectors that she was 'happy, happy' living with her foster carers. Children form stable and trusting relationships with their foster carers because their foster carers provide them with personalised care in line with their individual needs.

Supervising social workers have developed positive relationships with the foster carers and children. Smaller caseloads mean that supervising social workers know the foster carers and children well and can provide them with support that is tailored to their needs. For example, a foster carer told the inspectors that the weekly telephone calls are a great support. As a result, the agency has fewer placement breakdowns, which ensures that children are provided with stability.

Children's healthcare needs are understood by their foster carers. They manage the children's medical and treatment plans effectively, including those children with complex health needs. Children are supported to attend all routine and specialist health appointments.

The agency has a good oversight of children's education and attainment. Most children are attending school and are making progress. Foster carers work closely with schools to ensure that children receive the right support. A teacher informed the inspectors that a foster carer is supportive in meeting the educational needs of a child in their school. An education passport has been introduced, which provides supervising social workers with essential information to identify gaps in children's education. This ensures that children are making progress with their education.

Foster carer assessments are detailed and thorough. They provide clear analysis and recommendations for panel. Carers say that the assessor and the fostering panel are sensitive and fair in their approach. New foster carers state that they feel welcomed and valued by the agency. For example, one foster carer told the inspectors that she wishes she had transferred to the agency sooner. Foster carers are prepared extremely well for their role, which contributes to high levels of care and stability for children.

An independent therapeutic service is used by the agency. A therapist works closely with children and provides them with an outlet to explore their own lived experiences. In addition, the therapist works alongside carers to ensure that they understand the children's needs and provide appropriate and effective care. For example, a foster carer informed the inspectors that the work with the therapist has supported a child in her care to understand his emotions, which then supported him

to manage his behaviours. This therapeutic input means that children make progress in a range of areas.

Children have developed positive relationships with the agency and enjoy taking part in the different activities provided. Children can express their thoughts and views through several different avenues. For example, the children have recently attended an arts and crafts participation group.

Overall, the referral and matching process is thorough. Matching assessments are comprehensive and provide detailed overview of how the child has been matched to the carer. Management oversight is provided, which helps to support and strengthen the decision around matching. This ensures that children are safely and carefully matched to carers who can meet their needs. However, on one occasion, a child was placed with a foster carer who had not undertaken the training relevant to his needs. This resulted in an escalation of unsafe behaviours. This means that, on this occasion, a child's needs were not met.

The agency provides foster carers with suitable training, supervision and regular supervising social work visits. In general, foster carers are provided with an effective out-of-hours service, which means that foster carers can seek support from a supervising social worker at any time of the day, should this be needed. However, on one occasion, the out-of-hours service did not provide effective support to a carer. As a result, the police were called for support.

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

Children report feeling safe living with their foster carers. They form trusting relationships with their carers and feel that they can talk to them when needed. One child informed the inspectors that she would talk to her foster carers if she feels worried. A social worker also commented, 'The carers know how to keep my child safe, he is central to every decision they make.'

Safer care plans and risk assessments are thorough and detailed. They are individualised and provide clear guidance to foster carers around supporting and managing risk-taking behaviours. The agency's response to significant incidents involving children is robust and effective. This helps to ensure that children are kept safe.

Incidents of children going missing from home are responded to effectively by the agency and the carers. Supervising social workers do everything they can to ensure the safe return of children. For example, during the inspection, the inspectors noted that a supervising social worker had been in daily contact with one child who had been missing. On their return, children receive an independent interview. This ensures that they can share their experiences and provides external agencies with an opportunity to learn from the incidents.

When children make allegations, the agency responds effectively. Concerns are referred to the designated officer. The agency works jointly with other professionals,

including social workers, to ensure that the welfare and safety of children are paramount. The agency challenges foster carer practice effectively. For one fostering household, this led to a review at panel and recommendations made for deregistration. This safeguarding practice helps to ensure that only adults who are safe care for children.

Some children are known to self-harm. In each case, the agency has acted appropriately and effectively to help to keep children who self-harm safe.

Supervising social workers carry out two unannounced visits to each fostering household every year. Children are spoken to alone. This provides further opportunities to meet with children and ensure that they are safe and happy.

Recruitment of carers, staff and panel members is robust. There is effective management oversight of recruitment, which helps to ensure that only safe adults provide care and support to children.

Children have very stable and mostly long-term placements, which gives them a sense of stability and permanence. In several cases, carers are looking after a child along with the child's brothers and sisters, which enables them to continue living together. In some foster care households, siblings share bedrooms. However, assessments regarding the sharing of bedrooms are not individualised and do not specify the sharing arrangements. This does not ensure that children's sleeping arrangements are monitored and reviewed.

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

The manager is passionate and committed to the agency. She is child focused and ensures that staff and foster carers have the right support and guidance to provide children with positive outcomes. During the inspection, the staff informed the inspectors that they feel supported by the manager and enjoy working for the agency.

The manager has a good oversight of the agency's strengths and areas of development. She has effective monitoring systems in place. This includes monthly monitoring reports and case file audits, which helps to identify shortfalls in practice.

Staff receive regular supervision sessions that enable them to reflect on their practice. Their performance is regularly appraised, which informs their development needs. Team meetings take place monthly and provide further opportunity for the agency staff to come together to discuss their development and improve practice.

Staff have access to a range of relevant, good-quality training. This enables them to improve their knowledge and practice to support the foster carers and children effectively. During the inspection, staff informed the inspectors that the manager and senior management are always happy to fund additional training in line with

their own developmental needs. This means that staff are skilled to provide the right support to foster carers and children.

The fostering panel provides a high level of independent scrutiny of the decision-making by the agency. This includes detailed quality assurance of assessments. The panel chairperson provides clear reasons for the recommendations made. Equally, the agency decision-maker provides thorough and reasoned decisions in a timely manner. This level of scrutiny ensures that carers are recruited with the skills to care for children and keep them safe.

Foster carers have provided very positive feedback about the support they receive from the agency. One foster carer told the inspector that the support provided is 'amazing'. Another described the agency as 'a breath of fresh air'.

The manager has formed positive relationships with external agencies. Good multi-agency working means that the children receive consistent care, which contributes to them achieving positive outcomes.

The manager has completed a quarterly monitoring report. The report provides an overview of the service and identifies areas of strength and areas for development. However, the report does not provide consultation from foster carers, children and their parents. This prevents the agency and the regulator from having accurate information about the services offered by 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>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 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) (3))</p>	29 August 2022

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that each child over the age of three has their own bedroom. When bedroom sharing is agreed, the decision-making process and outcome of the assessment should be recorded in writing. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', page 22)
- The registered person should ensure that the fostering service only suggests foster carers to local authorities as a potential match for a child if the foster carer can reasonably be expected to meet the child's assessed needs. Where gaps are identified, the fostering service should work with the responsible authority to ensure that the placement plan sets out any additional training, resources or support required. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', page 32)
- The registered person should ensure that there is an effective out-of-hours advice and support service for foster carers. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', page 42)

## **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:** 1255753

**Registered provider:** Fusion Fostering Limited

**Registered provider address:** Old Mill, Maltravers House, Petters Way, Yeovil,  
Somerset BA20 1SH

**Responsible individual:** David Tucker

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

**Telephone number:** 01543 404760

**Email address:** eastmidlands@fusionfostering.co.uk

## **Inspectors**

Lydia Isaac, Social Care Inspector  
Jodie Lewis, 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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022