

# Evolve Therapeutic Fostering Ltd

Evolve Therapeutic Fostering Ltd

Office 34, Discovery Park, Innovation House, Innovation Way, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9FF

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

This privately owned independent therapeutic fostering agency registered with Ofsted in August 2021. The manager was registered with Ofsted on 13 October 2022.

The agency states that predominantly, and in line with their model, foster carers work therapeutically with children and young people who have experienced abuse and/or neglect and who may have been significantly traumatised. At the time of this inspection, there were two approved fostering households providing care for three children including parents and a child in the south of England. A number of foster care assessments are also in progress.

### Inspection dates: 13 to 15 September 2022

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

Children are looked after by foster carers who are warm and caring. Care is individualised and carers receive good support from the agency to meet the diverse and complex needs of the children. The multi-professional clinical team attached to the agency trains foster carers in therapeutic parenting. This method of therapeutic intervention has led to children making good progress.

The agency's focus is very clearly on ensuring that all necessary measures are in place to meet children's needs. The quality of the relationships between foster carers and other professionals involved with the children is good. When possible children are involved in the regular reviews of their care. The agency values the children's views and takes action if these are not being considered. In one case they enlisted the assistance of an independent advocate for the child. The agency has a strong commitment to working positively with a range of professionals despite some clear frustrations.

Foster carers are skilled and are well prepared for caring for each child. They receive pre-approval therapeutic training in addition to preparation group training. The training that they receive, and the regular supervision from an experienced supervising social worker, means that foster carers advocate for and support progress in all areas of children's lives. Foster carers work closely with the clinical team to ensure that children have ongoing therapeutic support to address early childhood trauma. As a result, children continue to make good progress.

Children have many opportunities to share their views and wishes. Staff took children ten-pin bowling recently to build relationships and give children an opportunity to talk about where they live and about their day-to-day experiences. The supervising social worker has good relationships with the children and the regular supervision sessions create opportunities to hear about children's feelings. Children have provided questions for the fostering panel to ask prospective carers. This helps children to feel valued and invested in the agency and its continued development.

Children have positive experiences that contribute to their ongoing development, and which prepare them for their future. Children attend a range of activities that help them to have fun and develop their social skills. One child has successfully become involved in performing arts where months ago they would not have been able to manage this. Children are clearly accepted into families and welcomed as a valued member.

The agency helps carers to prepare children for moving in and moving on. A clear plan is put in place regardless of how quickly the move needs to happen. Children

are involved in drawing up this plan. If there is an unplanned ending, the agency promotes continued communication between the child and foster carer if appropriate. The ending is discussed with carers in a reflective supervision session. This allows foster carers to explore their feelings and identify any learning. Because of this, foster carers feel well supported to provide good care.

The fostering panel is well organised. It is diverse and panel members are appropriately skilled. Prospective carers receive a range of training opportunities and are well-prepared for fostering. One panel member said, 'Applicants have been treated with respect and warmth attending panel and I feel very proud to be a panel member'. However, fostering assessments are not as strong as they could be and there is a need for increased professional curiosity. One assessment was presented to panel before it was ready, but the agency did not formally approve this family until the outstanding documentation was received.

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

Children's needs are understood by the supervising social worker and foster carers. Risks are known and the agency and foster carers work together to keep children safe. When there were significant concerns about a child's safety, the agency completed a matrix/risk assessment to highlight this and escalated concerns to the responsible authority. While the child was eventually moved on it helped keep other children in the home safe.

The children placed with carers in this agency are well protected. When age appropriate, they do not go out on their own and do not have unsupervised access to social media. The children are protected by the fact that carers and the agency know them well. Consequently, external activities and short breaks for children do not happen until they have been appropriately researched and measures put in place to mitigate any risks.

Foster carers work closely with the agency when children go missing. Foster carers know the missing from care procedures and follow these. Children are offered return home discussions to establish why they went missing and how recurrences can be prevented. When there were concerns about possible exploitation of one child, the agency appropriately pushed for the responsible authority to make a referral for support for them. Additionally, the clinical team offered support around the wider issues experienced by this child.

Carers receive training in therapeutic parenting. They understand how to use the models favoured by the agency and as a result, responses to behaviours are consistent. Carers understand trauma and see children's behaviours as a result of their experiences. Carers are well supported to ensure children receive good, effective, and long-term care. One carer said, 'The agency keeps us up to date with all the changes and guidelines in fostering and training'.

Staff receive safeguarding training, and this is refreshed as required. They respond to concerns about the safety of children and know how to report any. There are two safeguarding leads in the agency, and both are appropriately experienced and skilled.

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

The manager has recently been registered with Ofsted. The manager is well supported by the responsible individual as well as receiving regular structured supervision from an external practitioner. As a result, the manager can focus on what matters most for foster carers and the children in their care. The manager has high expectations about what children can achieve and models these expectations to her staff. In partnership with the responsible individual, she provides opportunities to children to help them to progress. This includes input from the clinical team.

The development of a multi-professional provision is an indication of the resources available to children. This shows an agency that is focused on delivering on the vision and expectations that they have for children through the informed care that they receive from well-trained carers.

Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the progress that children are making. They have good oversight and follow progress through their review of various documentation and consultations. Carers are encouraged to take pictures of their children at significant points in their life, for example their first day at school, and managers monitor that this happens. The clinical lead has developed a tool for monitoring stressors in carers and reviewing how these change as children's difficult behaviours reduce. As a result, leaders and managers know when additional help is needed and take appropriate action.

There is good supervision practice in this agency. Staff and the manager receive regular supervision that is detailed and reflective. The training offered to staff is of a good standard and they spoke positively about the variety available. There is an upcoming 14-week therapeutic parenting training course that staff and carers will undertake and which they look forward to. This course will be delivered by the clinical team followed by fortnightly group reflective meetings.

Leaders and managers are aware of the agency's strengths and areas for development. A continuous development plan is in place and regularly reviewed and updated to ensure actions are taken and outcomes known.

The agency has an escalation policy in place around issues relating to information about the children. The policy is used well, and leaders and managers appropriately escalate the lack of documentation or other information to the relevant authorities. There is strong challenge by leaders and managers, as a result they receive the outcome that they require.

Leaders and managers understand the importance of the promotion of equality and diversity. The fostering panel has a member who is care experienced. One member of the panel was complimentary about the way that the agency meets her mobility needs. Leaders and managers recognise the need for a diverse carer group who can meet the needs of the range of children currently being referred to the agency. To this end, the agency has a rolling foster carer recruitment programme in place.

## **What does the independent fostering agency need to do to improve?**

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that all necessary information is provided to panel members at least five working days in advance of the panel meeting to enable full and proper consideration. In particular, ensure that applicants are not presented to panel without all relevant documentation being received. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 14.3)

### **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:** 2606502

**Registered provider:** Evolve Therapeutic Fostering Ltd

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**Responsible individual:** Jonathan Toomey

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## **Inspectors**

Vevene Muhammad, Social Care Inspector

Suzy Lemmy, Social Care Inspector

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