

Fusion Fostering North East

Fusion Fostering Limited

Worksop Turbine, Coach Close, Worksop S81 8AP

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

The fostering agency is privately owned. The agency supports foster carers across a wide geographical area, which includes East Yorkshire and the East Midlands.

The placements provided include short-term, long-term, emergency and parent and child placements. At the time of the inspection, there were 26 fostering households providing placements for 40 children.

Children and foster carers were spoken to during the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2022.

Inspection dates: 19 to 23 May 2025

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: 4 July 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 are receiving very good care from experienced and skilled foster carers. Their dedication, kindness and compassion enable children to build trusted relationships and develop a strong sense of security. Carers welcome children into their families and accept children for who they are. Children settle in very quickly and soon begin to make progress, even in emergency situations. Some children's care is exceptional.

Many children live with their carers for long periods of time, some going into adulthood. Alongside this, they see their birth families regularly. As such, they develop a strong sense of permanence and belonging. Children describe their carers as 'awesome' or 'superheroes'. They stay in touch when they leave home, which is testament to the care they have received.

Social workers have excellent relationships with foster carers and children. They visit regularly and children know them well. There is a family feel to the agency, which provides necessary emotional support. Successes are celebrated, however small, which children and carers appreciate. Placement stability is good, and unplanned endings are kept to a minimum. Where this happens, reflection takes place and areas of learning are identified.

The manager has excellent oversight of children's health and education. A tracking system has been embedded that monitors individualised plans and ensures that the plans remain meaningful and dynamic. The trackers are also overseen by health and education specialists who provide consultation and advocacy for carers, ensuring that children reach their potential. For example, one child has been able to remain in mainstream school.

Children have excellent day-to-day experiences. They have good routines, hobbies and new opportunities. Three children are currently planning a trip abroad. Children aspire for their futures in further and higher education. The agency encourages this as they know how important education is for children's life chances. Carers teach children to become independent incrementally. This approach reduces the sense of institutionalisation that can impact looked after children.

Carers have a positive experience of assessment. The process is thorough, yet supportive. Assessment reports are of a very good standard, exploring strengths and vulnerabilities well.

The agency actively seeks the views of children. However, they are not yet providing regular opportunities for children to take part in influencing the development of the service.

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

Managers have built a strong safeguarding culture. They have a good understanding of children's risks and vulnerabilities. Risk management plans contain measures to increase safety. Children are regularly seen alone. This builds trust and opportunities for children to share any concerns about their care. Supervising social workers also spend considerable time with foster carers to make sure that they understand concerns and risks. This builds carers' confidence in managing difficult situations and preventing them escalating.

The manager has clear processes in place to manage allegations. She works transparently with carers and relevant agencies. Children are always spoken to about their concerns, and investigations take place where necessary. Where possible, the agency works through concerns. However, the manager implements the required processes when foster carers' suitability is in question. Children do not yet receive a written outcome in response to their allegations, which the agency acknowledges as an important part of the process.

Children rarely go missing from home. On occasions where children have left without permission, there has been a well-coordinated response and children return safely. Children are sensitively welcomed home and spoken to about why they were absent. Support is provided to reduce further incidences. Carers receive training in sexual and criminal exploitation to keep up to date with contextual safeguarding risks.

Carers are skilled in supporting children with their feelings and behaviours. This means that they are well equipped to help children when they become overwhelmed. Carers have access to an in-house therapist who provides trauma-informed approaches, which they use to good effect. Physical interventions are seldom used. If this does occur, then support is provided following the incident.

Staff are recruited through excellent vetting procedures. The agency goes above and beyond their role in ensuring that they only employ people who are suitable to work with children. This includes extensive checks and information-gathering before someone is appointed.

The managers work effectively with local authority social workers to ensure that there is the right level of oversight of children to keep them safe. There are good examples of children being supported to make safer decisions in terms of substance misuse and vaping. Online courses are available for children to learn more about issues affecting their age groups. The number of children accessing the courses is currently building.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is passionate about her work. She has created a stable and resilient team who are aspirational for carers and children. The manager and her team value the care that foster carers provide for children. They fully understand that to maintain this they need to look after their carers. They hold events that celebrate

fostering and show their appreciation. These are thoughtfully planned and implemented.

Leaders and managers model a high level of professionalism and integrity, which are now established in the social work team. The manager and deputy have close oversight of the service. There is an active development plan, which has a good focus on compliance with core fostering tasks. However, the recruitment strategy is limited. The majority of carers are White British, which means there is limited choice for children from ethnic minorities.

The team works closely together in a synchronised way. Staff report that they feel well supported by the manager and senior leaders. They feel that they can approach them at any time. Social work staff benefit from regular, reflective supervision and case direction from managers. This helps them to keep children at the centre of their work and make well-informed decisions. Staff receive good training that informs their support of foster carers and children. The manager has embedded trauma-informed practice and therapeutic parenting since the last inspection. This has benefited children's care.

Social workers provide good supervision to foster carers. This ensures that carers are supported, but also challenged when necessary. There are good boundaries in place, which help foster carers to understand their role and the expectations of the agency. Ultimately, this keeps children safe.

Professionals have high levels of confidence in the fostering service. External agencies speak very positively about the care provided to children, particularly the level of responsiveness at key times in children's lives.

The fostering panel is functioning well. There is an experienced panel chair who ensures that appropriate scrutiny is applied to their recommendations. There is good communication with the fostering manager, which means that any feedback about practice is acted on in a timely way.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the wishes, feelings and views of children and those significant to them are taken into account in developing the fostering service. (Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards, page 9, paragraph 1.7)
- The registered person should ensure that children receive prompt feedback on any concerns or complaints raised and are kept informed of progress. (Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards, page 9, paragraph)
- The registered person should implement an effective strategy to be responsive to predicted future demands on the service. Future planning should include increasing the diversity of carers. (Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards, page 28, paragraph 13.1)

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: 1255753

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Registered provider address: Old Mill, Maltravers House, Petters Way, Yeovil,
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Inspectors

Laura Walker, Social Care Inspector

Jess Baines, Social Care Inspector

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