

Family Care Fostering

Family Care Fostering Ltd

First Floor Offices, The Unit, Berry Way, Euxton, Chorley PR7 6RA

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Family Care Fostering Limited is a privately run fostering agency. It has offices in the North West and the Midlands. The agency offers a range of foster placements including long-term, short-term, emergency and short breaks foster care placements for children up to the age of 18.

At the time of the inspection, the agency was supporting 57 children and 42 fostering households.

The manager post has been vacant since February 2025. A permanent manager has been appointed. She is not yet registered with Ofsted.

The inspection involved a blended approach of on-site and off-site activity. Children and foster carers were spoken to during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 8 to 12 December 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The independent fostering agency provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 10 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress from their starting points. Children experience warm and nurturing care that enables them to settle quickly and establish a sense of security and belonging. Some children have spent a significant part of their childhoods with the same foster carers. This enables children to enjoy stable and trusting relationships that enhance their life chances.

Children spoken to by inspectors had a strong sense of belonging in their fostering households. Children saw themselves as part of a family and told inspectors about the positive impact their foster carers have had on their lives.

One child said, 'When I first came to live with my foster carers, I was angry, hurt, and didn't trust anyone. Since being here, I have been so supported and loved.' Another child told inspectors, 'My foster carers are my guardian angels. I couldn't dream of life without them.'

Children are supported to move into foster homes in a planned way. Consideration of which foster carers can meet children's individual needs is robust. Decisions to match children with their foster carers are made on comprehensive and up-to-date information. Consequently, very few children leave their foster carers because they cannot meet children's needs.

Children's healthcare needs are understood well by their foster carers, including children with complex health needs. Foster carers and agency staff develop good relationships with health professionals to ensure children's health needs are met.

Children are encouraged to develop their skills and interests through involvement in a range of hobbies and activities. In addition, staff organise a range of activities for children and their foster carers throughout the year. These give children and foster carers opportunities to socialise and have fun together.

Children are supported and encouraged to maintain relationships with their birth families. A parent said, 'This is my child's first time in care. His foster carer has made sure he has photographs of his family in his bedroom. She always lets us know how he is getting on.'

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

Children say they feel safe with their foster families. Children identify their foster carers as adults they trust and can go to with any worries or concerns. Foster carers know children well and use this knowledge to build on children's strengths and reduce their vulnerabilities.

Written risk assessments and safer care plans do not always provide foster carers with sufficient, detailed, child-specific information, which limits their effectiveness for foster carers. For children with additional needs, the use of mechanical restraints, including reins and harnesses in the community, as well as monitoring equipment within the home, is not always supported by a clear, written assessment of need that has been agreed by all relevant professionals involved with the child's care.

Children's care records are comprehensive and provide children with information about their day to day lives and decision making. However, children's records are not consistently child friendly and are written about them rather than to them. This approach does not help children to view these records as their own, or to understand, contribute to, or access them now or in adulthood.

Incidents of children going missing from home are low. When this does happen, foster carers are proactive in following children's missing-from-home plans. They inform all relevant professionals in a timely manner and use their knowledge of the child, the child's friends and family to ensure their safe return.

Support workers from the agency provide an additional layer of support to foster families to keep children safe. Support workers spend individual time with children and discuss topics relevant to them, including the risks of knife crime, healthy relationships and friendships.

Children's positive behaviour is promoted. Foster carers can access the agency's in-house therapist, giving them additional guidance to improve and enhance the care they provide. They receive strategies to support children safely and meet their individual needs.

When there are safeguarding concerns for children, foster carers and staff work closely with the child's local authority and other professionals. Information is shared promptly and appropriately to manage risks and ensure children's safety.

Complaints and allegations against foster carers are rare. When these occur, managers maintain consistent and effective communication with safeguarding professionals.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

A lack of stability has affected the quality and consistency of management oversight. The registered manager post has been vacant for ten months. Senior leaders acted promptly to address the gaps in the agency's operational management. However, although permanent appointments were made two managers' left the agency before registration with Ofsted. A new permanent manager has now been appointed, but she has not yet applied to register.

The new manager has begun identifying areas for improvement. These plans are still their early stages, so their impact cannot be demonstrated.

Recent turnover of staff, along with changes in leadership and management, has affected the quality of relationships between some foster carers and the agency. However, most foster carers remain committed to the agency, having worked with them for many years.

The majority of staff receive regular supervision, which supports both their professional practice and development. Staff say that they feel supported by leaders and managers. However, one social worker is not receiving the supervision and support required during their first year of practice.

Foster carers and staff can access a range of training to support them to meet children's individual needs. Foster carers benefit from regular support through local groups run which are run by foster carer representatives. These groups provide foster carers opportunities for peer support and a forum to raise issues and concerns which are then shared with leaders and managers.

Shortfalls in management oversight mean the agency does not consistently capture the quality of care children receive or the progress they make. Information gathered for some children is not used to inform practice. When children leave foster families in an unplanned way, leaders and managers do not sufficiently reflect on these incidents or learn from them.

The functioning and effectiveness of panel are a strength of the agency. Due to the low numbers of new foster carer approvals since the last inspection, the fostering panel has focused on foster carer's annual reviews.

The agency benefits from having an experienced and skilled panel chair. The agency decision-maker (ADM) possesses a range of knowledge and skills, which they apply effectively to their role. ADM decisions are thorough and provide a clear rationale for decision-making. The ADM contacts the foster carers to explain his decision-making, and the written information he provides is clear.

The fostering panel and ADM are supported by good-quality reviews of foster carer approvals by the independent reviewing officer. The administration for fostering panel is effective, which helps it run smoothly. Foster carer annual reviews are completed within timescale and offer constructive support and challenge to both foster carers and the agency.

Leaders and managers do not always provide the regulator with an updated statement of purpose in a timely way to reflect staff changes. This omission has not had any impact on children or foster carers.



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 fostering service provider must provide a copy of the statement of purpose to the Chief Inspector. (Regulation 3 (2)) Specifically, that the registered person must ensure that the statement of purpose is updated and sent to the regulator following any staff changes.	31 January 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children's risk assessments and safer care plans contain detailed, child-specific information that supports foster carers to keep children safe. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 4.1)
- The registered person should ensure that the use of any restrictive practice, including the use of mechanical restraints and monitoring equipment, is informed by an appropriate written assessment and agreed with all relevant parties. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 4.5)
- The registered person should ensure that information about the child is recorded in a way which will be helpful to them when they access their care records now or in the future. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 26.6)
- The registered person should regularly monitor all records kept by the service to identify patterns and trends, learn from unplanned endings and evaluate children's progress and outcomes. This should include regular auditing of foster carer and children's records. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 25.2)
- The registered person should ensure that newly qualified social workers receive additional supervision and training in their first year of practice. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 24.1)

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: SC450903

Registered provider: Family Care Fostering Ltd

Registered provider address: First Floor Offices, The Unit, Berry Way, Euxton, Chorley PR7 6RA

Responsible individual: Andrew O'Reilly

Registered manager: post vacant

Telephone number: 01772647500

Email address: fostering@family-care.co.uk

Inspectors

Dawn Parton, Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Zillah Brooks, Social Care Regulatory Inspector



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