

Fosterplus

Fosterplus Limited

Wavendon Tower, Ortensia Drive, Wavendon, Milton Keynes MK17 8LX

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Fosterplus is a privately owned independent fostering agency in the Polaris group. The registered office for the agency is in Milton Keynes and there is a sub-office in Stonehouse, Gloucestershire. The agency was registered with Ofsted on 8 February 2006.

The agency supports 27 households, with whom 27 children, aged between 0 and 18 years, are placed.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 31 October 2019.

Inspection dates: 10 to 14 July 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 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: outstanding

The level of individualised support and care to children is outstanding. As a result, the outcomes for children living with carers in this agency are excellent. The children are achieving their dreams and making exceptional progress.

The children have wonderful relationships with the agency staff. One child identified an agency staff member as a consistent person they trust and would approach for support. Children feel listened to and very well supported, which helps to keep them safe.

Relationships between the children and foster parents are exceptional. Children are accepted and loved as part of the family. When children reach 18, 'staying put' arrangements are naturally progressed and promoted. Children want to stay with their foster parents and not to be distinguished as different. This is a strength of this agency.

The agency staff have excellent oversight of all the children's education journeys. The staff prioritise attending all education meetings and all the children are enrolled in an education provision. None of the children have been excluded. Children make exceptional progress with their education, exceeding their personal targets, going on to college or joining the Armed Forces following a natural progression from enjoying their cadet experiences.

Children are supported to be confident in sharing their incredible successes with others. This builds the children's confidence and belief in themselves that they can achieve. The progress of children with this agency is impressive.

The children's voice is fully embedded in the agency's ethos. The registered manager has completed a comprehensive participation report reflecting children's views. Staff are consistent in visiting children and spending good-quality time with them. The children speak proudly about how their views are listened to, and acted on, by the agency staff.

Time with birth family is consistently supported by the agency staff. One local authority offered high praise for the support given to a child and their family member in a complex scenario. The agency staff and foster parent went above and beyond to ensure the child and their family were able to spend good-quality time together.

The manager promotes relevant research and evidence-based practice. This is accepted and developed by the team. As a result, research-informed practice is embedded in all the work the agency staff do.

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

Children's identified risks are understood by all the staff. Risk assessments and safer care plans are individualised, thorough and updated regularly. Plans are signed by the foster parents, children and relevant professionals. This demonstrates that everyone is aware of the plans in place to support and safeguard children.

The agency provides exceptional support and advice to carers. Foster parents said they never feel like they have to repeat themselves to any agency staff member. They find it reassuring that the staff know them and their children. In times of crisis, foster parents find the out-of-hours service is always available and supportive.

The children are settled and living long-term with their foster parents. They rarely go missing. One carer said that they had been well supported by the agency when a child had gone missing. The foster parent said that the support from the agency staff had given them confidence in their abilities as a carer going forward.

The manager is creative and innovative in developing tools to improve safeguarding practice. An example of this is her development of a bespoke child sexual exploitation tool. The tool is thorough, informative and offers a high level of information to foster parents and professionals. This improves their understanding of child sexual exploitation risks and helps them to better safeguard children.

The agency staff promote a safeguarding culture that is creative in successfully engaging children to learn. Children are encouraged to learn about keeping safe. They have made posters on safeguarding topics such as internet safety, stranger danger and pet care. These posters are proudly displayed in the office.

Everyone spoken to during this inspection was confident that safeguarding children is a priority of this agency. The agency consistently and appropriately notifies the regulator of all relevant events.

Allegations and complaints made by children are few. However, when they do occur, they are managed to a high standard. The manager has written to children to apologise when things have not gone right. She also writes to children following her home visits to them, to reflect on their discussions. This personalised approach goes above and beyond in ensuring children feel listened to and valued and that any concerns are responded to.

Safer recruitment practice is meticulous. All relevant checks are undertaken and fully explored. There is exceptional monitoring of the staff team and foster carers throughout the agency. The manager ensures to the best of her ability that only safe adults are caring for, and supporting, children in this agency.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has been in post since 2019. She has high aspirations for children and her approach is passionate, innovative and creative. Partner professionals have positive working relationships with the manager and staff team. They hold the agency in high esteem.

The support given to carers to support children is exceptional. The manager consistently monitors all children's progress regularly. Her presence and oversight in driving high standards are clear.

All staff have regular supervisions and annual appraisals. The high quality of these reflective discussions is clearly evidenced. The reports document reflective, evidence-based and child-focused discussions. Staff say that they feel very well supported by their highly accessible manager.

All staff are up to date with their core training. The training offer to staff is vast, as it covers the whole Polaris group. Training is reflective of the needs of the children and additional training is offered when specific topics arise.

All foster parents' core training is up to date. Performance development plans are consistently updated to ensure carers continue to develop and learn. Foster parents' annual reviews are of excellent quality and are held within the required timescales. The oversight and monitoring of foster parents' development are thorough. This ensures foster parents continue to develop their practice, to offer the best possible care to children.

The manager knows the strengths and areas for development well. Her high-quality management reports are always submitted to the regulator on time. The manager is on a constant journey of wanting to always improve the service for children. She consistently drives improvement, for example, introducing welcome boxes, memory books for children and booklets for children when they have to move on.

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: SC065614

Registered provider: Fosterplus Limited

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Responsible individual: Joanne August

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Inspector

Skye Frain, Social Care Inspector

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