

# Family Works Fostering Limited

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Unit 2, Victoria Central, 27 Victoria Avenue, Southend-On-Sea SS2 6AJ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

Family Works Fostering is a small privately owned agency operating from one office in Southend. The agency provides emergency, short-term, long-term and parent and child foster placements. The agency currently supports 38 fostering households and 48 children.

The suitably qualified and experienced manager has been in post since the agency registered with Ofsted in 2017.

### Inspection dates: 7 to 11 October 2024

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** good

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:** 24 January 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Inspection judgements

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

Children gain a sense of permanence with foster carers. Foster carers know children well. Children are positive about their experiences. They become part of foster carers' families. Children are supported into adulthood, and several have stayed on in 'staying put' arrangements.

The agency carefully considers children's cultural heritage. Children are placed with carers from similar backgrounds when possible and this helps them to build their identity. Important cultural occasions are celebrated, and the agency arranges special events that carers and children can attend. Children who are seeking asylum are quickly supported to attend health appointments, get into education and integrate into the community.

Education is supported by the agency and the foster carers. Children are supported to attend educational placements that are tailored to their needs. When there are challenges with education, foster carers and supervising social workers attend meetings to reduce these barriers. One carer took extended time off work to support her child with education. Two children have recently started university, studying law and nursing. The managers are very proud of this, and it models aspirations for other children.

Foster carers supporting parent and child placements use a warm and a nonjudgmental approach. This gives young parents the best opportunity to succeed. One parent spoke gratefully about the support she had received and the very positive relationship she enjoyed with the foster carer.

Foster carers take children on memorable holidays. One child proudly talked about going to Turkey and staying in a five-star hotel. Other children have visited Dubai and Germany. These shared experiences help children to build positive memories and strong connections to their foster carers.

Foster carers receive high levels of support and feel valued by the agency. This helps them to offer children consistency and stability. Foster carers spoke about the annual awards ceremony facilitated by the agency and were pleased to be recognised for their contributions.

Foster carers do not always keep detailed records of children's day-to-day experiences. Some records are detailed and offer an accurate picture of children's lived experiences. However, others are not recorded in a timely way and do not provide the relevant detail to help the children, the agency, or social workers understand children's experiences.

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

Foster carers are experienced, dedicated and knowledgeable. They offer individualised support to children who make good progress.

Children feel listened to and are able to confide in their foster carers. One child said that their carer is someone who listens. Another child said, 'I can tell her [my carer] anything and everything I am worried about.' These relationships help to keep children safe.

The agency employs a therapist who supports staff, foster carers and children. Carers spoke very highly of this support. It helps them to understand children's past trauma and to respond to any challenges with a better understanding. Alongside this, there is good out-of-hours support. This helps foster carers to provide children with stability and helps to avoid children having unnecessary moves.

The agency has a placement support worker who adds another layer of support to foster carers. This includes arranging activities for children to take part in, such as highwire climbing, escape rooms and theme parks. These activities are inclusive of birth children. This offers foster carers additional rest and relaxation. Initiatives like this add to the wraparound support carers receive.

The agency provides regular support and supervision to their foster carers. Supervising social workers know their families well and offer emotional and practical support. However, unannounced visits have not taken place within the annual timeframe for several carers.

When children go missing from care, their foster carers report them missing to the police. However, carers do not always take proactive action to assist in finding children. For one child, the agency and foster carer have not kept clear records of when the child has been missing, or escalated concerns to relevant agencies when care planning has not been effective.

One fostering household member has not had safer care training. This does not support their understanding of professional boundaries or implementation of safe-care practice.

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

The agency is managed by an experienced and dedicated manager. He knows the carers and wider team well. The manager is committed to providing children with good-quality care. He works well alongside his deputy manager.

The amount of feedback received from foster carers in support of the agency is exceptionally high. This indicates that they are happy to be part of the agency. The high level of support foster carers enjoy enables them to help children during challenging times. As a result, the number of unplanned endings are low. Local

authority commissioners described the agency as a 'go-to agency'. They recognise the stability offered to children. They said that communication with the agency was very good.

Supervising social workers said that they are happy to be part of the agency. They describe the agency as having a 'family feel'. Professionals who work with the agency provided positive feedback.

There is an excellent range of professional and personal expertise on the foster panel. This includes care-experienced young people and a very experienced panel chair. The fostering panel provides effective challenge and scrutiny that helps to improve the quality of assessments. The amount of feedback from members of fostering families and professionals has improved. This helps the foster panel members to make informed decisions.

There is a good training package for agency staff and carers. Supervising social workers and foster carers have the same training, which helps them to have a consistent approach to caring for children. One carer said, 'The agency provides excellent training opportunities that have helped me develop my skills as a foster carer.' Foster carers have access to training that they feel is good quality and supports them in their role.

The agency does not consistently ensure that it has the most up-to-date local authority care plans for children. As a result, some foster carers do not have the most current plans. The agency has not challenged this in a timely way. This does not help carers or supervising social workers to understand children's needs and ensure that they are working towards children's relevant plans.

Leaders and managers know the foster carers and children well. However, management direction and guidance is not clearly recorded on foster carer and children's records.

The manager's annual review of the quality of care is detailed and supports continuous development of the service.

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

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the national minimum standards. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The fostering service provider must ensure that, in relation to any child placed or to be placed with a foster parent, the foster parent is given such information, which is kept up to date, as to enable him to provide appropriate care for the child, and in particular that each foster parent is provided with a copy of the most recent version of the child's care plan provided to the fostering service provider under regulation 6 (3)(d) of the Care Planning Regulations. (Regulation 17 (3))</p>	<p>2 December 2024</p>

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the fostering service and foster carers take appropriate action to find children who are missing, including working alongside the police and relevant agencies where appropriate. ('Fostering services: National minimum standards', 5.5)
- The registered person should ensure that written records kept by the fostering service where a child goes missing detail action taken by foster carers, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the foster home and any action taken in the light of those reasons. This information is shared with the responsible authority and, where appropriate, the child's parents. ('Fostering services: National minimum standards', 5.10)
- The registered person should ensure that each approved foster carer has at least one unannounced visit a year. ('Fostering services: National minimum standards', 21.8)
- The registered person should ensure that appropriate training on safer caring is provided for all members of the fostering household. ('Fostering services: National minimum standards', 20.9)
- The registered person should ensure that information about the child is recorded clearly and in a way that will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. ('Fostering services: National minimum standards', 26.6)
- The registered person should monitor all records kept by the service to ensure compliance with the service's policies, to identify any concerns about specific

incidents and to identify patterns and trends. The registered person should ensure that this monitoring is available to audit. ('Fostering services: National minimum standards', 25.2)

## **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:** 1242101

**Registered provider:** Family Works Fostering Limited

**Registered provider address:** 46 Parham Drive, Ilford, Essex IG2 6NB

**Responsible individual:** Wendy Edward-Tsuro

**Registered manager:** Tafadzwa Dzinoruma

**Telephone number:** 01702597797

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## **Inspectors**

Mary Costello, Social Care Inspector

Rebecca Hannell, Social Care Inspector

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