

The Children's Family Trust

The Children's Family Trust

1A Brindley Way, Wakefield Business Park, Wakefield, WF2 0XQ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

The Children's Family Trust independent fostering agency is a registered charity. This is one of 4 regional agencies that are currently registered with Ofsted.

The agency provides short-term, emergency, long-term and respite placements. The agency also supports children on 'staying put' arrangements.

At the time of the inspection, the agency had 23 approved fostering households and 38 children living with foster carers.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2020.

Inspection dates: 2 to 6 February 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The independent fostering agency provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 July 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 experience stable and settled homes. The agency's ethos of 'family for life' is established. Placement stability is strong, and children benefit from nurturing relationships with their carers. Disruptions in placements are rare. When they do occur, they are managed sensitively with a clear focus on the child's long-term wellbeing.

Children make timely progress from their starting points. For some children, this progress is gradual, but it is meaningful and sustained. When additional support is required, it is provided promptly and without hesitation. Carers said staff are responsive, accessible, and available when needed. Carers describe staff as approachable and committed, they feel 'nothing is too much trouble.' This flexible and child-centred approach helps carers feel supported and valued.

Children form trusting and supportive relationships with their carers. These relationships support children to feel safe and able to explore their identity, interests, and aspirations. Children talk positively about their futures. One child has been sensitively supported to explore their gender identity. This has been managed in a safe, respectful, and child-centred way, enabling them to feel accepted and understood.

Children with complex needs are cared for by knowledgeable and skilled carers. As a result, children with lifelong health conditions experience stability and consistent care. Carers feel confident in meeting children's individual needs because they receive regular support from specialist services. This ensures children receive the support they need and enjoy the same opportunities as any other child. The agency's approach promotes inclusion and positive day-to-day experiences for all children.

Children benefit from support for as long as they need it beyond the duration of the placement. This commitment provides children with a sense of belonging and stability. One carer said the agency helped them maintain a connection with a child after they left their care. The child visits the carers home, and the agency has been clear that they will continue to support should they need it in the future. This demonstrates a commitment to sustaining relationships and ensuring that children continue to feel valued, even after they have left their care.

The agency has an inclusive approach. This is evident through initiatives and awards set up within the agency. Supervising social workers build and maintain relationships with all children and families, not only those allocated to them. This inclusive practice strengthens children's sense of belonging and provides them with a wide network of trusted adults.

The agency's model of care is embedded in practice. Carers shared how they use the model of care and demonstrated a clear understanding of how this supports children. The shared approach contributes to consistent, nurturing care for children.

Matching assessments reflect the ethos of 'family for life.' Children typically remain in their placements for extended periods. Carers describe how they are supported to consider each child as a full member of their family. Carers are guided through the matching process. They receive support to think carefully about how a child's needs, personality and routines will fit within their household. This helps children settle quickly and contributes to the positive long-term outcomes for the child.

There is a high number of cultural placements within the agency. These placements are stable however, cultural matching is not thorough. Assessments do not explore cultural considerations in sufficient depth or consider wider cultural effect for children.

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

Children feel safe in their homes. Children have positive relationships with their carers and are making progress. Professionals state children are safe and the children placed with this agency are not the children they worry about. Professionals describe children as 'secure,' 'settled' and part of the family. One child said he feels 'safe and free to be himself.'

Children rarely go missing from home. When they do, carers respond proactively and in line with procedures. They take immediate steps to locate the child. Staff ensure that all relevant professionals are kept updated, and they work closely with partner agencies to support the child's safe return.

Risks relating to each child are well understood. Assessments are detailed, regularly reviewed and reflect each child's individual circumstances. Where children have a history of going missing from home or are vulnerable to exploitation there are clear risk management plans in place. These plans outline strategies to reduce risk and guide carers in how to respond.

Carers are familiar with these assessments and demonstrate a good understanding of how to implement them in everyday care. They are supported by knowledgeable supervising social workers, who provide consistent guidance, monitoring, and oversight. This helps ensure that risk is managed effectively and that children remain safe in their placements.

Carers are skilled at managing challenging situations and use de-escalation techniques effectively. Incidents within homes are rare. This calm, consistent approach helps maintain positive relationships between children and their carers and reduces the need for physical intervention to keep children safe. Furthermore, children benefit from predictable, nurturing care that contributes to their overall safety.

