

tiney Childminder Agency

Inspection dates: **21 to 24 May 2024**

Overall inspection judgement **Effective**

Leadership and management Effective

The quality of the agency's services Effective

The impact of the agency's services on the quality of the education and care provided by its childminders Effective

Previous overall inspection judgement **Effective**

Summary findings

tiney's senior leadership team has a clear vision for the childminding agency, and this is shared by the whole team and the executive board. Since the last inspection, tiney has become a nationwide agency, providing quality services for all its childminders, children and families. There is an embedded approach to driving improvement and working collaboratively to ensure the agency's values continue to be central to the delivery of their services.

The process for pre-registration includes a comprehensive training package for childminders on operating their business with tiney. The agency is strongly committed to ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion are threaded through all aspects of its work. Staff have completed training that relates to unconscious bias. This helps staff to gain a secure understanding of the impact unconscious bias can have.

There is an extensive training programme available for childminders and their assistants through the 'tiney app'. Although assistants are able to access the mandatory training, some state that they are not able to fully access all aspects of the app. Therefore, they are not able to complete additional training or register their continuous professional development.

Safeguarding is effective. There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first. tiney has well-established processes to ensure and monitor the ongoing suitability of registered childminders, which include regularly reviewing the Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

tiney has a safeguarding panel that works cohesively to respond promptly to safeguarding matters when they arise. Panel members are knowledgeable in relation to their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. They respond swiftly to ensure that appropriate action is taken to review concerns and identify next steps to keep children safe. There is a strong focus on continued improvement. For example, the safeguarding panel is currently reviewing the way in which information is shared at meetings to further strengthen discussions and the decision-making processes.

tiney conducts quality assurance visits for all its registered childminders. However, there is some delay in processing resignations. For example, when a childminder indicates that they wish to resign, the agency issues a 'notice of intention', followed by a 'notice of decision' to de-register, neither of which is a legal requirement for resignation. As a consequence, the resignation is not actioned swiftly. This means that quality assurance visits for those wishing to resign are put on hold and appear to be overdue.

Overall, the tiney app enables good communication between tiney and its childminders. For example, some childminders seek guidance through the tiney app for support to help them meet the additional needs of their minded children. tiney has a special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) panel that assists in devising strategies so that childminders can offer the appropriate care and support to enable children to make progress. Some childminders state that, on occasion, they experience a delay in receiving a response to their non-urgent queries. In addition, some childminders state that their follow-up quality assurance support plan meetings are delayed.

Recommendations

- enhance communication with childminders to improve response times to non-urgent queries and support plan follow up meetings
- enable childminder assistants to fully access all relevant parts of the tiney app to enhance their continuous professional development
- consider reviewing the process for childminder resignations so they are actioned in a timely way and do not impact on quality assurance visit time frames.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the childminder agency

- The agency has a robust recruitment and induction process for all staff. This helps to ensure that staff are committed to the aims and vision of the organisation.
- The agency values its staff and provides ongoing support for their well-being. This helps staff to manage challenging circumstances.
- The agency's vision is to support the growth of childminder agencies, both in the United Kingdom and globally. Since the last inspection, they have successfully grown. The strong commitment of the chief executive officer (CEO) and senior leadership team has positively driven the expansion of the agency, so that it now has registered childminders across England.
- The agency's self-evaluation is forward thinking. It takes into account the views and opinions of the agency's highly engaged staff. There are opportunities for staff to progress across different roles and responsibilities within the organisation.
- The agency's self-evaluation has a strong focus with regards to the ongoing quality improvement of childminders, the development of the agency and enhanced digital systems. These systems aim to improve all areas of childminder practice.
- The agency consultants who complete quality assurance visits are knowledgeable and experienced. They receive regular support and monitoring from senior leaders. This helps to moderate the consistency of the consultants' practice and the delivery of quality assurance visits.
- The views of parents are sought through regular surveys. The agency takes these into account and responds appropriately to address key points.
- The feedback that Ofsted received from parents during the inspection demonstrates strong partnership working. Parents have expressed their satisfaction with the support they receive. They say that the information available to them on the tinely app is extremely helpful.
- The agency provides opportunities for childminders to progress their careers. For example, childminders can become community coaches and/or consultants where they have the required skills.
- The agency understands its responsibilities for safeguarding and applies its regulatory powers appropriately, such as suspension of registration, to minimise risks to children.
- The agency takes appropriate action in the event of urgent safeguarding concerns. It makes the necessary referrals to the local authority designated safeguarding lead officer and works cooperatively with them. This practice positively reflects their commitment to implementing robust safeguarding practices to safeguard children.

The quality of the agency's services

- The digital systems in place, such as the tinely app, have continued to develop with the expansion of the agency. The tinely app provides childminders with an

effective and easy system to support the daily organisation of their business. It enables childminders to focus on the children in their care and aims to reduce administrative tasks. For example, childminders can share daily updates with parents. There is also support for managing the financial aspects of the business, for both childminders and parents.

