

Shining Stars Fostering Agency Ltd

Shining Stars Fostering Agency Limited

The Lansdowne Building, 2 Lansdowne Road, Croydon CR9 2ER

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

This independent fostering agency provides foster care placements for asylum-seeking children, parents and children, individuals and brother and sister groups. The fostering agency supports emergency, short-term and long-term placements. Asylum-seeking children make up over 70% of the current placements. The company's 2 directors have held the roles of responsible individual and registered manager since the agency registered with Ofsted in March 2016.

At the time of the inspection, the fostering agency had 102 approved fostering households with 131 children in placement; 34 young adults continue to live with their foster families under 'staying put' arrangements that enable care leavers to remain living with their foster carers when they turn 18.

Inspection dates: 11 to 15 May 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
---	--------------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

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: 19 June 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Summary of findings

Children are settled and are making exceptional progress from their starting points. Children's wishes and feelings are continually sought to ensure that the fostering service remains child focused in its approach.

Children say that they feel safe in their foster homes. Children's vulnerabilities are understood, and concerns regarding children's safety are acted on promptly through an effective multidisciplinary and coordinated approach.

Leaders and managers are visible and available to foster carers and staff. The ethos nurtured by leaders and managers is one of being 'part of a family'. Leaders and managers promote reflective practice in the fostering agency and have acknowledged shortfalls in their oversight of some aspects of agency practice.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children who spoke to inspectors described living with their foster carers as feeling like part of the family. A significant proportion of children arrive as unaccompanied asylum seekers. These children are helped to settle by foster carers who make enormous efforts to get to know them well and to understand their individual needs. Foster carers talk about the children with compassion and affection. Children experience high levels of stability and form positive attachments to their foster carers. Children remain with foster carers through long-term fostering and 'staying put' arrangements after their eighteenth birthday. Consequently, children experience a high level of stability, which enables them to make significant progress in all aspects of their development.

A key development contributing to children's experiences and progress is the involvement of the multidisciplinary hub. The hub brings together a systemic therapist, the sensory and behaviour support lead, an education consultant and, increasingly, the in-house safeguarding team. The hub offers highly specialised interventions to children and foster carers to address emotional or behavioural issues that may impact on children's safety or progress.

In most cases, children are matched with carers who reflect aspects of the child's identity, whether this is the same language, culture or religion. This helps children to settle. However, matching assessments reviewed did not contain sufficient information to demonstrate how the fostering agency had decided that the foster carer would be able to meet the child's assessed needs. Managers are aware of this and are taking action to address this shortfall.

All children receive a 'comfort pack' when they come to live with their foster carers. The pack contains information (available in different languages) explaining what foster carers do and how children can make a complaint. The fostering agency has an active youth council, which helps children to meet and talk about their experiences in foster care. A youth panel has been re-formed to offer children the opportunity to interview prospective foster carers and to have their views considered at the agency fostering panel. Children are supported to provide feedback about their experiences in foster care as part of foster carer annual reviews. These initiatives demonstrate the strong commitment to listening to children's voices and providing opportunities for them to influence how the service is delivered.

A dedicated worker for asylum-seeking children works in collaboration with managers to identify and befriend these children, and any other children who require bespoke support. This can be to engage children in activities that they have a particular interest in, or to help children orient familiarise with and adjust to the different social and cultural expectations of this country. Children can join support groups and engage in activities, either on their own or with other children. These include boxing and gym activities and trips to places such as theme parks and high-rope activity centres. Therefore, children benefit from a clear focus on tackling isolation and promoting inclusion and stability.

A specialist education consultant provides excellent oversight of children's progress in achieving positive outcomes, working effectively with the virtual school and responsible authorities. The consultant meets regularly with fostering support workers to discuss the progress of children. Children who are not in education, employment or training are tracked to monitor the actions being taken to promote engagement. The consultant works from a trauma-informed viewpoint, which helps with early identification and advocacy for additional support for children through agreed education, health and care plans. Staff go above and beyond to motivate children, with one staff member attending a foster carer's home early in the morning to take a child for a walk to get them into a routine of getting up early. One child has attained a scholarship to a prestigious school. Children who spoke to inspectors have aspirations to attend university to study a variety of courses, including physiotherapy and psychology, cyber security and fashion design. Children's achievements, whether small or large, are celebrated at an annual awards event.

Foster carers and fostering social workers help children to stay in touch with those people who are important to them. Children are supported to move on in a planned way when placements end. Children receive a 'step up' pack, with useful information regarding independent living support, a rucksack with a kettle, a toaster and a bedding set. Foster carers keep in touch with children who have moved on and talk about them with pride in terms of the progress they have made.

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

Children say that they feel safe living with their foster carers. Children develop trusting relationships with their foster carers and can talk to them or to other trusted adults about their worries or concerns.

Children's risks are understood. Comprehensive safety plans are developed, in tandem with children where appropriate, to ensure that new concerns are identified and action is taken to avoid or reduce harm. Information about risks and potential areas of support is provided to children, covering subjects such as signs of radicalisation, child criminal exploitation and cyber-bullying. Foster carers receive training on child sexual exploitation, online grooming, knife crime, and communication through emojis, so they are better able to understand the issues and information that children are sharing with each other.

The identification of concerns relating to children's safety and the responses to these concerns are significantly enhanced by the development and growth of the safeguarding team in the fostering agency. Regular incident tracking, weekly reviews of risk ratings for children and management reviews mean that focused support is identified for the most vulnerable children.

When children go missing from their home, the safeguarding team escalates concerns and convenes multi-agency meetings, demonstrating appropriate challenge to ensure an effective and coordinated response in locating children.

