

# Orange Grove Fostercare Yorkshire

Orange Grove Fostercare Ltd

South Yorkshire Office, 2b Sidings Court, White Rose Way, Doncaster DN4 5NU

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

Orange Grove Fostercare Yorkshire is an independent fostering agency. It is a private limited company and is part of Orange Grove Fostercare Limited, with six registered offices across the country. Following a change of corporate ownership, the agency was registered in 2015 but had operated in a similar form for some years before this.

The agency offers emergency, short-term, long-term, permanent and respite placements. It also offers specialist placements, including sibling groups, parent and child and solo placements, and placements for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people, teenagers and 'staying put' arrangements. The agency's main office is situated in Doncaster, and it has area offices in Beverley and Leeds. At the time of this inspection, 107 children were living within 88 fostering households.

The manager was registered in April 2019.

### Inspection dates: 18 to 21 March 2024

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>outstanding</b>
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding

The independent fostering agency provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the independent fostering agency contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

**Date of last inspection:** 21 October 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Children are making exceptional progress from their starting points. This is because of the excellent quality of care that they receive from their foster carers and the agency's practice. This high standard of care is underpinned by the excellent use of theoretical and therapeutic approaches. This supports and equips foster carers with the skills and resilience to cope with children's ever-changing needs. One child said that their foster carers 'are amazing'.

Stable care is offered to children by their foster carers. When foster carers are assessed to provide long-term care, they understand that this can also mean committing to children into adulthood. As a result, children enjoy trusted and secure relationships with their foster carers. They develop a sense of belonging and are fully included in their foster family's lives. The quality and strength of positive relationships between children, foster carers and agency staff is apparent. These relationships underpin the excellent progress children make.

All children are in education. The agency's educational coordinator provides support and information to supervising social workers and foster carers. With this support, foster carers feel empowered to meet the educational needs of children in their care. As a result, foster carers help children to progress well in their education and to develop confidence and aspirations. Social workers can demonstrate the individual progress that children make. One social worker said, 'Before [name of child] being looked after, their school attendance was very poor. Since being with [name of foster carer] they have not missed a day [at school].'

Children's health needs, including their emotional health, are known and clear plans are in place to support them. Foster carers ensure that children attend routine and specialist health appointments. Complex health needs are identified and addressed quickly. This helps to maintain children's health.

The focus on promoting excellent outcomes for children is also evident in the agency's commitment to the engagement and participation of children. The agency greatly values the input of children to help develop the service. The children openly share their views as they are confident that their opinions are valued and acted on. For example, children developed questions for the fostering panel to ask prospective foster carers. This gives added value to the panel process and consideration of the suitability of prospective foster carers from the children's perspective.

Foster carers also feel valued and listened too. Feedback from foster carers has been overwhelmingly positive. Foster carers described the support they receive as 'amazing' and 'second to none.' This includes support from the agency staff, a buddying system which provides foster carers with peer support and groups that meet regularly. These platforms give foster carers enhanced opportunities to learn

and share experiences. In addition, there are regular agency events for children and foster carers that provide a supportive and sociable experience for all.

The preparation and assessment of all foster carers is effective. The process prepares carers well for the fostering task. Assessments of foster carers are comprehensive. They are undertaken in a timely way. These reports are of a high standard, with strengths and vulnerabilities appropriately explored and evaluated. A thorough assessment of the strengths and vulnerabilities of prospective foster carers ensures that children are suitably matched, offering secure placements that are successful in meeting the needs of children.

Foster carers are well prepared for the panel by the assessing social worker. They receive profiles of all panel members and information about the purpose and process of the panel. As a result of this thorough process, foster carers feel fully prepared and find it a positive experience. Prospective foster carers contacting the agency feel welcomed. Most approach the agency due to positive word-of-mouth recommendations. One foster carer said, 'We have found (the agency) warm, friendly, professional and helpful throughout our fostering journey. They take any carer feedback and ideas seriously and enthusiastically. We are extremely happy working with them and couldn't recommend them enough for new prospective carers.'

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

Overall, the agency is supporting foster carers to manage the risks to children. There are some good examples of how carers are keeping children safe. Foster carers and staff work directly with children. This is teaching children about how to keep themselves safe. Foster carers are trained and supported to develop a good understanding of attachment and trauma. Effective practical strategies are offered to foster carers to help them respond to any difficulties that children may be experiencing. Foster carers create families in which children feel safe. Consequently, children disclose to their carers about their past experiences and appropriate support is sought for them.

