

Fair Ways Care UK

Fair Ways Community Benefit Society

Building 1000, Western Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO6 3EN

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Fair Ways Care (UK) Fostering Service is an independent fostering agency based in Portsmouth. It is a part of the Fair Ways group, which is a registered charity providing fostering, education, residential, mental health and family services.

At the time of this inspection, the independent fostering agency provided support and supervision to 38 approved foster care households, 39 children in care and seven young adults in 'staying put' arrangements.

The agency provides a range of fostering households for children, including short-term and long-term homes and a small number of specialist provisions, including 'staying put' and homes for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

The registered manager has been registered with Ofsted since 12 July 2022.

Inspection dates: 17 to 21 February 2025

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: 1 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are cared for by carers who deeply care for them and enjoy the fostering role. Children are welcomed and treated as members of the foster family. Children scored their carers highly and get on well with the other children they live with. One carer described the children as 'the joy of my life'.

Children are welcomed into the agency and have opportunities to attend activities and social events throughout the year. For children arriving to the UK from overseas, there are opportunities to meet with other separated children. Every effort is made for children to receive information in their native language, and cultural norms are respected and promoted.

Children's health needs are well met by their carers. Where necessary, foster carers have undertaken specialist training to meet the individual health needs of the children in their care. More widely, routine health appointments are promoted and achieved for children. In some examples, carers have adapted their homes to accommodate the needs of the child in their care.

Children are routinely attending education, and in some instances, attendance rates have improved since being with their foster carers. Examples were seen of children moving on to study at university, while having the continued support of their carers under 'staying put' arrangements.

The agency uses trackers to capture the progress children make from their individual starting points. The data is supported by a narrative written by staff who know them well to interpret the results for the reader.

Carers described the support from the agency to be of a consistently high level and value the relationships with their social workers. Carers described the agency as having a 'family feel' and felt that they have a good knowledge of all staff and that they know them well.

The offer of high-level support along with having charity status is often what attracts carers to the agency. The agency has a dedicated recruitment manager who deals with all enquiries and oversees any subsequent assessments. This gives carers one familiar person throughout this crucial stage of the process.

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

Children are kept safe by their carers and the agency. There is an ex-police detective working in the agency as a safeguarding lead, who has oversight and monitoring responsibilities of any risks or safeguarding concerns. Leaders and managers closely track these circumstances and meet weekly to identify and review any actions to mitigate the risks for the children.

There are strong working relationships with the wider professional group to promote children's safety. For example, there are sound responses when a child is reported missing, and the agency chases local authorities to advocate for independent return home interviews.

Allegations and complaints are well managed, and practice concerns are addressed with carers where necessary. In a couple of instances, concerns have led to a standards of care investigation, which are thorough and provide clear rationale for the conclusions drawn and reflections on future learning.

Safer care plans and risk assessments are of varying quality and detail and do not consistently capture the risks or the expectations of how these are to be managed. In one home restrictive practices were being used by carers, documents were unclear on how these were being used, to ensure that practice is proportionate and used as a minimum restriction only, nor when this was going to be reviewed. However, it is recognised that this information was being gathered, with plans in place to meet with key professionals to address these gaps in the coming days. In another example, the arrangements for a child's personal care were not prescriptively captured to ensure a clear understanding by all parties and promote safety for the child.

Form F assessments are generally of good quality and provide both detailed narrative and analysis of the carers' skills through the fostering lens. However, in one example, a historic allegation of abuse (against a person connected to the household), while covered in the assessment, was not recorded in the most transparent way to allow for further scrutiny and consideration by the panel. While appropriate checks and references were undertaken to understand the potential risk, this was not recorded well enough to understand the context of the incident and ensure appropriate professional curiosity to manage or reassess any risk.

The majority of children enjoy stability of placement with their carers. In the year 2024, 7% of children experienced an unplanned ending with their carers, which equates to five children. Of all of these cases, there was little in the way of practice changes that could be reasonably expected to have avoided any of these disruptions to the children's care. This is a similar figure as in the year 2022. However, there was a marked increase in 2023, with 15% of children experiencing an unplanned ending. While there is some analysis of this data, it does not go far enough to understand this anomaly and interpret the reasons behind this figure.

