

Orange Grove Fostercare Yorkshire

Orange Grove Fostercare Limited
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, 74 children were living within 64 fostering households. The new manager was registered in April 2019.

Inspection dates: 21 to 25 October 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 8 November 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The progress of the children and young people living with the agency's foster carers is exceptional. They are flourishing because of the high-quality, nurturing care and support provided by their foster carers. Children's and young people's lives significantly improve. When talking about a sibling group, one professional said, 'I can't tell you how much progress they have made. I couldn't be more pleased. The foster carers have been amazingly nurturing for them.'

The children's and young people's school attendance is excellent. This, along with their attainment, is monitored by the agency's education coordinator to ensure that any extra support is available. The foster carers are creative and supplement learning at home, making sure that they work closely with school staff. This helps the children and young people to reach their full educational potential. The children and young people make marked improvements with their reading and writing, achieve good examination results and have improved life chances as a result. Several go on to study at college and university.

The children and young people receive consistent, therapeutic parenting. This helps them to develop secure attachments to their foster carers. The children and young people feel loved and are welcomed by their foster carers' immediate and extended families. They experience stability, which helps them to re-establish trust in adults. Children and young people become less anxious, more confident and have improved self-esteem.

The matching of the children and young people with the foster carers is an exceptionally well-considered process. The children and young people are at the centre of any planning when introductions are made. The agency uses many child-friendly tools to introduce children and young people to their foster carers. This includes a digital children's guide, foster carer's family book and a personalised memory box. This helps new children and young people to settle quickly with their foster carers.

The agency provides first-rate support to their foster carers and children and young people. The foster carers are supported by the long-standing, dedicated and experienced supervising social workers, who have an excellent understanding of the foster families. They are often the most stable social care professional in the children's and young people's lives. Foster carers spoke of the supervising social workers 'going over and beyond', 'always being available' and how 'their guidance has resulted in consecutive success stories'.

Additionally, the children and young people get their own emotional support from the agency's family support workers. The creative family support workers encourage and support children and young people to express their views through the use of a vast array of child-friendly literature and games. This helps the children and young

people to open up about any issues affecting them. Children and young people learn to express their feelings while having fun.

A high level of participation with children and young people is an integral part of the service. The voice of the child is evident throughout the work of the agency. The children's and young people's steering group provides a forum where they can share their views and make a difference to how the agency operates. The children and young people help to shape and improve the agency's practice and were involved in the development of a leaflet providing 'top tips' for foster carers. Children and young people are also involved in the recruitment of the family support workers.

The agency ensures that children and young people have a plethora of activities and fun days that they attend. The passionate and energetic family support workers offer an impressive programme of events. They go the extra mile to make these activities successful with good attendance by children and young people and the foster families. This includes raising money taking part in a charity dragon boat race, and a garden party festival with live music. Foster carers and their families also get involved with events such as a Viking workshop and a culture day. This helps children and young people to develop social skills and improve self-esteem and levels of confidence.

These well-planned events and activities provide the children and young people, staff, foster carers and their families opportunities to meet, strengthening their relationships and the support available. Children and young people are supported to make new relationships with others in a similar position to themselves. This results in new friendships, allowing them to speak about their shared experiences. The introduction of the Talk Listen Change scheme offers extra support to some children and young people through meeting with young adults who have previously lived in foster care. This provides positive role models and mentors to the current children and young people.

Placement stability has a huge impact on children's and young people's outcomes and experiences of family life. Unplanned endings are rare. When needed, short breaks are used to provide additional support to children, young people and their carers. If a placement is ended, this is done sensitively, keeping the children and young people informed. This helps to minimise any sense of rejection that a child or young person might experience.

Foster carers provide enduring care. A number of young people remain with their foster carers once they reach 18 years of age. 'Staying put' is well established and enhances young people's feeling of stability and consistency, enabling their life chances. One young adult in a staying put arrangement said, 'It is easier to plan to go to university when you are in a set home and a strong placement. You don't have the stress of worrying about where you will be living.'

