

# By the Bridge Midlands

By The Bridge Limited

TS1, Pinewood Business Park, Coleshill Road, Marston Green, Birmingham B37 7HG

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

By The Bridge Midlands is a privately owned independent fostering agency and is part of a limited company. This is the agency's first inspection after registration on 29 April 2025.

The agency offers short-term, long-term, sibling, respite and parent and child, staying put and step-down placements. At the time of this inspection, there were 71 fostering households caring for 91 children.

There is a permanent registered manager in post. The manager is social work qualified and registered with Social Work England.

### Inspection dates: 2 to 6 March 2026

**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:** not previously inspected

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** not applicable

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** not applicable

## Inspection judgements

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

Children live with families who keep them safe and secure. Most children live with their foster carers long-term. Children develop a sense of belonging. One third of children live with their siblings. This enables them to maintain familial links and a positive sense of their identity.

The agency provides children and their foster carers with therapeutic wrap around support. This promotes stability allowing children to heal and recover from trauma. Thus, improving their emotional development enabling positive childhood experiences.

Foster carers understand children's cultural and religious needs. They support children to practice their religious beliefs such as fasting and praying. Foster carers are also creative and overcome language barriers where necessary. Systems for gathering children's views are effective. This ensures that children feel listened to and valued.

Education advisors and grow, achieve, learn consultants promote educational progress and attainment. They also support children to develop their interests through direct work and activities. Children and foster carers describe them as 'amazing'. One professional described them, as 'the gold standard'.

The agency ensures that prospective foster carers experience a supportive assessment process. They provide them with every chance to succeed including therapeutic support if needed. Assessments of foster carers are thorough and of a good standard. Good preparation for foster carers promotes stability for children.

When children experience instability, the agency consults with relevant professionals. They consider, the quality and impact of care and any issues or concerns. Also identifying any support needs for the child. Foster carers receive therapeutic support to help them understand children's response to trauma. Aswell as reflecting on their approach and improving this where needed.

Annual reviews of foster carers suitability are thorough. Detailed review reports offer clear analysis of strengths and areas of vulnerability. Also, protective measures to mitigate any risk.

Professionals are unanimous in their praise for the service. They describe children as making good progress. They also describe effective communication which helps prevent any drift in care planning. One professional said the agency is one of the best they had ever worked with. Children benefit from a strong multi-agency approach to their care.

The agency has an out of hours service. This provides valuable support to foster carers and children. Yet, on occasion children have moved in with foster carers with

minimal information. Recently two siblings moved in an emergency facilitated by the police to keep them safe. The agency only had the children's names and date of birth for three days. The agency escalated this with the children's placing authority but were ineffective. This increased the children's vulnerability at a time of crisis. This also places undue pressure on foster carers who may be unable to meet their needs.

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

Foster carers understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Each child has a detailed risk assessment and safety plan. Foster carers follow clear strategies to keep children safe.

Overall, managers and staff respond appropriately to allegations and concerns about children's safety. Staff act swiftly demonstrating a clear focus on children's needs and welfare. This includes timely referrals to safeguarding agencies. This contributes to a multi-agency approach to keeping children safe.

When children go missing, foster carers follow missing-from-care protocols. They also follow procedures set by local authorities and safeguarding partners. This promotes a coordinated response and helps to locate children quickly. Managers and staff support foster carers to identify patterns and triggers to missing. This enables foster carers to anticipate risks more effectively.

The agency's therapeutic team plays a central role. They help foster carers to understand trauma and the impact this has. Foster carers recognise that children can be 'close' to their trauma when they first move in. Children receive responsive care which is nurturing and sensitive. This helps them to trust their foster carers and develop their confidence. Children enjoy experiences that they have never before.

The quality of foster carer records is inconsistent. Some records provide detailed and thoughtful accounts that capture children's experiences. In contrast, other records lack detail. This limits the agency's ability to monitor and understand children's lived experiences.

Managers do not inform Ofsted of all notifiable events. They do not routinely update Ofsted of investigation outcomes either. This hinders the external monitoring of the agency.

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

The registered manager and responsible individual are ambitious and have a clear vision. They are both relatively new to their roles. The agency has experienced instability in the staff team. This is now resolving with staff providing positive feedback about the agency. Including their roles and the management support.

Leaders and managers have monitoring systems in place. This enables them to maintain good oversight of children and their foster carers. Monitoring systems

enable managers to track children's progress effectively. This includes management meetings specifically focusing on safeguarding.

The agency has a new experienced and skilled panel chair. They are enthusiastic about their role and the outcomes for children. The fostering panel is diverse in terms of skill and experience. The agency is recruiting new panel members to promote cultural and gender diversity. They are currently shortlisting applicants.

The fostering panel provides good quality assurance of foster carer assessments and reviews. They provide clear recommendations based on strengths and areas of vulnerability. The agency decision maker also provides good scrutiny and challenge. They ensure that recommendations reflect appropriate safeguards, review, and monitoring systems.

Children are fully involved in the approval process of foster carers. Children sit on 'shadow panels'. They read a simplified version of an applicant's assessment report. They formulate and ask applicants their own questions. This empowers children and provides them with a voice during the approval process. This contributes to the agency's understanding of children's lived experiences. It also helps to improve the quality of foster carers approved. Children feel listened to and their views are validated.

The manager and staff receive regular, reflective, and collaborative supervision. Actions and timescales are not always clear. This could compromise the monitoring and oversight of fostering households. Staff have access to a range of training relevant to their roles. This includes external training and in-house training with the agency's therapeutic team.

## 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, The 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 registered person in respect of an independent fostering agency must ensure that—</p> <p>the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster parents is safeguarded and promoted at all times, and</p> <p>before making any decision affecting a child placed or to be placed with a foster parent due consideration is given to the child’s—</p> <p>wishes and feelings (having regard to the child’s age and understanding), and</p> <p>religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background. (Regulation 11 (a)(b)(i)(ii))</p> <p>The registered person should ensure that they have all necessary information about children’s needs and risks during the care planning processes and prior to children moving in with foster carers, to enable them to effectively consider foster carers’ skills, knowledge, personal circumstances, and capacity to meet children’s individual needs and to keep them safe. This is particularly pertinent to when children move in an emergency.</p>	5 June 2026
<p>If any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 7 takes place in relation to a fostering agency, the registered person must without delay notify the persons or bodies indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table.</p> <p>Any notification made in accordance with this regulation which is given orally must be confirmed in writing. (Regulation 36 (1) (2))</p>	5 June 2026

This refers specifically to ensuring that matters listed under schedule 7 are notified to Ofsted and that, when matters have concluded, an update is also provided to the regulator.	
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## **Recommendation**

- The registered person should take appropriate action to ensure that foster carer records improve in quality and consistency. Records of foster carer and staff supervision should also include clear actions and timescale for completion. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', page 52, 26.1 and 26.2)

## **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:** 2794311

**Registered provider:** By The Bridge Limited

**Registered provider address:** 4th Floor, Parkview, 82 Oxford Road, Uxbridge UB8 1UX

**Responsible individual:**

**Registered manager:** Keeley Purslow

**Telephone number:** 02476546160

**Email address:** Patricia.Jarrett@caretech-uk.com

## **Inspectors**

Sarah Berry, Social Care Inspector  
Zillah Brooks, Social Care Inspector  
Laura Norcop, Social Care Inspector

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