When children's past experiences influence how they may respond to risks, potentially placing them at greater risk, the safeguarding team works effectively with the agency's systemic therapist and sensory and behaviour support lead to provide highly specific interventions to address any additional needs. Excellent examples of collaborative working in the agency include addressing issues of self-harm, peer group influence and worries around asylum applications that have led to low self-esteem and feelings of hopelessness.

Comprehensive safety plans provide strategies for carers to better understand children's vulnerabilities and how best to support them. All plans encourage relationship building with children. This way of working is a strength of the safeguarding approach in the fostering agency, building confidence and resilience in carers to address safeguarding concerns with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers have been highly successful in nurturing a culture and ethos where staff and foster carers have a strong sense of being part of a family. Leaders and managers are approachable and accessible, with foster carers providing accounts of their exceptional and valued responses to them, for example through

the out-of-hours service. Leaders and managers know the children and young people in the agency well and have high aspirations for them.

A strength of the leadership and management team is the investment in providing positive learning experiences for overseas social work personnel and social work students on placement. Many of these workers go on to make a commitment to work in the agency. In addition, leaders and managers encourage and support the development of the skills of established staff. This 'grow your own' initiative has led to the development of roles in sensory and behaviour support, education, safeguarding and support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Consequently, the fostering agency has sufficiently experienced, suitable and knowledgeable staff to meet the needs of foster carers and children.

Leaders and managers have clear processes in place for reviewing the impact of the service on the quality of care provided to children. They are open to learning, with reflective discussions embedded in practice. Regular monitoring by leaders and managers of incidents, safeguarding concerns, placement stability and children's progress ensures that the fostering service remains focused on positive outcomes for children. The development of the multidisciplinary hub is a direct result of leaders and managers' recognition of the increasingly complex needs of children and the impact of early trauma on children's progress.

Leaders and managers' responses to safeguarding concerns are prompt and effective, reflecting the need to ensure that children are kept safe and that harm is reduced. The safeguarding team plays a significant role in informing the actions that leaders and managers take. However, in 3 instances, leaders and managers did not notify or update Ofsted of significant safeguarding matters that had occurred in foster homes. This did not allow the regulator to have timely oversight of the appropriateness of the actions being taken in response.

The support provided to staff by leaders and managers is exemplary. One staff member wrote, 'Managers are approachable and available for guidance when needed. Regular supervision, team meetings and extensive training opportunities have helped me greatly in my professional development and in supporting foster carers effectively.' However, leaders and managers have not had clear protocols and communication in place, when staff have taken on additional roles in the agency, to ensure that there is no confusion about foster carers and those external to the agency.

Carers receive excellent support and supervision from fostering social workers and managers. Foster carers have access to a wide range of training, with opportunities to undertake training to meet the specific needs of children, for example in health needs and behaviours. Foster carers benefit from individual consultations with a therapist and the sensory and behaviour support worker, which enhance their understanding and confidence in meeting children's needs from a trauma-informed parenting position.

Foster carer reviews provide a robust process for reinforcing the need for foster carers to continue to demonstrate their competence and meet compliance requirements, for example by attending training and completing sufficiently detailed logs. However, in one case, where leaders and managers were aware of significant safeguarding incidents in a fostering household, a fostering review was conducted that made no reference to these incidents and actions taken. This review was therefore not undertaken with accurate and full information about the household and their circumstances.

The fostering panel operates effectively as an independent quality assurance mechanism in respect of approvals and re-approvals of foster carers. Panel membership reflects a wide range of experience and knowledge, enabling robust consideration of agency recommendations. The panel chair and vice-chair noted the significant improvement in the quality of reports presented to the fostering panel, with evidence-based practice having greater prominence.

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

Requirement	Due date
The fostering service provider must review the approval of each foster parent in accordance with this regulation. When undertaking a review, the fostering service provider must— make such enquiries and obtain such information as they consider necessary in order to review whether the foster parent continues to be suitable to be a foster parent and the foster parent's household continues to be suitable, and seek and take into account the views of— the foster parent, any child placed with the foster parent (subject to the child's age and understanding), and any placing authority which has, within the preceding year, placed a child with the foster parent. (Regulation 28 (1) (3)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)) In particular, the enquiries and information obtained should accurately reflect the circumstances of the foster parent's household and any ongoing safeguarding concerns or investigations that the fostering agency is aware of.	1 September 2026
If any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 7 takes place in relation to a fostering agency, the registered person must without delay notify the persons or bodies indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. Any notification made in accordance with this regulation which is given orally must be confirmed in writing. (Regulation 36 (1) (2))	1 September 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are carefully matched to a foster placement and that foster carers have full information about the child (as set out in standard 3.9). ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 11.2)
- The registered person should ensure that there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the service. This includes responses to serious incidents, allegations, or complaints about the service, how management oversight is provided and where necessary, independent scrutiny by the fostering panel to ensure the quality of the service. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 25.1)
- The registered person should ensure that managers, staff, volunteers and foster carers are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The level of delegation and responsibility of the manager, and the lines of accountability, are clearly defined. This is particularly pertinent in relation to staff who may have dual roles in the fostering agency. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 25.4)

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: 1224685

Registered provider: Shining Stars Fostering Agency Limited

Registered provider address: 74 Kewferry Road, Northwood, England, HA6 2PG

Responsible individual: Shabnam Abbas

Registered manager: Mohd Yasir Farooqui

Telephone number: 0788 612 7826

Email address: info@shiningstarsfostering.com

Inspectors

Colin Bent, Social Care Inspector
Matilda Clode, Social Care Inspector
Angela Reid, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked-after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026