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

There is a strong safeguarding culture throughout the agency at all levels. The

training and preparation of foster carers is in depth and the assessments are thorough and analytical. Any concerns identified during the process are addressed rigorously. The panel members have vast experience and knowledge, which provides robust scrutiny of the new applicants. There is extra examination from the experienced agency decision maker. This makes sure that there is safe recruitment of foster carers and only those people who have the capacity to meet the needs of the children and young people are approved.

Children are kept safe because foster carers and staff have a good understanding of safeguarding issues and their roles and responsibilities. Foster carers receive ongoing training in topics relating to child sexual and criminal exploitation, county lines and online safety. This helps them to maintain an excellent awareness of the risks that children and young people face.

Children's and young people's individual vulnerabilities are understood through the detailed safe caring plans and risk assessments. The foster carers follow the effective strategies within the plans to minimise the risks and dangers. Children and young people rarely go missing from home. If they do, foster carers do their utmost to locate them and work closely with the police.

The manager and supervising social workers attend and contribute to the placing authorities' multi-agency strategy meetings. When needed, the manager challenges other agencies, such as the police, to make sure that effective safeguards are in place for the children and young people.

Foster carers are insightful and knowledgeable about trauma and attachment. They recognise how the children's and young people's past experiences can affect their behaviour. Foster carers also receive training on positive behaviour management, enabling them to de-escalate challenging situations quickly and effectively. They have access to further guidance through an attachment-focused psychotherapist. Consequently, children and young people learn to regulate their emotions. They become more settled, with less outbursts and negative behaviours.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Since the last inspection, there has been a change of registered manager and responsible individual. The new manager has brought fresh ideas to the agency and has continued to make positive changes and improvements. These include regular foster carer forums with outside speakers to offer training and advice. One foster carer said, 'These are very well attended and a great way to become informed and share experiences openly, to improve our practice and have a deeper therapeutic understanding of our role as foster carers.'

The staff and foster carers particularly welcome the manager's safeguarding experience and knowledge and his passion for making sure that there is strong participation from the children and young people. The manager makes sure that he has a visible presence within the staff teams as well as for the foster carers, children and young people. He attends the newly introduced Meets and Greets events where new applicants interested in fostering are introduced to the agency.

The manager is inspirational and ambitious for the children and young people. His passion to achieve the best outcomes for the children and young people is echoed within the staff team. The manager and team are strong advocates for the children and young people. This was recognised in the work of one supervising social worker who was highly commended by a family court judge.

The agency promotes a therapeutic parenting approach that is underpinned by a strong research base. This model is clearly embedded in practice and the parenting of the children and young people. Regular and reflective supervisions, which are of a high-quality, allow the staff and the foster carers to remain child-centred.

Written records on the agency's electronic database system are detailed and comprehensive. This helps the leaders and managers to monitor and have effective oversight of the practice of staff and the parenting provided by the foster carers. Supervising social workers routinely review the progress that children and young people are making through their regular auditing of files. However, although there are detailed placement plans, on occasions there are delays in placing authorities providing care plans. The agency does routinely follow this up but escalation to senior manager have been ineffective.

A high level of scrutiny from the agency's quality assurance and safeguarding manager ensures that procedures are followed. However, on one occasion the action from a foster carer's annual review was not completed in a timely way.

Feedback from the children and young people, foster carers, staff and other professionals was extremely positive. Foster carers comment that they receive the benefits of belonging to a large organisation but also the strong localised presence where they live. The three regional offices are consistent in their practice and the foster carers like being part of a larger team and benefit from the family feel of the agency. This has helped with the retention of foster carers as well as attracting new applicants.

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.

Recommendations

- The foster carer is given a copy of the child's placement plan as soon as this is provided to them by the responsible authority. If provision of the care plan by the responsible authority is delayed, the fostering service follows this up with the responsible authority. (National Minimum Standards 31.2)
- There are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the service. This includes the financial viability of the service, any serious incidents, allegations or complaints about the service and ensuring the quality of the service. (National Minimum Standards 25.1)

In particular, to make sure that recommendations made by the independent reviewing officers at the annual reviews are addressed in a timely way.

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

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Inspector

Tina Ruffles, social care inspector



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