

# Rainbow Fostering Services Limited

Rainbow Fostering Services Ltd

Rainbow Fostering Services, Unit 10, Churchill Court, 58 Station Road, North Harrow, HARROW, Middlesex, HA2 7SA

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

Rainbow Fostering Services is an independent fostering agency based in Harrow, Middlesex. It provides placements across London, Kent, Essex, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Oxfordshire, and Hampshire. It operates under one registration from the main office in London and has satellite offices in Milton Keynes, Birmingham, Manchester, London, and Portsmouth.

The agency is responsible for the recruitment, assessment, training, and approval of foster carers, as well as providing ongoing support. It offers both permanent and temporary care for children, along with parent-and-child placements.

At the time of this inspection, the agency had 135 fostering households caring for 159 children and 17 young people in 'staying put' arrangements.

### Inspection dates: 12 to 16 May 2025

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>outstanding</b> |
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|                                                             |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|

The independent fostering agency provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the independent fostering agency contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

**Date of last inspection:** 16 January 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding**

**Enforcement action since last inspection: none**

## Inspection judgements

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

Children thrive in the care of their foster carers. They develop deep and trusting relationships with their foster carers that help them build a sense of belonging and permanence. Leaders and managers provide invaluable support to foster carers pursuing adoption, applying for special guardianship orders, or seeking long-term approval. Half of the children in foster care live alongside their siblings, reinforcing the bonds that bring comfort and stability. As a result, children experience a strong sense of security, enabling them to make remarkable progress.

Children attend school or other educational provisions. Children are learning and making substantial progress taking account of their starting points. Foster carers, leaders and managers have high aspirations for children's education. One child was proud to be the first in their birth family to achieve qualifications. Children go on to university and others have developed careers in media or have joined the army.

Children's achievements are celebrated by foster carers and supervising social workers. Children attend an annual awards ceremony where they receive certificates and prizes. The office walls of the fostering agency are filled with pictures of children who have succeeded in foster care and are proudly celebrated as role models by staff and managers.

Children of all ages and abilities are given opportunities by dedicated and enthusiastic youth participation officers to engage in activities. These include children being able to take part in rock climbing, kayaking and horse riding. Children learn through group sessions about subjects such as understanding what is racism and islamophobia. Children can express their views through youth council meetings. The quality of material produced by children through the youth council is excellent. Children develop their confidence, learn effective communication skills, and are listened to through this wide range of activities.

Children's health needs are met by those caring for them. When children have complex health needs, foster carers receive specialist training to respond to children's needs effectively. Leaders and managers are proactive in ensuring that children's needs are assessed at the earliest opportunity and have funded assessments and therapeutic interventions when there is likely to be a delay in specialist support being accessed.

Children are supported by foster carers and staff to spend positive time with their birth families and those close to them. One child was supported to meet another child they had travelled with to the UK. They were able to spend time together during Eid celebrations, staying at the foster carers home. The foster carer was tearful when talking about the positive few days the friends spent together.

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

Safeguarding is a strength of the fostering agency. Children spoken to say that they feel safe with their foster carers. Children have trusted adults that they know will listen to any worries or concerns they have. Leaders and managers meet regularly to review and consider concerns, taking a proactive approach to reduce the chances of children being harmed. Concerns are dealt with promptly and involve the local authority social workers and the local authority designated officer when necessary. Risk assessments are clearly written, outlining what action foster carers can take to reduce risks. This means that incidents in the foster home remain low.

When children do go missing from their foster carers home, staff and foster carers work closely with local authorities and the police to keep in touch with children and monitor their safety. In one case, a child who had been in foster care for 7 years went missing. The knowledge gained over the years about the child and their family background helped to inform the network of risks and enabled professionals to think creatively about how best to safeguard the child.

When children's behaviour suggests that they may need direct work to help them makes sense of their actions and feelings, the youth participation officers carry out time limited one to one work with them. Examples of this include addressing a child's pattern of stealing, helping a child to manage their own emotions and use of self calming techniques. The youth participation officers develop close relationships with children, and one case, the children felt safe to disclose concerns regarding their care to them, leading to prompt action being taken by managers.

