

# Caldecott Fostering

Caldecott Foundation Limited

Caldecott Fostering Ltd, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SP

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

This independent fostering agency is a non-profit organisation based in Kent. The agency provides short- and long-term placements for children up to the age of 18.

The agency currently supports 14 foster families caring for 16 children.

### Inspection dates: 12 to 15 September 2023

**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 **outstanding**

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:** 21 January 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Inspection judgements

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

Children are thriving because they are looked after by foster carers who are genuinely committed to building and maintaining positive relationships with them. Dedicated and creative staff support foster carers to provide high-quality care to children. This makes children feel safe and secure, which enables them to make exceptional progress.

Staff and foster carers give high priority to helping children attend and achieve in education. Foster carers say that they feel fully supported with children's education plans. As a result, all children of school age are in education, many achieving well above the expected level.

All staff and managers advocate exceptionally well on behalf of children and foster carers. Managers ensure that they receive the information they need from other professionals, escalating any concerns where necessary. Consequently, they can make informed decisions about children's care.

Managers are committed to ensuring that children experience placement stability. Robust matching processes effectively assess foster carers' experience and ability to care for a child or a sibling group. This reduces the risk of unplanned endings and contributes to the agency's impressive retention of foster carers.

There is a deep-rooted ethos of listening to children's voices. All staff and foster carers actively listen to children and act on their wishes and feelings. Children are supported to attend meetings about their care planning. Recording and decision-making is clear and child-focused. Older children sit on the agency's youth panel and can contribute to the interviews of potential foster carers and staff. As a result, children know that they can have a say in important decisions.

Staff and foster carers are sharply focused on promoting an inclusive culture that supports equality and diversity. Children's curiosity and views in relation to their culture, religion and sexual identity are age-appropriately explored and supported. Consequently, children feel safe to develop a sense of their own identity.

Children's participation is prioritised by all staff and foster carers. Attentive staff organise events that are inclusive of all children. This includes all birth children in foster families. As a result, children embrace the family principles of the agency.

Staff are passionate in their efforts to be trusted figures for the children. This makes them good role models for foster carers. Interactions with children are warm and nurturing.

Children told inspectors that they are happy. They appreciate the support they receive from foster carers and from staff. One child said, 'I would not change a

thing.' Another said, 'It is amazing,' and a third said, 'We are all friends. I didn't have friends before.'

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

Safeguarding practice is a particular strength of the agency. Children say that they feel safe and well cared for by their foster carers. Children have thorough and detailed risk assessments which clearly describe how to keep them safe while allowing them to take age-appropriate risks.

There is an embedded culture of learning and continuous improvement. Staff are proactively encouraged and supported by managers to make good use of research to enhance their safeguarding practice.

The use of physical restraint is rare. However, one child benefits from appropriate and proportionate physical restraint to ensure their safety and well-being. Foster carers are trained, knowledgeable and caring when applying physical restraint. Recording by all staff and foster carers is detailed and is subject to rigorous scrutiny by the registered manager.

Managers promote effective and open communication with external professionals. In one example, the care planning for a child was thoroughly reviewed by the multi-agency team. Changes were made to plans to ensure that all risks have been recognised and are being robustly managed.

Allegations against foster carers are rare. When they do occur, managers respond robustly to ensure the safety of children, and thorough investigations are carried out. Learning from incidents is shared through reflective supervisions with staff and foster carer support groups.

All staff and foster carers are appropriately qualified and have the skills and knowledge to provide safe care for children. Training is comprehensive and the agency has excellent monitoring tools to ensure compliance with training by all foster carers.

Records of foster carers' supervision demonstrate that managers use supervision effectively to ensure that foster carers know how to safely care for children in line with their care plans and risk assessments. Unannounced visits to foster homes are carried out to ensure that children are living in environments which are safe and secure.

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

The registered manager is ambitious and has high aspirations for children. The leadership team is deeply committed to improving children's life chances by ensuring that excellent standards of care are maintained.

The registered manager's oversight and scrutiny of the agency are extremely thorough. As a result, they have an exceptionally well-rounded view of the experiences of the children and the impact the care is having on their outcomes. They are creative and persistent in their approach and ensure that any deficits or shortfalls in the quality of care are immediately addressed.

All staff receive regular practice-related supervision. Staff who have joined the agency in recent months say that they feel supported and have received a comprehensive induction to their role. Team meetings are valued by staff and provide opportunities to discuss practice, learning and concerns.

The fostering panel is well organised and effective, offering good-quality support to new and experienced foster carers. It is chaired by a knowledgeable independent person. Panel members receive comprehensive mandatory training. A care-experienced person provides valuable advice and guidance to panel members.

The registered manager completes comprehensive reviews of the quality of care provided to children and supplies a copy of the quality of care review report to the regulator. Feedback from external professionals is extremely positive regarding communication, partnership working and outcomes for children.

## **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:** SC420507

**Registered provider:** Caldecott Foundation Limited

**Registered provider address:** Caldecott House, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SP

**Responsible individual:** Clair Chamberlain

**Registered manager:** Jacoba Neil

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## **Inspectors**

Jill Sephton-Wright, Social Care Inspector (Lead)  
Kelly Marchmont, Social Care Inspection Manager

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