

Daffodils Fostering Limited

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Suite 219, Second Floor, Devonshire House, 582 Honeypot Lane, Stanmore,
Middlesex HA7 1JZ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

This is a privately owned independent fostering agency based in the London Borough of Harrow. It aims to meet a range of placement needs for children, which includes parent and child placements. The agency is currently providing a placement for a parent and child. The agency currently has two approved fostering households.

The agency registered with Ofsted in May 2021. The manager registered at the same time.

Inspection dates: 9 to 11 May 2022

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be 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 applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and parents benefit from living with warm and nurturing foster carers. An example was seen of a child being welcomed into the foster home with flowers and a card. The care children and parents receive has a positive impact on their well-being and enables them to grow in confidence.

Foster carers highlight that they 'love' their role. A parent described their foster carers as 'nice people' and they felt the fostering agency was 'good'. A social worker stated they were 'happy' with the placement and 'could not fault the foster carers'.

Children and parents quickly feel part of the foster family, which gives them a sense of stability and belonging. The level of attachment means that they fondly refer to foster carers as 'Mum', 'Uncle' and 'Grandma'. The sense of belonging is further enhanced by the relationship they develop with the foster carers' extended family.

A child was seen to be making good progress with their social skills, personal hygiene, independence skills and the development of their spirituality. The child was also actively supported to pursue their hobbies and interests. This involved going out on trips and the agency providing the child with their own support worker.

Foster carers understand the importance of helping children and parents to keep in contact with their relatives and loved ones. An example of this is a young father regularly visiting his baby and partner. A further example of this is a foster carer looking after a baby while the mother visited her father.

Leaders and managers recognise the need to carefully match each placement. There was a positive example of a cultural match, which enabled a child and their parent to form a good sense of identity and understand cultural norms. There was also a positive example of a child being placed with foster carers from a different culture and the child growing to love a wide range of new foods.

There is good attention to children's and parents' health needs and emotional well-being. Leaders and managers are also ambitious for parents. There are plans to mentor parents and offer them educational and training opportunities, to enhance their personal development.

Leaders and managers advocate well for children's educational needs if they do not have a school place. For one child, who was not receiving a structured educational programme, evidence was seen of extensive discussions with a placing authority and a virtual headteacher. During this time, the child was spending their time reading, going for walks and researching on the internet.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children and parents are safe. Essential checks are undertaken on all foster carers and adult members of their household. The recruitment of panel members, however, is not always robust and the foster carers handbook provides limited guidance to foster carers. These shortfalls have not had an impact on children and do not affect the overall judgement.

The guidance in the foster carers handbook is not trauma-informed. Some of the language used does not reflect current thinking, language and practice. The information about the signs of bullying, safe internet use and managing self-harm is very basic, which is not helpful for foster carers. Foster carers are therefore reliant on their personal and professional skills and experience.

The recruitment of panel members does not follow safer recruitment guidance. Two references are not always requested and proof of their identity and qualifications is not evident on recruitment files. Furthermore, the reasons for appointment are not recorded and references are not verified. The panel also does not have a vice-chair. This does not demonstrate that all panel members are suitable for their role.

Panel members do not have direct access to children. The shortfalls related to the fostering panel do not affect children or their good quality of care. There have only been two panel meetings and on both occasions the panel chair has been present. A vice-chair is needed to ensure that panel business can continue in the absence of a panel chair.

Panel members are all highly experienced professionals who are employed in their respective careers. Panel members provide constructive challenge to the fostering agency to ensure that all decision-making is in the best interests of children. The panel chair gives great care and attention to her role, referring to children as 'our children'.

Foster carers are able to manage children's complex needs effectively. Children respond well to routines and consistent and firm boundaries. There are no issues in regard to socially unacceptable behaviour.

Foster carers benefit from child protection and safeguarding training. There are no issues with standards of care or allegations. There are no concerns regarding children going missing from care, or being involved in radicalisation, extremism, or being criminally or sexually exploited.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The agency is run by highly experienced, passionate and child-focused social work professionals. They have successfully established a fostering agency during a global

pandemic. They have meaningfully supported foster carers and succeed in promoting positive outcomes for children.

A social worker described the agency as a 'lifesaver'. They commended the swift management of a referral, which enabled a parent and child to move into a foster home on the same day. A local authority commissioner praised the partnership working. They highlighted that the agency 'communicated extremely well with the local authority'.

Leaders and managers pride themselves on the level of support available to foster carers. This includes a support worker to take children out, to help give foster carers some respite and safeguard against placement breakdown. The agency also offers a high fostering allowance in recognition of foster carers' value, professionalism and expertise.

The agency is actively recruiting a range of foster carers to meet the needs of children. There are a number of prospective foster carers being presented to the next fostering panel. The agency has an effective social media video advert and leaders and managers are excited about introducing new individuals into fostering.

The agency has an efficient COVID-19 contingency plan, which provides relevant guidance to staff and foster carers. Leaders and managers have appropriately used the regulatory 'flexibilities' in the best interests of children. Social interaction and participation in training and meetings have been enhanced through the use of virtual technology.

The assessment of prospective foster carers is very prompt and efficient. The culturally diverse fostering panel has a wide range of expertise. Panel decisions focus on children's welfare and their suggestions contribute to improvements within the agency.

Foster carers unanimously praise the support provided by leaders and managers. Foster carers benefit from regular individual supervision and ongoing training. The agency has a computerised recording system; however, not all foster carers are confident in using this system. Foster carers have also cared effectively for parents and children, despite not having specialist training.

Leaders and managers wish to provide an outstanding service to children, both nationally and internationally. There is a clear vision for the future, which includes providing an integrated service for children, through their fostering agency, children's homes and semi-independent accommodation. They also plan to adopt schools in developing countries.

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
Appoint one or two persons who may act as chair if the person appointed to chair the panel is absent or the post is vacant, from the persons on the central list. (Regulation 23 (4)(ii))	1 August 2022
The fostering service provider must provide foster parents with such training, advice, information and support, as appears necessary in the interests of children placed with them. (Regulation 17 (1)) In particular, review the foster carers handbook and provide information technology and parent and child placements training.	1 August 2022
The fostering service provider must not— employ a person to work for the purposes of the fostering service unless that person is fit to do so. For the purposes of paragraph (1), a person is not fit to work for the purposes of a fostering service unless that person— is of integrity and good character, has the qualifications, skills and experience necessary for the work they are to perform, is physically and mentally fit for the work they are to perform, and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to that person in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 1. (Regulation 20 (1)(a) 3 (a)(b)(c))	1 August 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children's education is promoted. This particularly refers to children not in full-time education. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 8.5)
- The registered person should ensure that all people on the central list considered suitable to be members of a fostering panel are interviewed as part of the selection process and have references checked to assess suitability before taking on responsibilities. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 19.1)

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: 2631163

Registered provider: Daffodils Fostering Limited

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Inspector

Sharon Payne, Social Care Inspector

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