Carers repeatedly reported on the high-quality support and regular contact they receive from their allocated workers. In some instances, social workers were in almost daily contact with carers to offer support and guidance. In addition, carers routinely receive regular supervision. However, the recordings of the supervision visits rarely accurately reflect the discussions and interventions offered.

In a number of cases sampled, the chronologies of children's daily experiences were missing or of poor quality. While it is recognised that there were some strong examples, these were too infrequent. Due to the recording issues in the carers'

supervision records, it was difficult to see where the carers had been challenged to bring about a meaningful change.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The agency is led by passionate and committed leaders and managers who know the service well, with one person sharing that their 'passion is infectious'. Leaders and managers hold a detailed knowledge of the children and their carers. The registered manager is involved in the day-to-day workings of the agency and regularly attends meetings, speaks with carers and is familiar with children, their interests and what is happening in their lives.

Leaders and managers offer comprehensive and reflective supervision to staff on a regular basis. Supervision records are detailed and capture the required actions. In addition to supervision, staff have access to a reflective space alongside their colleagues to discuss cases and the impact of their role and professionally reflect on their work.

Staff feel valued and enjoy working for the agency, with one staff member commenting, 'I feel very fortunate to work within a team where every member is so passionate about providing the best possible care for the young people in placement with us and the families, we support with this.'

The agency offers a bespoke training programme that has been developed in house to deliver the company's ethos of trauma-informed parenting. This course has been through rigorous assessment and is recognised by two professional bodies. Attendance for carers is at 78%, and feedback gathered is highly positive about the learning that carers have taken from the training. However, records reviewed during the inspection are not all yet reflecting the ethos and underpinning principles of the training, and therefore the impact this training is having on carers' practice is not fully clear. Leaders and managers have recognised where reflective practice can be further developed and plan to use the therapeutic hub with the introduction of regular reflective spaces for carers.

The panel is in a period of change and development, with a new panel chair being in post for 12 months. This has brought positive changes to the agency and panel practices, with further plans to improve panel's function. This includes increasing diversity of panel members, presenting carer annual reviews to panel more frequently and more consistent scheduled panels than previously held.

Leaders and managers are keen to improve practice and are described as having a 'positive attitude to change' and are 'keen to get it right'. Leaders and managers know the service well, auditing reports identify areas for development and leaders and managers are taking action to address these areas of vulnerability.

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
<p>The registered person in respect of an independent fostering agency must ensure that—</p> <p>the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster parents is safeguarded and promoted at all times. (Regulation 11 (a))</p> <p>In particular, safer care plans and risk assessments must be comprehensive and individualised to the needs of the child. Where there are restrictive practices in place, these must be well documented, monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure they are proportionate and appropriate to meet the child's needs. Also, the child's personal care needs and how these are to be met should be written in detail to promote a child's safety and provide clarity of the expectations of carers.</p>	30 April 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff, volunteers, panel members and fostering households keep clear and accurate recordings that are maintained and up to date. There should be a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record-keeping and take action when needed. In particular, carers' supervision records should be a succinct summary of the discussions held within the meeting, providing opportunity for reflection and detailing any directions or intervention provided. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 26.2)
- The registered person should ensure that information about the child is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. Children are actively encouraged to read their files, other than necessarily confidential or third-party information, and to correct errors and add personal statements. In particular, carers' chronologies should provide the child with enough detail to capture their lived experience within the foster family. Recognising the importance of capturing the small details on behalf of the child

will furnish the records with meaningful information, which may otherwise become lost. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 26.6)

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: SC038930

Registered provider: Fair Ways Community Benefit Society

Registered provider address: Fair Ways, Building 1000, Lakeside North Harbour,
Western Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO6 3EN

Responsible individual: Natalie Merriman

Registered manager: Gemma Olden

Telephone number: 02380 230400

Email address: info@fairways-care.org

Inspectors

Katie Ratcliffe, Social Care Inspector
Kerry Fell, 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 <http://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 2025