

Sunbeam Pride Fostering Service

Sunbeam Pride Fostering Service Limited

113 New Bedford Road, Luton LU3 1LE

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

This privately owned independent fostering agency registered with Ofsted on 11 September 2009 and is one of six individually registered independent fostering agencies operated by this organisation. It provides a wide range of foster care arrangements, including caring for unaccompanied children from outside the UK.

At the time of this inspection, there were 86 fostering households, and 112 children were receiving support from the agency's approved foster carers.

The manager registered on 18 July 2024 and is currently undertaking the required management qualification.

Inspection dates: 13 to 17 October 2025

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

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

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: 27 February 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

Children receive individualised care and support of an exceptionally high quality. Foster carers are dedicated, caring, well trained and well supported by the agency. This is demonstrated by a comment from a local authority social worker who said, 'The care that my child is receiving from their foster carers is exemplary, and the local authority appreciates their dedication.'

Children become part of the foster carers' family and benefit significantly from a sense of belonging. One child said, 'When I have dinner with the other children, I feel a sense of belonging. Sometimes, I even forget the difficult journey I have been through and start to truly enjoy my life here in the UK.'

Children build a strong sense of attachment to their foster carers, which enables them to thrive and flourish. Many children have lived with their foster carers for significant periods of time, and 11 children are currently living in 'staying put' arrangements. This enables them to enter adulthood while still benefiting from the care and support of their foster carers. In addition, the agency fully supports arrangements for permanence that include foster carers adopting children in their care or becoming special guardians. When foster placements are at risk of ending, the agency uses innovative and imaginative support mechanisms to enable foster carers to continue. Any unplanned endings are rigorously scrutinised, and any identified learning is used to prevent a further occurrence.

Children's identity has a strong focus in this agency. Every child has a 'my journey' book, which helps build children's positive memories of their time with their foster family. This helps increase their self-worth and self-esteem. These books go with the child when they eventually move on.

The agency provides the children with excellent support to ensure they have the best outcomes possible. There are many examples of when carers and agency staff have gone 'above and beyond', for example providing additional funds for equipment, funding extra support and assisting financially with purposeful holidays. Such support has made a significant difference in helping foster carers continue to look after the children. It has enhanced fostering family stability and provided exceptionally positive experiences.

The therapeutic model of care is embedded throughout the service. The therapeutic family practitioner has made an invaluable difference to children's lives, including maintaining placements that may have otherwise broken down. One foster carer said, 'The staff have been professional, supportive and kind throughout. When we have needed help, they have been there for us, even in the middle of the night at a weekend.'

The agency staff have excellent arrangements to encourage children's participation. The agency provides an excellent range of activities and events for children, including a recent independence skills day. Children's achievements are always celebrated. Children's views are of paramount importance in shaping the agency. In addition to regular surveys, the agency employs a former Sunbeam Pride care leaver as a children's ambassador. A young people's steering group meets quarterly to further incorporate children's views to ensure they are fully appraised of and involved in developments in the service.

Children are well matched with their carers. The placements team is an integral part of the service. The placements staff ensure matching is very well considered. They make every effort to get as much information as possible from local authorities so that supervising social workers and foster carers can make an informed decision about whether they can meet a child's needs. However, although the agency's matching policy makes reference to gaining consent when a child is placed alongside another child, this is not carried out in practice, as local authorities are only informed of a child joining a fostering household rather than being asked for consent. This has the potential to be detrimental to children's placement stability.

Foster carers are extremely and universally positive about this agency and the supervising social workers, who go out of their way to support them. Their experiences from first contact with the agency, the assessment process and the subsequent matching with children are all positive. Comments include, 'Sunbeam is my second family,' and 'All the support I have received has been so helpful, and they are always there when I need them.'

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

Safeguarding children is a high priority in this agency. Regular safeguarding team meetings ensure that ongoing safety concerns are monitored, new concerns are highlighted, and knowledge and experience are shared between staff and managers to promote effective safeguarding practice.

Children's vulnerabilities are understood well and are comprehensively documented in risk and support plans, which are regularly updated in line with emerging risks or changes in circumstances to keep them meaningful and relevant. These plans provide foster carers with good guidance to minimise risk and keep children as safe as they can be.

