

Rising Stars Fostering Ltd

Rising Stars Fostering Ltd

58 De Vere Gardens, Ilford IG1 3ED

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Rising Stars Ltd is an independent fostering agency. The fostering agency and the manager registered in November 2023.

The fostering agency provides fostering placements for children from birth to 18 years. This includes emergency, bridging placements, short-term, medium-term and long-term placements. It also provides parent and child placements.

At the time of the inspection, the fostering agency had 10 approved foster carer households and three children in placements.

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 March 2025

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	requires improvement to be good
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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

Since registration, the agency has accommodated several short-term respite placements for children. Respite placements have been well considered and planned with foster carers. The agency completes a pre-placement risk assessment and a matching assessment with the proposed carer. This ensures that children's needs are understood as well as the ability of the foster carer to care for them.

Three children have recently been placed in longer term placements. Although the placements are very new, children's needs are understood well, particularly around their health and identity. The agency uses a progress tracking tool to identify children's individual starting points, set goals and measure their progress. This will help the agency to offer more targeted support to foster carers and children.

Children establish positive relationships with their foster carers. One child, who is struggling to engage with professionals, is working with their foster carer and building a positive relationship with them. Children are happy in their foster homes. One child said, 'The best thing is the toys!'

Children's education is a priority. The agency recognises the importance of children's education and is working closely with placing authorities to find local schools. Foster carers are providing activities and support to children while they are out of education.

Children's cultural needs are well understood and promoted by the agency and its foster carers. Equality, diversity and inclusion are things that the agency promotes throughout all aspects of its functions. Leaders, managers and staff are proud of the diversity among foster carers and staff. The broad range of experiences helps to fully understand children's needs and enhances their experiences of feeling understood and included.

Foster carers are supported well. Foster carers receive a warm and welcome response when making enquiries. All foster carers said that the agency responded quickly and provided information and guidance. Foster carers have a positive experience of assessment and feel well informed by the assessor. Foster carers said that communication with the agency is excellent. There are regular visits to fostering households, and the agency offers lots of support to carers, who are mostly all new to fostering.

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

Children's risks and needs are identified through the placement planning process, during which safer care plans are collaboratively developed with carers and children. If children's needs change or new risks emerge, the agency promptly takes effective action to provide support, including follow up with local authorities and working with the children and their foster carers.

Foster carers have clear and consistent boundaries with children. They identify behaviour in daily logs and share information with the agency and children's social workers. Children are visited by members of staff from the agency, including carrying out unannounced visits to the foster carers' homes.

Foster carers are well prepared for fostering through training and support. When specific needs arise, specialist training is provided, such as self-harm training when concerns or risks are identified. Additionally, a regular support group brings together all foster carers and members of staff from the agency, where people can share experiences and receive valuable learning opportunities.

Social workers report good communication with the agency. Safeguarding issues are shared quickly. There has been one incident when a child went missing from the foster carer's home. The foster carer and agency managed this appropriately.

Recruitment procedures are effective. Procedures are in place and are being followed to ensure that the foster carers and staff recruited are suitable to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Leaders and managers have chosen to start the agency slowly. All staff and carers are positive and report feeling part of something special. There is a clear commitment and compassion from everyone involved with the agency, along with many plans to develop the service.

However, leaders and managers have not complied with regulations when changes to the approval of foster carers have occurred. On two occasions, newly approved foster carers had their approval conditions amended to include parent and child placements without any further assessment and without returning to the panel. By doing this, the agency conducted the first review, but did not return it to the panel as required. Although the two parent and child placements were short-term arrangements, not following the regulation in full has left the agency vulnerable to operating illegally.

The agency's policy and procedure for parent and child placements requires improvement. The current policy shows that there is no need for a formal assessment of foster carers for parent and child placements. The policy does set out that there will be specialist training and additional support for these placements, with a recognition that there is a different expectation of carers. However, without further assessment, the specialism of this type of placement, or the foster carer's ability to provide this level of care, is not fully considered when changing their approval.

The quality of foster carer assessments is varied. Although some assessments are analytical and make solid recommendations, others are descriptive and lack analysis about the foster carers' ability to understand and meet the complex needs of

children. Two assessments highlighted historical safeguarding information that was not fully explored in the assessment. The panel challenged one assessment, and the agency decision-maker took this into account when making their decision to approve the foster carer. However, the other case was not picked up through the quality assurance processes. Furthermore, one assessment was countersigned by somebody who is not the team manager and not qualified to sign reports. Although the responsible individual states that this was incorrect and the report was not physically signed, this was the version available on this inspection.

Panel members are experienced and diverse. Panel minutes show that in most cases the panel appropriately challenges and asks further questions of the assessor and prospective carers. The agency decision-maker said that they can make decisions about suitability following the scrutiny of panel. Agency decision-making is usually robust and ensures that assessments are reviewed and issues are challenged. Panel members and the agency decision-maker have raised issues with the quality of assessments.

Leaders and managers have established positive relationships with local authorities. Leaders and managers are getting the balance right between working together and challenging effectively when necessary. Commissioners and children's social workers gave positive feedback about the agency.

Foster carers receive good-quality supervision. This supports foster carers in their role and ensures that the agency has good oversight and understanding of how foster carers are caring for children and managing difficulties.

Children's case records and daily logs are written sensitively. The agency invests time and resources to support foster carers and staff to write in a child-focused way. This is effective and ensures that children's records are meaningful.

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
The fostering service provider must review the approval of each foster parent in accordance with this regulation. A review must take place not more than a year after approval, and thereafter whenever the fostering service provider consider it necessary, but at intervals of not more than a year. When undertaking a review, the fostering service provider must— make such enquiries and obtain such information as they consider necessary in order to review whether the foster parent continues to be suitable to be a foster parent and the foster parent's household continues to be suitable. At the conclusion of the review, the fostering service provider must prepare a written report, setting out whether— the foster parent continues to be suitable to be a foster parent and the foster parent's household continues to be suitable, and the terms of the foster parent's approval continue to be appropriate. The fostering service provider must on the occasion of the first review under this regulation, and may on any subsequent review, refer their report to the fostering panel for consideration. (Regulation 28 (1) (2) (3)(a) (4)(a)(b) (5)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that the first review of a foster carer's suitability, including any proposed change to their approval, is returned to panel.	28 March 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the written report on the person's suitability to be approved as a foster carer sets out clearly all the information that the fostering panel and decision-maker needs to make an objective approval decision. The reports should be evidence-based, analytical and sufficiently explore safeguarding information to determine the prospective carer's capacity to meet children's needs. The reports should be countersigned and dated by the fostering team manager, or another suitable team manager who has the authority to countersign reports. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 13.7)
- The registered person should ensure that there is a clear and effective policy and procedure for the assessment and approval of parent and child foster carers. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 25.1)

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: 2714788

Registered provider: Rising Stars Fostering Ltd

Registered provider address: 58 De Vere Gardens, Ilford IG1 3ED

Responsible individual: Amel Bensmail

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Inspector

Leanne Grant, Social Care Inspector

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