

Sunbeam Fostering Agency

Sunbeam Fostering Agency Limited

12 Waterside Drive, Langley, Slough SL3 6EZ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Sunbeam Fostering is a privately owned independent fostering agency. The agency provides a range of foster placements, including emergency, short-term, bridging, respite, long-term and parent and child placements. The agency also offers placements for unaccompanied children from outside the UK.

At the time of this inspection, the agency was providing placements to 271 children in 251 fostering households.

The manager has been in post since June 2024 and became the registered manager in August 2025.

Inspection dates: 11 to 15 August 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 6 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Sunbeam Fostering is making a remarkable difference in the lives of children and young people by providing nurturing and supportive home environments. They are dedicated to ensuring that every child in their care receives the love, stability and guidance that they need to thrive. Through their commitment to trauma-informed care and personalised support, Sunbeam Fostering helps children heal from past experiences and build brighter futures.

Feedback about this agency is unanimously positive. One child said, 'I feel like I am with my own family, because they do the same things my family do for me.' Children receive nurturing and holistic care from foster parents, who embody the role of therapeutic caregiver.

The agency's therapeutic model permeates every element of practice and firmly underpins the accessible and supportive culture. Therapists work collaboratively with foster parents and supervising social workers to enable them to deliver therapeutic interventions under professional supervision. This has resulted in a reduction of placement breakdowns.

There is a focus on securing permanence for children and 'staying put' is considered early on to give children a sense of belonging and security. Foster children continue to keep in touch with their foster carers once they leave their care, seeking advice and support.

Children attend appropriate education settings. The level of support and encouragement from foster parents, supervising social workers and senior leaders is fantastic and enriches the lives of children. Children make excellent educational progress that is celebrated by all, and children continue to achieve when they leave care.

Children's health needs are exceptionally well met by foster carers and monitored by agency staff. Foster carers quickly register children with the dentist, doctor and optician when they come to live with them and ensure that any outstanding or emerging health needs are met.

Staff promote inclusivity and consider the identity of each individual child. Foster carers are well matched with children. Children's cultural backgrounds, as well as those of the other foster children in the household, are well considered. This provides each child with an authentic and relatable family environment. Heritage is celebrated, foster parents support children's religious needs and beliefs, helping children to explore and maintain their identity.

Foster parents are utterly committed to the children that they care for. They demonstrate both their devotion and their professionalism through the ways that

they advocate for children. Managers, supervising social workers and foster carers are vociferous advocates. They attend all professional meetings and liaise closely with children's professional networks. However, children are not always offered an independent advocate. This is a missed opportunity for children to benefit from the additional support of someone who is not linked to their placing authority or the fostering agency. However, this has not had a negative impact on children's outcomes or experiences.

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

Children experience stability with their foster carers and the work undertaken to reduce both the likelihood and impact of unplanned endings is extensive. The nature of relationships built with their carers provides a platform for open, honest and transparent discussions and reflection, allowing children to feel safe and supported.

Foster carers are aware of the vulnerabilities of their children and provide an appropriate level of support and supervision for each child that they care for. The agency's proactive approach to multidisciplinary working ensures that risks are responded to in line with children's individual care plans, and appropriate therapeutic intervention and support are provided without delay.

Any incidents when children go missing from care are managed in a well-coordinated manner to minimise risks. Foster carers speak about their deep appreciation for the support that they have received from the agencies out of hours service when their child has gone missing.

Allegations against foster parents are rare. However, they are managed effectively and in a timely way. Communication with local authorities, including the local authority designated officers, demonstrate that the agency has a strong approach to managing risk. Recording is thorough and learning is embedded into practice.

The manager has an excellent oversight of safeguarding concerns, which he reviews weekly with team managers to ensure that there is no drift or delay. This means that children who are struggling get the support that they need quickly and there is a multi-agency approach.

All staff and foster parents have completed all relevant mandatory training. When additional training needs are identified, training is provided and is of an excellent standard. Foster parents speak positively about the agency's approach to training and the positive impact that it has had on their approach to care.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The committed, determined and remarkable leadership team, whose members work tirelessly to continually improve the service and embed their shared vision across the whole workforce, is a significant strength for this agency.

The manager's calm 'can do' approach has had a positive impact on the agency, with improvements being made since his appointment. Staff appreciate the manager's dedication and management style and have developed their own practice because of his support and guidance.

Consultations with stakeholders, staff, foster parents and children drive organisational changes and are used to further improve the service.

Reflective practice sessions are provided to foster carers through their monthly supervisions. These give the carers the opportunity to receive bespoke guidance and support to help them meet their children's needs. Carers are also well supported with any personal issues that may arise. Foster carers feel valued by the agency and feel that they can contact any of the team at any time, knowing that they will receive the help that they require.

There is a well-established panel, whose members have a wide variety of experience. Consequently, they scrutinise assessments and make effective recommendations. Feedback is provided to the agency to continually improve practice if needed as well as sharing positive practice. The panel chair has appropriate skills and leads and chairs the panel well.

The agency decision-maker has an excellent understanding of the service and provides an added layer of quality assurance. Her decision-making is timely and considers all the information. The agency decision-maker speaks with passion and pride about the service and is child focused, ensuring that children's needs are central to her decision-making.

Safer recruitment processes are methodical, and there is a designated team, whose members are responsible for completing all checks. Social Work England registrations, right to work and disclosure and barring service checks are regularly monitored. There is succession planning to ensure that staffing levels continue to increase with the growth of the agency, meaning caseloads remain manageable.

Staff retention is exceptional, with many staff members working for the agency for many years. There is strong commitment from managers for staff progression and supporting the well-being and welfare of every individual working at the agency. As a result, staff want to work at the agency and are dedicated to their role.

The manager has excellent oversight of the service and has effective and detailed monitoring systems. He completes quality of care reviews. However, he has not shared these with the regulator in a timely way. This has not currently had an impact on children, the care that they receive or the functioning of the agency.

What does the independent fostering agency need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should make sure that the manager regularly monitors all records kept by the service to ensure compliance with the service's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. Immediate action is taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 25.2)
- The registered person should ensure that children are assisted to secure an independent advocate to support them in providing their views, wishes and feelings to statutory reviews. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 31.8)

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: SC035026

Registered provider: Sunbeam Fostering Agency Limited

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