

SWIIS Foster Care Limited

SWIIS Foster Care Limited

15 Warwick Road, Old Trafford, Manchester M16 0QQ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

SWIIS Foster Care Limited is a branch of a privately run national fostering agency. The agency approves and supports a range of foster carers who provide emergency, short-term, long-term and parent-and-child foster placements.

At the time of the inspection, the agency had 65 fostering households with 74 children in placements.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2018.

The 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: 12 to 16 September 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 **good**

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: 3 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are placed at the heart of the agency. They benefit greatly from care and support that are child-centred, individualised and aspirational. Managers, staff and foster carers know children extremely well. They are committed to providing opportunities for children to achieve excellent outcomes and to reach their potential. As a result of these relationships and opportunities, the vast majority of children make exceptional progress in all areas of their lives.

The agency prides itself on having a strong family ethos. Children, foster carers and staff value this and refer to themselves as being part of a large fostering family. They feel very connected to the agency and are overwhelmingly positive about the wraparound support they receive. One carer said, 'They are an incredibly supportive and inclusive agency. They work incredibly hard to ensure the best outcomes for children and ensure that carers are supported in each step of the journey.'

Children are exceptionally well supported to make progress in their education. All children have identified education and their attendance is high. Children's achievements are celebrated and valued. Supervising social workers and support workers regularly see children. This enables them to observe children and monitor their progress.

The agency is aspirational for children. Managers and staff creatively seek opportunities to enhance children's experiences and ensure that children's interests are nurtured and encouraged. Through developing strong community links, they have been able to facilitate opportunities for children to access sought after work-experience placements and to attend inspirational writing events. One child said, 'SWIIS is definitely a big family. They help me in so many ways. They are amazing.'

The successful implementation of a research-based therapeutic model means children's needs are exceptionally well understood. Foster carers know how to respond to children. They are helped to understand children's lived experiences and the impact of their trauma on their behaviours.

The agency goes to great lengths to seek the views of all children and foster carers, including those who are harder to engage. Children are listened to, and their views contribute to decisions about their care. Their views are also used successfully to inform ongoing development across the agency.

Children are placed with foster carers who can meet their needs. The agency undertakes meticulous planning with placing authorities to ensure that planned moves for children are positive with minimal disruptions. Children are helped to develop a sense of belonging and are fully integrated into their foster families.

Foster carers demonstrate real 'stickability' and commitment to children. Placing authorities recognise that carers do not give up on children, and because of careful matching, excellent support and carer 'stickability' some children live with their foster families for the majority of their childhood. When appropriate, children are supported to stay with their foster carers post-18 years of age and many children continue to benefit from the support of their foster families into adulthood.

The agency understands the importance of helping children to sustain a positive family identity and is proactive in keeping siblings together. In line with children's plans, foster carers go 'the extra mile' to ensure that children are helped to keep in touch with their families and people who are important to them.

Children's individuality and sense of self are respected and nurtured. Foster carers have a good understanding of diversity and are responsive to children's cultural and identity needs. Children experience inclusion and acceptance. They are supported to understand their own identities and are helped to develop positive self-esteem and increased confidence.

The development of an innovative in-house health support service means carers have access to health support as required. This service routinely undertakes assessments with carers for all children under one-year-old to offer practical support and to identify any additional resources. All children have access to routine and specialist health services, and their plans reflect their needs.

Agency staff act as excellent advocates for children. They will challenge placing authorities and address issues with carers as required. Any concerns regarding the standard of care provided by some foster carers are swiftly addressed, minimising the impact on children's experiences.

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

Practice in the agency is underpinned by a strong safeguarding culture. Managers, carers and staff know how to keep children safe. Children say that they feel happy and safe with their foster carers. They have trusted adults who they can speak to about any concerns, and they know how to make a complaint. As a result of the strong safeguarding culture, the vast majority of children experience a reduction in safeguarding concerns when living with the agency's foster carers.

Highly effective risk management is a key strength across the agency. Children's risks and vulnerabilities are well understood and reflected in their plans. However, a risk plan for an adult parent who was placed with their child lacked some details and did not clearly reflect the robust safeguarding measures in place. This limits managerial oversight.

