

# Diversity Foster Care Ltd

Diversity Foster Care Ltd

Anerley Business Centre, Anerley Town Hall, Anerley Road, London SE20 8BD

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

The agency is a small privately owned independent fostering agency. The statement of purpose sets out that they 'embrace all cultures' and seek to ensure that children, their family's carers and staff are treated equally, and their individual identities are recognised and respected. This includes in relation to the gender, sexual orientation, racial, cultural, religious and linguistic heritage of all children placed in their care.

The agency offers short-term, long-term and parent and child placements. It currently has 13 fostering households and 14 children in placement.

### Inspection dates: 6 to 10 March 2023

<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:** 18 March 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

The agency makes a positive difference to children's lives. Children receive good-quality individualised care and support. Careful matching, together with the agency's ongoing support, contributes to placement stability. As a result, children thrive and make good progress.

Foster carers are well prepared to support the development of the children in their care. Together, the agency and carers develop children's 'outcome-focused' trackers. Monthly reviews monitor children's outcomes in all areas of their health, education, social and psychological well-being. Children make good progress in all aspects of their lives. Examples are numerous and include improved diets, communication skills, better health and increased self-confidence.

Children's views are understood and taken into account. They complete annual evaluation forms of their care. They feed back after group activities, and carers work with the agency to ensure that their recommendations are acted on, such as having group holiday activities. Depending on their age and understanding, children take part in their statutory meetings and contribute to their care planning arrangements.

Foster carers make sure that children feel part of the family. At the same time, foster carers understand the importance of children maintaining positive relationships with their parents. Children benefit from seeing their foster carers' respect for their parents and that they work in partnership with their parents.

The quality of children's day-to-day experiences is good. They are welcomed into their foster family's homes and take part in family activities, from local shopping trips to visits to extended family. Children invite their friends to tea and for sleepovers, and with appropriate risk assessments and consent, children join their foster families on holiday in the UK and abroad. Children are encouraged to maintain or take up new interests and hobbies such as language lessons, swimming, football, drama and youth clubs.

Foster carers support children's education and learning. Children's school attendance is good. Foster carers and staff work closely with schools, colleges and the headteacher of the virtual school to ensure that children receive the support that they need. This includes finding suitable volunteer work or purchasing necessary student course books.

Carers celebrate children's successes with them, including school awards such as for 'strength and resilience,' 'star of the week', or the deputy head's prize or sports prizes. Agency staff and carers are particularly proud of a care leaver earning a place on a degree course at a prestigious university.

Children are well prepared for their futures. Agency staff and carers develop an 'independent skills and strengths checklist' for each child. This helps carers identify

areas for children's development, to ensure a successful transition into the community and to independent living. When children move on, they have memory boxes to take with them. Leaders and managers respect children's wishes and their strong advocacy helps children to 'stay put' with their carers when this is what they want.

The agency actively promotes children's diversity and their individual identities. Children's ethnic and cultural heritages are celebrated. Children complete a cultural and identity checklist. This helps inform their particular care needs, such as specific diets, hairstyles and language, and celebration of cultural festivals.

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

Children are welcomed into their new homes. The agency's welcome newsletter and regular updates let the children know that they are part of a wider group of children at the agency. An age-appropriate children's guide, which includes an audio guide for children who may have a learning difficulty, sets out children's rights and entitlements.

Children's risks are well identified and understood and children become increasingly safe. Children benefit from good safeguarding arrangements. Children said that they feel safe and protected by the adults around them. There have not been any serious safeguarding concerns since the last inspection.

The agency's thorough risk assessment processes increase children's safety. Foster carers understand risk and they know how to safeguard children. Risks such as going missing from home and child sexual exploitation are managed well and reduce considerably. Any concerns are dealt with quickly and robustly and safer care plans help to protect everybody in the foster family.

Carer recruitment, assessment and preparation and comprehensive training have a strong focus on child protection and keeping children safe. Carers are well prepared to manage any behaviours by children that challenge. Carers receive support, when necessary, from the agency's clinical psychologist. The clinical psychologist can help devise bespoke strategies to help to keep children safe or support their development, especially those children with complex needs.

Carers participate in the agency's consultation, viability and matching processes. Arrangements are made to meet children at their existing placements, as well as having introductory tea visits. These help to ensure a smooth transition for children to their new home.

A recognised therapeutic model is taught and embedded in carers' practice. This approach helps children to develop secure and trusting relationships with their carers and they become increasingly settled and grow in self-esteem. Life-story work enhances children's sense of belonging and connectedness with both their birth and foster care families. A parent said, 'She [foster carer] is a carer but she is like family.'

A thorough recruitment process ensures that all staff are suitable for their roles. However, one staff recruitment record lacked a written record of reason for one gap in employment.

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

Leaders and managers have an ambitious vision and high expectations of what children can achieve, and they ensure high standards of care. The experienced responsible individual and registered manager share particular areas of responsibility in the agency. They work alongside each other and have a meticulous overview of the service.

Foster carers and staff appreciate that the agency is small. Experienced foster carers provide mentoring support to newly approved carers, and carers further benefit from regular informal foster care support groups. Foster carers receive a good level of support. Carers and supervising social workers engage in reflective supervision together. This helps embed their therapeutic practice. A carer said, 'They [the agency] hold our hand all of the way.'

The quality of professional relationships is good and ensures the best possible all-round support and outcomes for the children. The children's social workers and other professionals spoke positively about the agency's joint working with external professionals.

Leaders and managers are committed to inclusion, tolerance and equality. Their statement of 'embracing all cultures' is seen across every aspect of the service, including children, carers and staff. A panel member said, 'The registered manager and responsible individual are approachable, warm and child-focused and this transcends throughout the agency.'

A robust, diverse and experienced fostering panel, along with an equally knowledgeable independent decision-maker, ensure that the children's best interests are at the heart of the agency's decisions. However, one panel meeting record stated an attendee's role incorrectly. Annual reviews of the effectiveness of the panel and joint training for panel members and staff continue to develop good practice.

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

### **Recommendation**

- The registered person should ensure that the panel chair provides accurate written minutes of the panel meetings. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 14.7)
- The registered person should ensure that written records consistently follow good recruitment practice. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 19.2)

### **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:** 1268928

**Registered provider:** Diversity Foster Care Ltd

**Registered provider address:** 27 Faringdon Avenue, Bromley, Kent BR2 8BP

**Responsible individual:** Rosemarie Ross

**Registered manager:** Rosa Simpson

**Telephone number:** 0208 7713200

**Email address:** [info@diversityfostercare.co.uk](mailto:info@diversityfostercare.co.uk)

## **Inspector**

Victoria Jones, 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 looked after children, 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 2023