

Young People At Heart

Young People At Heart Limited

Office 20-21 Rural Enterprise Centre, Vincent Carey Road, Rotherwas Industrial Estate, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 6FE

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Young People At Heart is a not-for-profit, Independent Fostering Organisation Limited by Guarantee. The agency has been registered with Ofsted since 3 October 2019.

The agency offers short- and long-term foster care, including sibling, parent and child, and emergency placements. At the time of this inspection, 35 fostering households care for 68 children. There is a permanent registered manager in post. He holds the level 5 qualification in leadership and management.

Inspection dates: 3 to 7 February 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: 22 November 2021

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 have positive and trusting relationships with their foster carers. They spend time with their carers and are fully involved in family life. When children move on, they can maintain lifelong links with their foster families.

Children are healthy and foster carers engage well with health professionals. The agency work hard to promote children's health. For example, to prevent delay, the agency funded a medical assessment for one child. This gave a clearer picture of the child's needs and enabled quickly coordinated support among professionals.

All children attend school or alternative provision, which supports their educational needs. Children enjoy attending school and make progress. Children achieve qualifications to support them in higher education. They have ambition and ideas about careers for the future. When children require alternative education, the agency works with partner agencies to support them.

Permanence is promoted. Twenty-eight children have permanent plans and benefit from long and stable placements with their carers. Additionally, several children are or will be staying put, and this offers them stability. Over half of children are living with their siblings, which offers them the opportunity to maintain important connections.

Children make good progress, and their achievements are celebrated. The agency continually recognises their achievements. The agency promotes children's independence from an early age, which equips them for adulthood. Children have grown in confidence and developed life skills because of their care. In addition, carers are committed to promote family time arrangements, and as a result, children spend regular time with family.

A wide range of events and activities for children and their foster families are hosted by the agency. Children of staff working at the agency are also invited. Events are well planned and consider the needs of all children, including those with disabilities.

The agency follows a specific model of care, and bespoke training to enhance carers' knowledge is well attended. Staff have received training which supports them to supervise carers when providing advice and support. Social work assistants offer children emotional support through agreed direct work sessions. This benefits children's emotional well-being and promotes placement stability.

When moving into their new homes, children's needs are well considered and they receive thorough planning and transitions. They receive personalised welcome boxes, which includes handmade blankets from a local charity. Children also receive a welcome guide so they know what to expect from their carers and the agency.

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

Foster carers know children well and children feel safe living with their carers. Children have individualised plans often completed alongside them to support their safety. The manager reviews children's plans, and these are updated on a regular basis, considering any changes or emerging concerns. Clear policies and procedures are in place, which staff and carers follow, and there is a strong focus on multi-agency working to keep children safe.

Safeguarding practice is good. If children go missing, the agency responds effectively to reduce the risk of harm. Since the last inspection, there have been two missing-from-care incidents. Allegations of harm are responded to effectively and investigated thoroughly. The agency supports the child and offers support to carers through this process. The agency has taken learning from practice to make positive changes when allegations occur.

The agency recognises wider risks to children, and when children and young people use the internet, they support them to be safe. Behaviour management approaches are therapeutic and avoid the use of physical intervention. Instead, alternative strategies based on the individual needs of the children are used. As a result, incidents are low and managed well.

Recruitment and assessment of carers is of good quality and appropriately assesses the suitability of carers. This means that only carers who share the agency's ethos and who have high expectations for children are selected. The training carers receive at the beginning of their fostering journey is high quality. This means that carers have the knowledge and skills to meet children's needs and can respond to varying or changing behaviour. High-quality training is continuously available to carers at the agency.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The agency is managed by a suitably experienced registered manager who has high ambitions for children. He is dedicated to the agency, highly visible and approachable to all.

Staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals to review their development. Training, practice discussions and reflective sessions support a learning culture within which staff continually gain further knowledge and skills to support their work with children and carers. In addition, the manager receives supervision from a qualified social worker, which enables him to reflect on his role.

The fostering panel provides a level of independent scrutiny of the decision-making of the agency. The panel conducts thorough quality assurance of assessments, and an experienced panel chair provides clear reasons for recommendations. The agency decision-maker makes detailed and reasoned decisions in a timely manner.

The manager has effective monitoring systems in place to regularly review the quality of the service. The manager is reflective and identifies where improvements can be made. The manager responds to feedback and uses learning to improve the quality of experiences for children.

The manager has formed strong relationships with stakeholders, partner agencies and other professionals. Foster carers speak positively about the manager, who they described as child focused and committed to the children.

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: 2541624

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Responsible individual: Gary Cox

Registered manager: David Bailey

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Inspectors

Charlotte Love, Social Care Inspector
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