

Britannia Fostering Agency Limited

Britannia Fostering Agency Limited

Sir Robert Peel House, Suite 003, 344-348 High Road, Ilford IG1 1QP

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Britannia Fostering is an independent fostering agency. It registered with Ofsted in September 2021. This is its first inspection since registration.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2021.

The agency provides short-term, long-term, emergency, and parent and child placements.

At the time of this inspection, the agency had six approved fostering households providing foster care for 12 children. The majority of children placed with the agency are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Inspection dates: 26 to 30 September 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The independent fostering agency provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The agency provides an effective fostering service. Children live with nurturing foster families and they receive individualised high-quality care, support and guidance. All the children spoken with said that they are well cared for. They quickly establish daily routines and this helps them feel part of the family. One child said, 'I have no worries, my family is good.'

Careful consideration is given when matching children with carers, taking into account their ethnicity, language and religion. Carers ensure that they promote children's cultural needs. Children can attend their local church and local community groups.

When English is not a child's first language, interpreters and translation apps are made readily available to help them to communicate and get involved in making decisions about their life. Children consistently receive the agency's children's guide. The guide is translated when needed, so that it is available in each child's language. This helps children understand their care arrangements and contributes to placement stability. Since registration, there have been no unplanned placement endings at this agency.

Foster carers are committed to the children who live with them. They work closely with the agency and placing authorities to promote and encourage children's education and ensure that their health needs are met. One child has recently received a school award for good attendance.

Foster carers make sure that children have enjoyable experiences and opportunities to develop their interests. Children socialise with peers from similar cultural backgrounds and attend after-school clubs. The agency's annual summer fun day provides opportunities for children and foster carers to meet and enjoy activities together.

Foster carers develop positive relationships with the children. These relationships help children to develop a sense of belonging. One child calls their foster carer 'Aunty' and said, 'They are always there for me.'

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

Children's risks are identified well and foster carers understand the risks associated with the children that they care for. Foster carers know how to keep children safe. Children spoken with said that they feel safe.

Risk management practices are effective. Children's risk assessments are comprehensive. Foster carers understand the particular risks for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. However, risk assessment records are of variable quality. This recording shortfall has not impacted on children's safety and welfare.

Children rarely go missing from their home. When they do, foster carers follow the agency's clear reporting procedures. The agency proactively addresses any concerns about children who go missing from home. Discussions with placing authorities and other professionals, alongside updating children's safer care plans, help to increase children's safety.

Children's participation in their safer care plans helps them to understand the rules and boundaries in their home. The close relationships that children develop with their foster families adds another safeguarding factor for the children.

The assessment and preparation of prospective foster carers are rigorous and comprehensive. Safer caring arrangements and foster carer training are prioritised. This helps to ensure that carers are safe, suitable and knowledgeable. The agency's social workers carry out regular supervision visits to foster carers. During these visits, children are able to talk to the supervising social worker in confidence, if they wish to.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

This newly registered agency is led by an experienced responsible individual and registered manager. These ambitious leaders are committed to balancing the growth of the agency with maintaining high standards of care.

Leaders and managers know the agency's strengths and areas for development. The responsible individual and registered manager are closely involved with the assessment and supervision of their carers. As a result, they have a sound knowledge of their carers and foster children, and have developed trusting relationships with them.

Since the agency's registration, leaders and managers have focused on the recruitment and assessment of foster carers. However, their oversight of the agency's records has not been equally prioritised. For example, the inspector found shortfalls in supervision records, reports of variable quality, typing errors and missing information.

Leaders and managers welcome children and foster carers from all backgrounds and cultures. The agency recruits a diverse mix of carers to provide care to children from a wide range of backgrounds. The support, supervision and training that foster carers receive help them to undertake their roles effectively. Foster carers talk positively about the leaders and managers. They describe them as approachable, supportive, understanding and always available.

The agency has established a foster panel. Panel member recruitment procedures are thorough. However, the registered manager has not recorded his verification of their references.

All panel members have undertaken an induction and initial training. The panel members praise the quality of the agency's foster carer assessments and the timeliness of the reports provided to them. This helps them make informed recommendations in a timely way.

The agency's panel membership could be strengthened if it included a person with a background in education and a care experienced person. The fostering panel records do not identify the role of each panel member or consistently set out the detailed reasons for the panel recommendations.

Leaders and managers have a clear plan for the agency's future development, for example, recruiting a permanent supervising social worker. The registered manager's review of the agency's quality of care is comprehensive and identifies areas for learning and development. However, it does not include any consultation with placing authorities and foster carers.

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>A fostering panel must make a written record of its proceedings and the reasons for its recommendations. (Regulation 24 (2))</p>	<p>31 December 2022</p>
<p>If a fostering service provider decide to approve X as a foster parent they must—</p> <p>enter into a written agreement with X covering the matters specified in Schedule 5 (the “foster care agreement”). (Regulation 27 (5)(b))</p>	<p>31 December 2022</p>
<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.</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) (2) (3))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that the quality of care review includes feedback from foster carers and stakeholders.</p> <p>Also, the registered person must ensure that the agency’s records are complete and accurate. This includes foster panel</p>	<p>31 December 2022</p>

minutes, safer care plans, risk assessments and foster carer agreements.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that part of the panel members' suitability and selection process includes written evidence that each written reference has been verified. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 19.1)
- The registered person should ensure that the knowledge and experience of people who constitute the panels equips them to make competent informed recommendations. The registered person should consider engaging a care experienced person and a person with an education background. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 14.8)

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: 2637131

Registered provider: Britannia Fostering Agency Limited

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Inspector

Victoria Jones, Social Care Inspector
Seka Graovac, Social Care Inspector (shadow)

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