

Familyplacement.com

Family Placement.com Limited

Unit 2, The Old Power Station, Ardington, Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 8QJ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Familyplacement.com is an independent fostering agency providing emergency, short-term and long-term placements for children. The service recruits, approves and supports a range of carers, including parent and child carers and carers for children with disabilities. At the time of the inspection, there were 71 fostering households caring for 101 children.

Inspection dates: 5 to 9 September 2022

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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 13 August 2018

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's overall experiences and progress are good. Children thrive socially, educationally, emotionally and physically.

Foster carers help children to lead full and active lives, including making sure that children can enjoy a wide range of activities that enable them to pursue their interests and hobbies.

The agency's social events have returned to face to face and are well attended. The registered manager ensures that children and foster carers who are geographically more isolated have activities nearer their area to help them to attend and feel part of the agency.

The children's information booklet has been reviewed and is suitable for children of differing ages and understanding. Children are given bespoke sensory packs that include specialised toys that can help reduce anxiety.

The agency supports children to achieve academic success. For example, some children have been successful in securing a college or university placement of their choice. Children's progress and achievements are acknowledged and celebrated in the agency's monthly newsletter.

Children are helped to grow in confidence. For instance, children have been able to contribute to the children's council and helped to design an introductory leaflet.

Social workers from the agency work closely with adult services to support children who are reaching adulthood. This early help ensures that appropriate services are available at the point of need.

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

Social workers and foster carers work together effectively for the benefit of the children. This extends to the agency ensuring that foster carers receive training that enables them to safeguard children in their care.

Managers and the supervising social workers ensure that foster carers provide safe and comfortable homes for children. This includes supervising social workers carrying out unannounced visits to foster carers' homes to ensure that children are safe.

Risk assessments and safe care plans are reviewed and updated to reflect any changes in circumstances or increase in risk. However, there have been occasions when foster carers have not informed the agency of concerns in line with the agency's policy and procedures. This has compromised the agency's oversight and their ability to promptly report concerns to the relevant authorities.

Managers and supervising social workers follow clear procedures for responding to concerns when a child is reported missing. This includes having strong multi-agency partnership working in place and taking a proactive approach for children with a known risk of going missing by giving them 'emergency go' bags, which contain useful emergency contact numbers and money to cover the cost of a bus fare.

The use of a camera in a fostering household has not been included in the risk assessment, safer care plan. Consequently, the agency is unable to ensure that the use and review of this camera are appropriate.

The registered manager reviews significant events and tracks these to highlight any trends or areas of learning. This process is enhanced by the additional scrutiny of records by the quality assurance team. However, the views of children are not always secured following an incident, and there is limited analysis as to whether the complaints procedure is effective.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager and responsible individual have a clear vision about the quality of care the agency should provide. Staff feel well supported and feedback from foster carers is positive.

When foster carers raise concerns, the registered manager is receptive and carefully considers ways to remedy the issues.

There have been changes in the organisation since the last inspection. This has resulted in some supporting social workers leaving the organisation and new staff starting. The registered manager is working to develop a consistent approach to manage this change effectively.

Recruitment is good. This helps ensure that children are cared for by suitable staff, foster carers and panel members.

Managers ensure that foster carers are provided with the skills and knowledge that they need. Supporting staff and social workers meet regularly with foster carers, facilitating group support as well as individual meetings. These meetings provide space to reflect on practice and, in the main, are recorded to a good standard.

There is a comprehensive training and induction programme for new foster carers. Training provided to prospective carers is highly valued and helps new foster carers to be prepared for their new caring role. Ongoing support is never far away, with more experienced foster carers providing a mentoring role.

The fostering panel members provide good safeguarding oversight and quality assurance to the agency. The scrutiny of the panel and the agency decision-maker helps to ensure that children are suitably placed. However, there have been occasions when the advice and purpose of the panel have not been adhered to. For

example, one parent and child placement was able to commence before the panel's full approval had been secured. This shortfall is acknowledged by the responsible individual, and improvements to practice have been made.

The recommendation from the last inspection has been met. The learning ethos of the registered manager and responsible individual means that when things do go wrong, learning takes place and is used to inform and improve practice.

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, Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the national minimum standards. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The functions of the fostering panel in respect of cases referred to it by the fostering service provider are—</p> <p>to consider each application for approval and to recommend whether or not a person is suitable to be a foster parent,</p> <p>where it recommends approval of an application, to recommend any terms on which the approval is to be given. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)(b))</p>	30 November 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support, including in regards to incidents and encouraging children to express concerns or complaints. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 1.3)
- The registered person must ensure that foster carers respect the child's privacy in a manner that is consistent with good parenting and ensure that the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. In particular, the registered person must ensure that any surveillance camera use is detailed in specific risk assessments and care plans and reviewed in regards to the camera's use. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 3.5)
- The registered person must ensure that a system is in place to notify, within 24 hours, persons and appropriate authorities of the occurrence of significant events in accordance with regulation 36. The system includes what to do when a notifiable event arises at the weekend. ('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: SC033478

Registered provider: Family Placement.com Limited

Registered provider address: Atria, Spa Road, Bolton BL1 4AG

Responsible individual: Catherine Rioda

Registered manager: Hannah Blay

Telephone number: 01993 706925

Email address: info@familyplacement.com

Inspector

Suzy Lemmy, Social Care Inspector

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