

Shared Care Services Limited

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119 Eastern Avenue, Redbridge, Ilford IG4 5AN

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Shared Care Services (fostering division) specialises in providing foster care for disabled children. The service provides bridging, emergency, short-term and long-term foster placements for individual children and sibling groups. The agency also runs a domiciliary care service for children who are disabled. This service supports the fostering service and is registered by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

At the time of this inspection, the fostering service had 31 approved fostering households, caring for 37 children. The fostering service was registered with Ofsted in February 2011, and the registered manager registered at the same time.

Inspection dates: 18 to 22 May 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor, and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 10 July 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Summary of findings

This independent fostering agency is judged to be inadequate because there are significant shortfalls in the leadership and management of the agency. This means that children are not always safeguarded effectively.

Leaders and managers have failed to implement effective monitoring processes and, at times, have not taken clear action to address the service's weaknesses.

Quality assurance is weak and records do not show the registered manager's oversight. Not all serious events or concerns are notified to Ofsted as required by regulation. Agency decisions and panel processes are not robust.

The quality of staff supervision is inconsistent. Children's views are not always obtained during supervising social workers' visits.

The manager ensures suitable matching for most children. Foster carers feel supported by the agency and mostly have appropriate experience to meet children's needs, including complex health needs. Most children are making good progress, and many are in long-term placements with their foster carers. The registered person has developed positive working relationships with placing authorities, and feedback from current local authority social workers is positive.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Shortfalls in the leadership and management of this agency mean that there is a lack of oversight of children's safety and wellbeing. This has meant that some children have experienced inadequate care and the progress and experiences of other children have been compromised. Despite these shortfalls, most children make some progress when living with their foster carers.

Children's wishes and feelings are not always taken into account when considering the quality of care provided to them. Opportunities to speak to children during visits to the fostering household have been missed. Records of foster carers' supervision sessions do not always demonstrate whether supervising social workers have seen or spoken with the children. This does not ensure that children are consistently consulted about the care they receive.

Oversight by leaders and managers has been poor. They have failed to identify themes or patterns from children's records, including what this shortfall in practice may mean for children's experiences. There is a lack of clarity in how children are doing and the progress they are making. For example, a complaint from a child about the care provided while they were living with foster carers could not be fully

investigated by the agency due to the foster carer not consistently recording appropriate information about the child's experiences.

In the main, children benefit from careful introductions to their foster families, and moves to new homes are sensitively coordinated. Children often settle quickly, feel well cared for and become a part of their new family. Feedback from children currently living with the agency's foster carers is positive. Some children who have experienced previous multi-placement breakdowns are now settled with their foster families. However, some children placed in an emergency have not benefited due to poor planning, resulting in foster carers not understanding children's needs. In addition, some children's moves from their foster families have been unplanned.

Most foster carers ensure that they meet children's complex health needs. They register children with local health providers and make routine appointments for children. Often, they advocate for specialist support or a particular assessment that individual children need. The agency arranges bespoke training to meet individual children's health needs.

Children are supported to maintain family relationships, and this helps them to feel pride in their identity. Foster carers and the agency support children to develop appropriate relationships and spend time with the significant people in their lives.

Foster carers provide a range of opportunities for children, including going on holiday abroad and trying new activities in their local area. Through these opportunities, children are able to develop their social skills and interests. Foster carers value healthy lifestyles and promote exercise. This helps some children to increase mobility and physical strength. Some children are now able to walk without support.

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

Shortfalls in safeguarding practices mean that managers, staff and foster carers have not always taken the right action to promote children's welfare.

There have been several allegations made against foster carers. While leaders and managers respond to allegations promptly, internal investigations are not always of sufficient quality. Some 'standards of care investigations' are completed by the foster carers' supervising social workers and lack objectivity. Investigations do not incorporate previous allegations or children's views and experiences. Managers fail to ensure that all investigations are thorough. They do not identify or share learning to improve practice. The weaknesses in the approach to investigations could lead to unsuitable people continuing to care for children.