The number of incidents of children going missing from their foster homes is low. When children do go missing from care, carers know how to respond and ensure that children are welcomed back into the family home on their return. Efforts are

made to understand the reasons for the behaviour and to reduce future incidents. As a result of the carers' approach to working with children, incidents of children going missing from care have significantly reduced and, for some children, have ceased to be a concern.

Children's behaviour is very well managed by their foster carers. Carers have a very good understanding of how to respond when children display behaviours that may be harmful to themselves or others. Instances of carers physically intervening to hold children are extremely rare. When an incident does happen, it is low level and is only used as a last resort to prevent children from hurting themselves or others. There is strong oversight from the manager to ensure that carers have acted appropriately and that children are safe.

Safe recruitment practices are in place for staff, panel members and foster carers. This helps to ensure that people who work with or care for children are safe to do so.

Managers have exceptionally good oversight of investigations into serious incidents, allegations and complaints. All investigations are dealt with robustly in line with statutory guidance and shared with appropriate agencies. High safeguarding expectations are continually reinforced across the agency. Any learning from incidents and practice reviews is shared with staff through practice forums and an agency-wide newsletter.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is inspirational and ambitious for children. She is held in exceptionally high regard by children, carers, staff and other professionals. Carers and staff recognise the positive impact of her leadership and say that they continually benefit from her guidance and knowledge.

The manager is supported by an assistant manager and senior leadership team. Leaders and managers are approachable. They are committed to providing children with opportunities to achieve excellent outcomes and have high expectations of staff and carers. Access to a range of robust monitoring systems enables managers to recognise any patterns and trends and to take appropriate action as required.

Foster carers and staff feel highly appreciated and valued. They are passionate about what they do and are highly motivated. Access to a wide range of training opportunities ensures that they are continually developing their practice to meet children's needs.

Communication with partner agencies is excellent. Feedback from commissioners, placing authority social workers and local authority designated officers is extremely positive. Professionals are confident that children's needs are being met and know that any concerns are swiftly addressed by the agency.

The fostering panel is well established and effective. Members of the central list have a wide range of experiences relevant to fostering. The agency decision-maker is effective at providing appropriate challenge and scrutiny to ensure robust decision-making.

Leaders and managers recognise the agency's strengths and areas for development. They are continually striving to improve outcomes for children. Managers have strong oversight of the service. However, despite taking action to ensure that there was no impact on any children, the manager missed opportunities to ensure that a foster carer's approval terms reflected their current circumstances. This was resolved by the agency's decision-maker prior to the inspection.

Electronic recording systems are well maintained and clearly demonstrate the journey for children and foster carers. However, reports from annual health assessments and minutes from strategy meetings had not been received for some children. Although agency staff had been present at the meetings, the absence of formal reports and minutes limits the manager's oversight and reduces opportunities to ensure that all identified actions are completed.

The two requirements and five recommendations made at the previous inspection have been met.

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 review the approval of each foster parent in accordance with this regulation.</p> <p>When undertaking a review, the fostering service provider must—</p> <p>make such enquiries and obtain such information as they consider necessary in order to review whether the foster parent continues to be suitable to be a foster parent and the foster parent’s household continues to be suitable.</p> <p>At the conclusion of the review, the fostering service provider must prepare a written report, setting out whether—</p> <p>the foster parent continues to be suitable to be a foster parent and the foster parent’s household continues to be suitable, and</p> <p>the terms of the foster parent’s approval continue to be appropriate. (Regulation 28 (1) (3)(a)(b) (4)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the agency takes swift action to address any required changes to a foster parent’s terms of approval.</p>	<p>25 November 2022</p>
<p>The registered person must maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals, and improving the quality of foster care provided by the fostering agency. (Regulation 35 (1)(a))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that there are efficient and robust processes in place so that the agency has access to children’s annual health assessments and minutes from strategy meetings.</p>	<p>25 November 2022</p>

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that risk assessments reflect the action taken to minimise potential risks from parents who are placed with their children. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 14.5)

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: SC043551

Registered provider: SWIIS Foster Care Limited

Registered provider address: 4th Floor, Prince House, 43-51 Prince Street, Bristol
BS1 4PS

Responsible individual: Keith Stopher

Registered manager: Wendy Keillor

Telephone number: 0161 228 7442

Email address: keith.stopher@swiis.com

Inspectors

Caroline Bertram, Social Care Inspector
Pauline Yates, 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