

Shine Fostering

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Office 5, 9 to 11 High Beech Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 4BN

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

The agency has been operating since 2013. The manager registered with Ofsted on 26 September 2016.

The agency provides short-term, long-term, emergency and parent and child placements.

At the time of this inspection, the agency had 7 fostering households. The agency provided placements for 7 children and one young person under 'staying put' arrangements. Two children provided feedback to the inspector. Another child was too young to express themselves verbally and contributed to the inspection in a different way.

Inspection dates: 12 to 16 January 2026

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 **outstanding**

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

Date of last inspection: 13 June 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 are happier, more confident, and emotionally stable; they also have increased self-esteem and a sense of belonging as they thrive in nurturing and life-enhancing foster homes.

The stability that foster families provide for children ensures that they make social, emotional and educational progress. A strength of the service is the positive outcomes it offers to babies who find their forever families and the stability it provides to children until adulthood.

Children know what to expect from the service when they move into their fostering family. The agency has produced a fun cartoon that complements the informative children's guide that sets out what is on offer. This, along with the personalised gifts that children receive, ensures that they understand what they can expect while benefiting from a warm welcome in their foster homes.

Education is valued. Children benefit immensely from the educational coordinator position through one-to-one sessions, tuition and a vast range of activities. Children receive assistance with enrolling in college and securing a place at university. Children benefit from new experiences, including pottery classes, foreign holidays and learning additional languages.

Older children benefit from effective arrangements that help them make a smooth transition into adulthood. The agency's guidance and independent living skills programme help children learn practical skills, such as first aid and sewing. A young person said that their foster carers helped shape them into a more confident, positive and independent individual.

Some young people remain with their foster carers under effectively planned 'staying put' arrangements. Other children maintain their relationships with the foster families once they move on. These children spend Christmas together and enjoy going on holiday with their former foster carers. Young people appreciate and value the ongoing support they receive.

Some children still do not have a meaningful record of their early life experiences, as some foster carers do not maintain daily logs. The staff have used a wide range of options to enhance children's daily records consistently; however, this has yet to improve.

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

There are currently no children who are missing from care, at risk of radicalisation or exposed to exploitation.

Children benefit from effective safeguarding arrangements. Regular meetings that focus on placement stability, outcomes for children and placement concerns address any challenges before they arise.

Research-informed practice ensures that foster placements provide a safe haven and a secure base for children. Foster carers use trauma-informed practice so that children receive continual encouragement to stay safe in the community and online.

The agency consults with safeguarding agencies and the police to ensure that safeguarding incidents are managed well. When children share traumatic experiences of abuse they have experienced in a different country, the police and local authority are quickly informed. Although the agency appropriately notifies Ofsted of significant events, it did not report one incident. Leaders and managers have identified a suitable system to ensure that all significant events are reported to Ofsted as required.

Children benefit from structured routines and consistent, firm boundaries that help them develop socially acceptable behaviours. A restorative justice approach is taken. This includes reflection sessions to enable children to see the impact of their actions. Children learn to manage their emotions in a more positive way, and they have improved social skills. Children respond well to a holistic and therapeutic approach and have learned to relax through yoga, journalling and using a calm box.

Foster carers are highly responsive to children's complex needs. Children have meaningful support plans that incorporate their known risks, and they take account of their individual needs. Risks are identified, understood and successfully managed. Foster carers and staff benefit from diverse, wide-ranging safeguarding training. This has raised their awareness of issues relating to misogyny and contextual safeguarding.

Safer recruitment practice is followed. When employees have worked with children or vulnerable adults, they highlight why they have left these roles. Leaders and managers routinely verify staff's references, but they sometimes fail to record that they have verified the staff's account for leaving.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

This is a child-centred agency that has made exceptional progress since its last inspection. The introduction of new systems, posts and ways of working ensures greater accountability and regulatory compliance. This is a learning organisation where lessons are learned from mistakes, which contributes to greater strategic oversight and planning. There is a strong desire to be an outstanding agency and ensure that there are excellent outcomes for children.

Leaders and managers are resilient, and they exude genuine care and compassion. The responsible individual puts her heart and soul into the agency and plays an active part in its daily operations. A young person highlighted that the responsible individual had restored their faith in society. The committed registered manager is

warm, empathetic and reflective and is focused on promoting positive outcomes for children and ensuring compliance.

The fostering panel is professionally curious and provides challenging scrutiny that focuses on safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The panel chair is a highly experienced social work professional. The central list includes people from diverse cultures and expertise. The fostering panel and the agency decision-maker constructively contribute to the agency's quality assurance process. They highlight improvements in the panel's functioning, quality of assessments and minutes. Annual reviews reflect children's voices, and foster carers' strengths are linked to the national minimum standards. This is an outstanding feature.

Highly experienced professionals and talented individuals want to work for this agency due to the empathetic determination to help children shine. All staff work in a child-centred manner and strongly advocate for children. Staff can use their initiative, and they benefit from regular reflective supervision and ongoing training.

Feedback from foster carers and all involved in the service is excellent. A foster carer commended staff for being 'consistently supportive, understanding and helpful'. Foster carers appreciate the family-style community.

Staff work creatively with foster carers to equip them with the necessary skills. A wide range of interesting and pertinent training courses, including cultural competence, are available for foster carers. Children receive support from foster carers who embrace their professional and therapeutic role.

Children receive care from foster carers who have access to 24-hour support. Extensive training helps equip them for their roles. All foster carers have received the required vocational training. A care-experienced consultant is currently working on innovative bespoke drama-related training for foster carers. Foster carers also have access to support groups, newsletters and their own apps.

Leaders and managers are aspirational for children. Although this is a small agency, there are big dreams for children. The agency celebrates foster children's and birth children's successes in an achievement ceremony.

The recruitment strategy focuses on the quality and not the quantity of potential foster carers. Five families are scheduled to attend the forthcoming 'skills to foster' training. A care agency has also been contracted to assist with finding potential foster carers. The identified plans will substantially increase the number of suitable homes available for children.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff and fostering households understand the nature of records maintained and follow the service's policy for the keeping and retention of files. Fostering households should maintain accurate records for children that are meaningful, up to date and provide a good overview of children's experiences. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 26.2)
- The registered person should ensure that the fostering service can demonstrate, including through written records, that it consistently follows good recruitment practices. Where a person has previously worked with children or vulnerable adults, the reason why the employment or position ended should be verified as far as reasonably practicable. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 19.2)
- The registered person should ensure that there is a system in place to notify Ofsted within 24 hours of the occurrence of significant events, including children's allegations of historical abuse, in accordance with regulation 36. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 29.1)

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: SC457831

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Registered provider address: Office 5, 9 to 11 High Beech Road, Loughton,
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Inspector

Sharon Payne, Social Care Inspector

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