The agency does not always ensure that agreed actions following allegations are completed. For example, a child was not seen or spoken to during visits to the foster home while a placing authority searched for an alternative placement following serious allegations against the foster carers. Visits to this foster home were poor because the child was not seen and managers could not show what attempts had

been made to see the child while they were waiting to be moved. In addition, managers placed two children with foster carers prior to completing all the actions identified following a standard of care investigation. This weakness in practice fails to prioritise the safety of children.

When children have been in crisis, staff have not provided high levels of support to foster carers to ensure that children receive a well-coordinated response. For example, when children go missing from home, foster carers do not ensure that they follow children's missing-from-home procedures to support children to return home safely. Managers have provided training to staff and foster carers on these procedures. However, records do not show that children are given advice and guidance on how to stay safe.

Supervising social workers' visits to foster carers' homes do not go far enough to show that they are professionally curious. Staff were not aware that a foster carer was providing intimate personal care to a child that had not been discussed or agreed with the child's placing authority or parents. On another occasion, they were not aware that a foster carer had adults staying on their premises until this was raised by another agency. Furthermore, staff do not always communicate meaningfully with children to gather their views during home visits. This is a missed opportunity and fails to promote high-quality foster care for all vulnerable children.

Some risk assessments and safe caring plans do not provide relevant or up-to-date information about children. Children's plans lack information about known and potential risks and do not consistently include clear actions or strategies for foster carers to take. In addition, staff do not routinely evidence how they support foster carers to recognise, assess and manage risk. As a result, the fostering service fails to provide foster carers with robust strategies to help them understand risk and keep children safe. This includes recognising signs and symptoms of child exploitation.

Some foster carers do not follow safeguarding procedures. For example, a foster carer failed to inform the agency of another agency's involvement with their own family. This delayed the agency from sharing relevant information and compromised timely intervention from the placing authority. When the information was disclosed, the agency took appropriate action and informed all the relevant parties.

Managers have failed to identify serious incidents as requiring notification to Ofsted. When incidents have been notified, they have not always contained all the relevant information. For example, one notification lacked detail about the extent of allegations made against a foster carer. This limits the regulator's ability to monitor the agency's response to safeguarding children.

The managers follow appropriate processes to ensure that staff and foster carers are safely recruited. However, the manager has not ensured that Disclosure and Barring Service checks for all foster carers are updated in accordance with the agency's policy for renewal.

Children say they feel safe and can talk to their foster carers about any concerns. The children have access to a detailed children's guide, which has a list of people they can contact if they are worried. The children's guide is tailored to meet children's diverse needs, including those with additional communication and learning needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The leadership and management of this fostering service are inadequate. The lack of oversight by the responsible individual and the registered manager has compromised children's safety and wellbeing.

Leaders and managers do not have effective systems in place to enable them to have robust oversight of practice across the agency. Managers have failed to implement robust quality assurance processes to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the service. They have not addressed gaps to improve practice. Records are poor and lack oversight by managers.

The responsible individual does not provide the level of oversight expected with this role. He informed the inspectors that he is not involved in the running of the agency and is more involved in the domiciliary care service of the sister company. The responsible individual does not demonstrate an appropriate understanding of the strengths or weaknesses of the agency and does not provide sufficient guidance or challenge during supervision with the registered manager.

Decisions made by the agency decision-maker do not reflect the rationale for their decision or ensure that relevant information is considered. Consequently, opportunities to identify support for foster carers have been missed. This does not prioritise children's safety and wellbeing.

The registered manager oversees assessment work and takes on the panel advisor role. At times, this has resulted in a lack of objectivity and a blurring of boundaries between the two roles. This does not ensure that the fostering panel consistently benefits from objective guidance with regard to the approval and re-approval of foster carers.

Leaders and managers do not consistently support or challenge supervising social workers when concerns are raised about foster carers' practice. There is a systemic lack of professional challenge at all levels across the agency. In addition, some staff supervision is of poor quality and does not support reflection. Records do not show appropriate case management oversight or direction given to staff to improve practice. For example, the majority of supervision records only show what social workers are reporting. This does not support the staff's professional development to improve the quality of practice.