Allegations and complaints are managed promptly by the manager. Concerns are explored thoroughly to understand any potential harm or effect on children. The manager works effectively with partner agencies to ensure that issues are investigated and resolved in line with safeguarding procedures. Outcomes from complaints and allegations are clearly recorded and followed up on, ensuring that any learning is used to improve practice.

Panel arrangements meet the requirements. The panel members are diverse and led by an experienced and knowledgeable chair. Discussions in the panel have a clear child-focused approach and demonstrate the curiosity of the panel. The recommendations and minutes provide clarity to the agency decision maker to promote informed and safe decision-making.

Safer recruitment processes are thorough, preventing unsuitable people from having contact with children. The training offered in the recruitment and preparation for fostering focuses on child safety. Unannounced visits are completed regularly and in addition to expectations. This promotes best practice and monitors the safety of children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The agency is led by a permanent and experienced manager who provides stable and effective oversight. The service is appropriately staffed and the support offered to carers and children is consistent and meets children's needs. Staff, carers, and professionals describe the manager as approachable, available, and strongly child-focused. The staff team express a high level of confidence in the manager's leadership.

While the manager is knowledgeable, skilled, and experienced, they do not currently hold the qualification required. This does not appear to have affected the quality of leadership; however, the agency must take steps to ensure compliance and meet regulatory expectations.

The agency uses a calendaring system to ensure that annual reviews are completed in a timely manner. This contributes to strong oversight and ensures that carers' practice is regularly evaluated. There is evidence of appropriate challenge within the review process, supporting the agency's expectation that carers provide a consistently good standard of care.

Supervision sessions take place regularly. Staff receive consistent and structured oversight that supports effective practice. The frequency and reliability of supervision provide staff with the guidance they need to fulfil their roles confidently. Supervision offers staff opportunities for reflection, to consider recent practice, explore challenges, and evaluate decision-making. This reflective approach helps staff to maintain a clear focus on children's needs and promotes continuous professional development.

Training and development needs are regularly discussed in supervision. This supports the ongoing development of a skilled and knowledgeable staff team. This approach promotes continuous improvement across the team.

Team meetings are well attended. Staff who cannot be present in person join remotely, ensuring full participation. The regularity of the meetings ensures that all staff remain informed, engaged and aligned with the agency's priorities. Meetings provide an additional space for shared reflection. Staff use this time to explore practice issues, discuss learning, and consider how their approaches contribute to improved outcomes for children. This reflective focus promotes a culture of continuous improvement and supports a cohesive and well-informed team.

Outcomes and progress are monitored effectively. Review systems demonstrate the positive effective that care is having on children's development, wellbeing, and increased life opportunities. The monitoring enables the agency to track improvements over time and to identify where additional support may be required.

The agency does not currently have a system that identifies emerging delays at an early stage. Although the monitoring and review processes eventually highlight when actions are overdue, by this point a delay has already occurred. This reactive approach limits the agency's ability to respond promptly and prevent issues from recurring.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the national minimum standards. The registered person must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
A person must not manage a fostering agency unless they are fit to do so. A person is not fit to manage a fostering agency unless that person— having regard to the size of the fostering agency, its statement of purpose, and the numbers and needs of the children placed by it— has the qualifications, skills and experience necessary for managing the fostering agency In particular that the registered manager has completed the relevant management qualification. (Regulation 7 (1) (2)(b)(i))	20 Aug 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure the fostering service only suggests foster carers to local authorities as a potential match for a child if the foster carer can meet the child's assessed needs. Where gaps are identified, the fostering service should work with the responsible authority to ensure the placement plan sets out any additional training, resource or support required. (National minimum standards page 32, paragraph 15.1)
- The registered person should ensure that there are clear arrangements in place when the registered manager, or local authority fostering service manager, is absent. This will avoid any delay in notifications being sent to the regulator. (National minimum standards page 50, paragraph 25.5)

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: SC477734

Registered provider: The Children's Family Trust

Registered provider address: Hanbury Court, Harris Business Park, Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 4DJ United Kingdom

Responsible individual: Marina Mulholland

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Inspectors

Kate Jackson, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Lisa Finch, Social Care Inspector

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