- The agency values their childminders and provides interesting learning opportunities in addition to the training available on the tiney app. For example, inset days are provided twice yearly. The inset day held in May 2024 provided opportunities for high levels of learning and demonstrates the ambitious culture that tiney has for its childminders.
- The agency provides a broad range of training to support the continuous professional development of its childminders. tiney has a clear focus on the well-being of childminders, which is woven through the services they offer.
- The range of training is regularly reviewed by the agency's head of education, who works collaboratively with colleagues across the agency to ensure that training, webinars and inset days are centred on the most relevant feedback from those who use the agency's services.
- The agency consultants provide quality assurance support plan meetings for childminders, with a focus on improving weaker practice. Occasionally, these meetings are delayed; however, consultants are skilful in their approach. They offer helpful suggestions and guidance to enhance the practice of childminders. This enables childminders to reflect on and improve the quality of care they provide to children.
- As required, the agency completes annual quality assurance visits for childminders that wish to remain registered. The consultants demonstrate a consistent approach to the visits and follow the agency's quality framework when assessing compliance with the early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework requirements. They are able to identify weaker practice and non-compliance. Consultants provide a balanced assessment of the quality of care provided by childminders.
- As part of the quality assurance visits, consultants review the development children make. This helps to ensure that children are making progress from their starting points, and where necessary, additional support is identified and sought to secure children's next steps.

The impact of the agency's services on the quality of the education and care provided by its childminders

- The agency sets clear expectations about the completion of mandatory training, which includes safeguarding awareness. It requires all its registered childminders to keep their safeguarding knowledge up to date. Childminders must complete annual safeguarding training; this helps to ensure they retain a secure understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and are able to act to keep children safe.
- The agency provides its members with a 24-hour safeguarding helpline, which is managed by an experienced safeguarding team member. The purpose of this

helpline is to offer guidance and support to childminders and parents in the event of safeguarding concerns.

- There is a strong pre-registration process that has an appropriate level of focus on the suitability of trainees and prepares them well for undertaking the roles and responsibilities of a childminder.
- As part of the registration process, trainees must attend a theory session. This is designed to ensure that they have gained the necessary level of knowledge and understanding of the EYFS requirements. Additionally, this also ensures compliance with the EYFS and supports childminders to deliver effective and ever-improving care and learning.
- The agency provides a regular book club for childminders and their minded children. The book club is a good example of how the agency promotes communication and language development for all children. It assists childminders to enhance their own teaching skills and is very warmly received. Those that participate in the book club receive information in order to obtain a free copy of the featured book after attending the live sessions.
- The agency are committed to supporting the well-being of all their childminders. They have invested in providing a range of services, such as the GP out-of-hours service, which is accessible to childminders and parents. This helps to ensure that children's health, care and well-being are promoted.
- Childminders are provided with support to help them meet the care and learning needs of all their minded children, particularly those who have additional needs. Childminders are aided and encouraged to work with other agencies and parents to prioritise children's development. tiney has identified that discussions with parents about possible SEND issues can sometimes be a sensitive matter, and therefore, the quality and training team are working closely with childminders to provide some focused training in this area.
- The childminders registered with tiney state that they receive very good support with training and the set up of their business. Post-registration welcome sessions are offered to help childminders settle into their role during the initial phases of being a registered childminder. However, childminders would value having more contact with the agency in between quality assurance visits.

Childminder Agency details

Unique reference number	CA000038
Local authority	Newham
Type of provision	Childminder Agency
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Number of active childminders	932
Number of active providers of childcare on domestic premises	2
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2022 to 2 March 2022
Previous overall inspection judgement	Effective

Information about this childminding agency

tiney Childminder Agency registered with Ofsted in 2019. It registers childminders on the Early Years and the Childcare Registers. All tiney childminders receive ongoing support and training. tiney also provides services for parents, including access to a specific parent app, which provides administrative support, a daily update service and information and training. The agency's operational office is in Holborn, London. It currently has over 930 registered childminders across England. The agency employs and contracts a relevantly experienced staff team.

Information about the inspection

The inspection was led by an Early Years Senior Officer. The inspection team included a second Early Years Senior Officer and 18 Early Years Regulatory Inspectors. To assess the effectiveness of the agency, the inspection team held in-depth discussions with the nominated individual/CEO, senior managers, team leaders, quality assurance consultants and advisers.

The inspection team conducted observation visits with quality assurance consultants, visited childminders and spoke with them to gain their views about the agency. The inspectors also spoke with a number of parents. Inspectors observed panel meetings and sampled a range of documents, including the statement of purpose, the agency's self-evaluation document, complaints records, regulatory correspondence, quality assurance reports, training materials and parent and childminder surveys.

This was the agency's second inspection and was carried out under the Childcare Act 2006, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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