Staff and foster carers are extremely positive about their involvement in this agency. They feel valued, appreciated and supported. Communication is described as being positive. They describe the leadership team as 'approachable', 'visible', 'available' and

'responsive'. Many foster carers have recommended their friends or family members to foster for the agency.

Training and development activities for foster carers are wide ranging and relevant to the fostering task. Some foster carers receive bespoke training to help them meet the specific needs of children, for example training in children's complex health needs. However, records of the training completed are not consistently updated.

Current placing authority social workers speak positively about the care provided to children and the quality of the communication from staff and foster carers. In the main, partnership working with professionals is good. However, feedback from previous placing authorities is varied about the quality of communication and responses from managers when concerns have been raised about foster carers.

The requirement raised from the last full inspection, to maintain a system for monitoring the service, identify strengths and promptly address any gaps, is restated along with the previous recommendation.

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 registered person must maintain a system for— monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals, and improving the quality of foster care provided by the fostering agency. The system referred to in paragraph (1) must provide for consultation with foster parents, children placed with foster parents, and their placing authority. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that they have effective monitoring systems to identify any strength and promptly address any gaps. This requirement was issued at last inspection and is restated.	14 August 2026
The registered person in respect of an independent fostering agency must ensure that— the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster parents is safeguarded and promoted at all times. (Regulation 11 (a)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that staff and foster carers understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. The registered manager must ensure that they implement an effective system for supervision of foster carers; that all areas of the homes are monitored during supervision visits; and that supervising social workers help children to express their views during these visits.	14 August 2026

The registered manager must ensure that all personal care provided by foster carers is clearly detailed in safer care plans and that foster carers are clear about what responsibilities and decisions are delegated to them and where consent needs to be obtained. The registered provider must ensure that all standard of care investigations are thorough, incorporate previous information about the foster carers and children's views and take prompt actions to inform all appropriate agencies when decisions are made to de-register the foster carers. The registered provider must ensure that all adults in the foster carer's household have updated checks in line with the agency's policy.	
If any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 7 takes place in relation to a fostering agency, the registered person must without delay notify the persons or bodies indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. Any notification made in accordance with this regulation which is given orally must be confirmed in writing. (Regulation 36 (1) (2)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that all significant incidents relating to children are notified promptly and that all relevant information is shared accurately.	14 August 2026
The fostering service provider must ensure that all persons employed by them— receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal. (Regulation 21 (4)(a)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that all staff, including the registered manager and supervising social workers, receive regular supervision that is of appropriate quality and enables reflection and staff development and challenges poor practice.	14 August 2026
A fostering service provider must, in deciding whether to approve X as a foster parent and as to the terms of any approval, take into account the recommendation of the fostering panel. (Regulation 27 (3)(A))	14 August 2026

In particular, the registered manager must ensure that the fostering service provider's decision-maker shows what information has been taken into account to make a decision and that decisions are specific to individual assessments and not a blanket decision or a single signature of all assessments recommended by the panel on a single day.	
The fostering service provider must prepare and implement a policy, which is agreed with the local police, setting out— the measures to be followed to prevent children placed with foster parents from going missing from their placement, and the procedure to be followed when a child is missing from a foster parent's home without permission. (Regulation 13 (3)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure risk assessments adequately identify all risks at the point of referral and that foster carers are given comprehensive guidance and support on what to do when children are at serious risk of harm, including being missing from care, and that they challenge placing authority where return home interviews are not completed.	14 August 2026

Recommendation

- The registered provider should implement a written policy that clarifies the purpose, format and contents of information to be kept on the child's file. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 26.1) In particular, that there are separate risk assessment, behavioural management and safe care plan documents.

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: SC416392

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Registered provider address: 119 Eastern Avenue, Redbridge, Ilford IG4 5AN

Responsible individual: Owais Khan

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