

Barnardo's Fostering South East

Barnardo's House, Tanners Lane, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1QG

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

This independent fostering agency provides short breaks, parent and child placements, and emergency short- and long-term placements for children and young people who are referred by local authorities.

At the time of the monitoring visit, the agency supports 11 fostering households, which are caring for 10 children and young people.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 8 July 2020.

Inspection date: 25 March 2025

Date of previous inspection: 7 February 2022

This monitoring visit

On 16 January 2025, Ofsted accepted the request this independent fostering agency made to defer the full inspection. Ofsted was informed of the intention to close this branch of the agency, with the transfer of foster carers and social workers to another branch within the organisation.

Senior leaders gave Ofsted formal notice to cancel the agency's registration by 21 April 2025. This monitoring visit was carried out to review compliance with the regulations governing the transfer process.

The plan for transferring the service is well considered. Senior leaders have implemented appropriate arrangements to consult with, and support staff, foster carers and children.

Foster carers were informed of the intended closure in a timely way. Leaders and managers have kept foster carers abreast of decisions and changes throughout a scheduled period of consultation. Forums have provided the opportunity for foster carers to voice their views and meet leaders from the new branch of the agency.

This ensures that foster carers are well informed of changes, the implications for their roles and actions that they are required to remain as approved carers.

All foster carers will be subject to an appropriate approval process. Information-sharing by senior leaders to support the approval process is timely and thorough.

The expedited process includes good practice arrangements, such as early annual reviews of foster carers to identify any new support needs they may have.

Stability and consistency for children remain the focus throughout the transfer. All foster carers continue to receive support from their current social workers. This ensures that these changes have minimal disruption to children and families.

Children are being informed about the changes to the agency in a child-friendly and reassuring way. The development of personal 'fliers' explains to children the new opportunities they may become involved in with the new branch, which include youth forums and children in care council.

Commissioners have been advised of the organisational changes. There are arrangements for further consultation to take place.

There are no concerns identified in relation to the safety of children or the effectiveness of leaders and managers. Leaders and managers demonstrate good monitoring and oversight of the agency. Shortfalls and areas for improvement identified at the last inspection are largely responded to. This includes strengthened recording processes that ensure that important details around children who go missing from home are well documented. Through safer recruitment procedures, managers evidence greater scrutiny and assessment of staff suitability. Prior to the current period of consultation commencing, the agency statement of purpose provided an accurate and up-to-date reflection of the service offered.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that the children's guide to the agency includes important information. Details about how children can contact their independent reviewing officer, advocacy or Ofsted are missing. This remains pertinent to the current situation. Leaders and managers identify this as a matter that the organisation must continue to address.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure the children's guide includes a summary of what the fostering service sets out to do for children, how children can find out their rights, how a child can contact their independent reviewing officer, the independent advocate, Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors, and how to secure access to an independent advocate. ('Fostering services: National Minimum Standards', 16.4)

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Independent fostering agency details

Unique reference number: SC043552

Registered provider: Barnardo's

Registered provider address: Barnardos, Tanners Lane, Barkingside, Ilford IG6 1QG

Responsible individual: Darren Johnson

Registered Manager: Carol Norcott

Inspector

Angela Reid, Social Care Inspector

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