Foster carers and supervising social workers receive training on de-escalation as well as therapeutic parenting techniques, and trauma informed care. This equips staff and foster carers to respond sensitively but firmly to children's behaviour which may cause concern.

Children are safe in their foster carer's homes. Unannounced visits take place by staff from the agency, and children are spoken to separately on visits. Health and safety checks of the foster home happen regularly. Youth participation officers help children complete feedback as part of foster carers annual reviews, independent of the foster carer.

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

An experienced and knowledgeable registered manager manages the fostering agency. The manager leads by example in terms of commitment and drive and is visible and accessible to all within the fostering agency. An exceptionally competent and committed management team supports the manager. There is a strong focus on children, ensuring that they remain safe and have opportunities to grow and develop as individuals to meet their full potential.

Leaders and managers have a good overview of the day-to-day practice of the fostering agency. Leaders and managers are not complacent and look to improve on the service provided to children and foster carers. Leaders and managers actively seek the views of children to improve practice. Areas for development and new initiatives are actively encouraged and supported. One example is the development of an information technology system that has streamlined the referral process. This has led to less time being spent on administrative tasks and more time to strengthen relationships with placement officers from local authorities. Foster carers are being identified for children sooner as a result.

The roles of the youth participation officers is another excellent initiative that has been developed by leaders and managers. These workers make a real difference to the quality of the day-to-day experiences of children in foster care, through exciting activities and events. The one-to-one work undertaken with specific children has been a key factor in maintaining placement stability.

While there are no concerns regarding the quality of care within the fostering agency, and reports reviewing care have been completed for the last two years, Ofsted have not received these reports.

There is a stable and experienced supervising social worker team who know the foster carers very well. Staff are well supported and highly appreciative of managers. Staff have access to a wide range of training opportunities and appraisals show that staff can make requests for specific training as part of their professional development. Supervising social workers receive regular supervision and find this helpful. Leaders and managers are aware of the need to evidence that supervision offers space for reflection.

Leaders and managers have developed an impressive range of recruitment and marketing materials and processes to attract potential foster carers. Leaders and managers have seen a significant increase in registered interest. A prospective foster carer commented that the fostering agency was, 'responsive to answering my queries in a prompt manner, which is a testament to their devotion and dedication in their roles.'

Foster carers receive regular visits and supervision from supervising social workers. Foster carers have close relationships with supervising social workers. One foster carer described their supervising social worker as 'like family, because they know the foster carer and extended family so well. Foster carers have access to a wide range of training and development opportunities. All foster carers are expected to undertake basic training in therapeutic parenting. For example, foster carers can go on specific training in relation to type of fostering they are providing, parent and child or caring for unaccompanied asylum seekers.

Leaders and managers have worked hard to address the quality of foster carer recordings in respect of children's day to day experiences. Foster carers logs are varied, with some written to the child with detailed information, but this is not consistent, or representative of all records seen.

Leaders and managers have good relationships with local authority social workers and commissioners. Leaders and managers collaborate with social workers, education professionals and specialist agencies, to ensure that appropriate support is available for children.

The fostering panel operates effectively as a quality assurance process in respect of the approval and continuing approval of foster carers looking after vulnerable children.

## 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      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <p>The registered person must provide the Chief Inspector with a written report in respect of any review conducted for the purposes of paragraph (1) and, on request, to any local authority. (Regulation 35 (2))</p> <p>In particular, the review of the quality of care report should be sent to Ofsted as soon as possible after completion.</p> | 1 August 2025 |

### Recommendations

- The registered manager should ensure that information about children is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. ('Fostering services: National minimum standards', 26.6)

### 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:** SC031621

**Registered provider:** Rainbow Fostering Services Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Unit 10, Churchill Court, 58 Station Road, North Harrow, HARROW, Middlesex HA2 7SA

**Responsible individual:** Afshan Ahmad

**Registered manager:** Aijaz Ahmad

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## **Inspectors**

Colin Bent, social care inspector

Matilda Clode, social care inspector

Thobekile Bandama, social care inspector



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