Foster carers' assessment, recruitment, supervision and training emphasise the importance of safeguarding and building safe environments for children to flourish. The carers are therefore alert to and act to minimise risk. All foster carers and staff know their safeguarding responsibilities and how to raise any concerns within and outside the agency.

The recruitment of foster carers, staff and panel members is robust. This ensures that only suitable people are recruited.

In the main, children's risks are identified, understood and managed in line with their individual safety plans. The agency ensures that the foster carers have relevant training and clear guidance around managing the potential risks to the children. However, on a few occasions, foster carers were not provided with consistent guidance on how to manage all of the known risks to children.

This agency takes safeguarding seriously. Any concerns regarding the care and support provided to children are shared with relevant partner agencies and robustly investigated. The agency presents any standards of care investigations to the panel. However, on a few occasions this has not been progressed in a timely manner. A recommendation is made to enhance this aspect of practice.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

Leaders and managers have a strong vision and high expectations for what foster carers and children can achieve. The needs of children are central to the work the agency does. All fostering practice is centred around positive outcomes for children.

Staff report that they are well-led and valued. Subsequently, there is an extremely small turnover of staff. This benefits children and foster carers as the relationships that they form with the staff team are sustained. Staff benefit from regular reflective supervision and team meetings. These are used as forums for practice discussions and personal development. This is driving forward practice and upskilling staff. This ensures that children make and sustain excellent progress.

A significant strength of the agency is in the quality of the training provided to all foster carers. The preparation and training of prospective adopters includes training in therapeutic parenting. This training is supported by additional training offered to foster carers on an ongoing basis. Training offered is regularly reviewed in line with current research. This ensures that foster carers remain responsive to the needs of the children they care for. One foster carer said, 'Training is comprehensive and enjoyable. I feel that I have grown in my role as foster carer.'

Foster carers find the regularity and quality of supervision to be good. They value the opportunity to reflect on their practice. Recordings of these sessions are thorough and identify actions which are then followed up.

The panel is highly effective. The panel chair has considerable experience and is very knowledgeable. Panel membership is diverse, and members bring a range of personal and professional experiences in fostering. Panel members receive regular training, support and appraisals which assist them to be competent and effective in their role.

The agency decision maker's (ADM) oversight and scrutiny are rigorous. The decisions made and the rationale behind them are very clear. Recommendations made about quality assurance ensure a high standard of work. The ADM, panel chair and management team meet regularly to review panel business. This is an opportunity to reflect on practice and identify lessons learned to continually improve practice.

The agency strongly promotes equality and values diversity. The leaders and managers actively promote equality and diversity through the recruitment of foster carers who

include mixed-gender, single carers, same-sex couples, and black and ethnic minority carers.

There is joined-up support from a number of professionals working within the organisation, including administration staff, education staff and therapists. Quality monitoring at all levels is rigorous and, as a result, the quality of the agency's day-to-day practice is solidly assured. Systems include regular audits within the agency, and reflective practice sessions. This ensures that at both an operational and strategic level, there is a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and needs of the service. This ensures a seamless service to foster carers. One foster carer said, 'We feel valued and feel our voice is heard. We can contact any member of staff and speak to them and feel they know us and our children. Admin is fantastic and they always respond quickly and efficiently.'

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

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that children's safety and welfare is promoted in all fostering placements. Children are protected from abuse and other forms of significant harm. In particular, ensuring that children's safety plans are clear to foster carers. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 4.1)
- The registered person should ensure that investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly, quickly, and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for the child, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. In particular, ensuring that the standards of care investigations are completed in a timely manner. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 22.9)

### **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:** SC485769

**Registered provider:** Orange Grove Fostercare Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Malvern View, Saxon Business Park, Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove B60 4AD

**Responsible individual:** James Mcgarrigle

**Registered manager:** Craig Clark

**Telephone number:** 01302326797

**Email address:** craig.clark@orangegrovecare.co.uk

## **Inspectors**

Evelyn Chafota, Social Care Inspector

Rachel Walker, Social Care Inspector



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Piccadilly Gate  
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