Currently, most children are not engaging in risk-taking behaviour. However, foster carers know how to respond if they are concerned. There is a responsive out-of-hours service as well as written guidance to support the regular, relevant training that foster carers undertake. This knowledge is supplemented by a safeguarding week, which encompasses a significant amount of training by experts in their field, carried out jointly with agency staff. The therapeutic model of care, which is embedded throughout the agency, also contributes to carers responding appropriately to situations of concern.

Foster carers are recruited safely, and all the appropriate checks and references are undertaken. Two unannounced visits to foster homes are undertaken each year. These are well documented and thorough, and they provide an added layer of scrutiny to promote safe care. Staff are recruited through safe employment practices that exceed the minimum expectations and ensure that all people who have contact with children are safe and suitable to do so.

The agency responds diligently and robustly to all allegations and complaints against foster carers. The designated officer for the relevant local authority is consulted appropriately, and one such professional commented, 'Sunbeam Pride is one of the agencies that engages with us best and that we have confidence in. They check things out if they are not sure.' When an investigation into standards of care is required, this is carried out thoroughly by an independent professional. The comprehensive report is always presented to the fostering panel so that it can make an independent recommendation about a foster carer's ongoing suitability, taking into account the findings of the investigation and the agency's recommendation.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Passionate and inspirational leadership underpins the work of the agency. Leaders and managers are visible, available, child focused and determined to make a significant difference to children's lives. This ethos permeates throughout the agency.

Staff are exceptionally happy working for the agency. The cohesive staff team feels valued and empowered. Good staff retention provides continuity and consistency for children and foster carers. It is evident that supervising social workers know all the children and families well. Caseloads are manageable, and staff feel highly supported by available and responsive managers who operate an 'open-door culture'.

Staff really value their supervision, which is of an exceptionally high quality. This enables staff to reflect on their practice. Staff also have access to good-quality training, including trauma-informed practice, to ensure they work consistently with the foster carers.

Impressive monitoring and case auditing systems ensure thorough tracking of key targets so that outcomes and actions are met and quality of practice is maintained. Regular and extensive reporting ensures that managers and senior leaders have access to information and know what is going on. Senior leaders use information from this to target the agency's future development.

Partnership working is highly effective, and stakeholders comment very positively about the service. One local authority commissioner said, 'We have a strong and trusting relationship, and their commitment to children is impeccable. They try their hardest to find children the homes they deserve.' However, the agency is not afraid to challenge partners when necessary and is rigorous when action needs to be followed through.

Foster carers have access to, and benefit from, a wide range of training that is available both online and in person to increase its accessibility. This ensures their knowledge and skills are kept up to date and are relevant for the children they are caring for. If a particular need is identified, appropriate training is sourced. Foster carer supervision is regular, focused and well recorded. Carers speak very highly of their supervising social workers and the support they receive.

Foster carer reviews are thorough and ensure that foster carers' continued suitability is rigorously assessed. Annual reviews are always carried out by a senior staff who is independent of the carers and, in some cases, completely independent. This adds an additional layer of scrutiny and security.

The fostering panel is well established. The panel chair is experienced, with a particular expertise in safeguarding. Panel membership includes foster carers, people who have experience of being cared for, social workers and people with relevant health and education backgrounds. This provides a good balance of personal and professional experience. This variety of experience is used very effectively to make appropriate recommendations about foster carers' suitability, ongoing approval and variations to their terms of approval. The administration of the fostering panel is excellent. The good-quality minutes are quickly produced. This enables the agency decision-maker to make an informed and timely decision.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that there is careful pre-placement planning, including consideration of the impact on any children already living in the foster home. Consent to such a placement must be given by the fostering service provider and any other responsible authority with a child already placed with the foster carer. This will require consultation with the social worker of any other child placed in the foster home. ('The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations volume 4: Fostering services', page 14, paragraph 3.2)

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: SC398706

Registered provider: Sunbeam Pride Fostering Service Limited

Registered provider address: Sunbeam Pride Fostering Service Limited, Sunbeam House, 12 Waterside Drive, Langley, Slough, Berkshire SL3 6EZ

Responsible individual: Muhammad Haneef

Registered manager: Raheela Khan

Telephone number: 01582 218228

Email address: raheelak@sunbeamfostering.com

Inspectors

Rosemary Chapman, Social Care Inspector
Daniel Rankin, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025