

Fusion Fostering South West

Fusion Fostering Limited

Fusion Fostering, Richmond House, Taunton TA3 6BY

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

The South West office of Fusion Fostering undertakes the recruitment, assessment, approval and training of foster carers in the South West region who care for children aged 0 to 18 years. The agency also operates offices in other regions of England.

At the time of the inspection, the agency had 76 fostering households, who were caring for 85 children and young people.

There is a manager in post. Their application to register with Ofsted is in progress.

Inspection dates: 17 to 21 April 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The independent fostering agency provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 12 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the previous inspection, in September 2022, leaders, managers, staff and foster carers have worked tirelessly to address the serious shortfalls identified. At this inspection, the inspector found significant and positive improvement across all areas. As a result, children are cared for by foster carers who are better assessed, trained and supported. Children make and sustain progress.

The majority of the foster carers who contributed to the inspection reported a significant improvement in the level and quality of support they receive from their supervising social workers. Some foster carers struggled with the increased level of scrutiny and training that followed the previous inspection. However, in these instances, the supervising social workers worked closely and supportively with carers to help them understand and develop.

Records are well kept and detail the rich conversations that take place between the carer and their supervising social worker. In particular, they evidence the level of professional curiosity applied by the workers, the voice of the child and the progress that the children are making. The inspector found examples of supervisions with foster carers that were of an excellent standard.

Foster carers have access to a suite of training which has been reviewed for its quality and usefulness. Records confirm that the vast majority of carers are up to date with their mandatory training. This means that foster carers are better informed and skilled to support children. In particular, the training for foster carers who support parent and child placements has vastly improved.

Consultation with and participation by foster carers and, most importantly, children is of a noteworthy standard. Children and foster carers who contributed to the inspection were overwhelmingly positive about the agency.

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

Children living with foster carers are kept safe because agency staff and the foster carers understand well the safeguarding needs of the children. The inspector found safer care plans and risk assessments were very well written and personalised. They provided foster carers with strategies to support and care for children when they were most upset.

Records capture the skilled approaches applied by the foster carers when managing children's behaviours. In addition, the agency family support workers provide much valued additional support to carers and children.

Standards of care reports are completed in a timely manner and highlight learning for both the agency and the carer. In the few cases where foster carers remain

dissatisfied with the response from the agency, leaders and managers have plans to address the issues.

Unannounced visits to foster carers take place regularly. Recordings of these visits are detailed and demonstrate that the children are living in safe and secure homes.

Professionals who contributed to the inspection were confident that children were safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have regularly shared their improvement activity with Ofsted, safeguarding partners and local authorities. The agency has sought independent scrutiny and commissioned independent investigations.

Learning from this has resulted in a complete review of all policies, procedures and practices. The inspector found an impressive volume of evidence to demonstrate how the leaders and managers have met all the requirements and recommendations set at the last inspection. Because the response to addressing the shortfalls has been dynamic and strategic, the agency is now operating in line with its statement of purpose, is safe and is in a strong position going forward.

The manager and the responsible individual are extremely visible in the agency and are child-focused. The ethos of providing children with the best possible care clearly comes across. Systems to support the monitoring of the agency are effective and provide leaders and managers with an excellent level of oversight.

The inspector observed a significant change in the relationships between leaders, managers and the whole staff team. All staff spoke of feeling valued, listened to and safely supported. This has directly led to the improvement of staff morale and energy and an enthusiasm by all to continue to improve.

The fostering panel functions effectively, is safe and provides support and challenge appropriately. The panel chair and members are experienced in the field of social care and the agency decision-maker provides a good level of scrutiny and challenge.

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: 1226630

Registered provider: Fusion Fostering Limited

Registered provider address: Fusion Fostering Limited, Old Mill, Maltravers House, Petters Way, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 1SH

Responsible individual: David Tucker

Registered manager: Post vacant

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Inspector

Linda Bond, Social Care Inspector

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