

Chrysalis Care

Chrysalis Care Limited

Chrysalis Care, 7 Princes Street, Bexleyheath, Kent DA7 4BQ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

This independent fostering agency provides foster care placements for individual and sibling groups, disabled children, asylum-seeking children and parents and children. The fostering agency supports emergency, short-term, long-term, permanent and respite placements.

The agency registered with Ofsted in 2003, and the manager registered with Ofsted in August 2017.

At the time of this inspection, the fostering agency had 41 approved fostering households, with 54 children in placement. A small number of young adults continue to live with their foster families under 'staying put' arrangements.

Inspection dates: 18 to 22 September 2023

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: 8 July 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The fostering service provides good-quality care. Children develop secure attachments with their foster families and have a strong sense of belonging. Outcomes for children are positive, and they have good experiences.

Children feel listened to. They are aware of how to make complaints, but do not do so. The agency's children's services support children to have a voice within the fostering service, which ensures that children have an influence in shaping the fostering agency's services.

Children receive care that is tailored to meet their individual needs. The matching process is effective in matching children with foster carers who provide them with high-quality care. This is also the case for families in parent and child placements. Children's identity needs are well met by the agency. For example, translated information and interpreters are available for children as required. Children are able to practise their faith as they wish, and foster carers ensure that they are skilled in communicating effectively with children who are non-verbal.

Children's learning outcomes and general development are good. They make steady academic progress. School and college attendance is high, and children make good progress from their starting points. Staff are proactive in challenging educational professionals if they feel that children's educational provision fails to meet their learning needs.

Children, foster carers and staff celebrate children's achievements. Children receive gifts and incentives for their achievements, and these are frequently publicised in the fostering agency's newsletter.

Children live healthy lifestyles. Foster carers and staff ensure that they promote children's physical, emotional and social well-being. Children have good access to primary healthcare services and receive advice and support from specialist services, such as mental health services and occupational therapists, as required.

Children with complex health and medical needs make significant improvement while living with their foster families. Foster carers are skilled in understanding the wishes and needs of children who do not communicate through speech. In one household, the foster carers adapted their home in order to care safely for their disabled child.

Children maintain good contact with their family members and friends if it is safe for them to do so. Staff and foster carers negotiate contact arrangements, ensuring safe meetings between children and significant people in their lives. This supports established family relationships and promotes children's positive sense of heritage. In one case, children were accompanied by their foster carers to travel to Asia to meet the children's extended family members.

The fostering service prepares older children for adulthood. They receive support via the agency's children's service to develop practical daily skills to help increase their independence. For example, some children are supported to apply for and secure employment, and some are learning to drive. A small number of young adults remain living with their foster carers in 'staying put' arrangements. This allows them to remain living with their foster families and maintain existing relationships for continued support and guidance.

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

The fostering service promotes children's protection effectively, and they are kept safe from harm and abuse. The service ensures that foster carers are aware of the vulnerabilities of the children they care for.

Children benefit from the fostering service's clear child protection policies and procedures, which staff and foster carers adhere to. Staff and foster carers regularly complete comprehensive safeguarding training.

Children receive information about making complaints and have opportunities to speak with staff from the fostering service in private. However, staff do not consistently conduct annual unannounced visits to foster homes as required.

Risk assessments and safe care plans require improvement. Some risk assessments do not highlight all known risks, while some safe care plans are general household plans and are not child-specific.

Foster carers set clear and consistent boundaries for children, which promotes children's positive behaviour. Foster carers use effective strategies to help to manage children's sometimes complex behaviour and to promote appropriate behaviour. In some crisis situations, foster carers restrain children. This is done safely and in accordance with children's care plans. Restraint is used to protect children and others from immediate harm. Records of restraint incidents are clear and comprehensive in explaining what has happened.

The fostering agency's therapist supports foster carers to develop an approach to care that is trauma-informed, providing foster carers with guidance to manage difficult issues. The agency's children's service works directly with children and provides placements with practical support, which also enhances placement success.

Incidents involving children's substance misuse, going missing from care, involvement in child sexual and criminal exploitation and self-harm do not regularly feature in foster care placements. When these do occur, foster carers and staff take effective action to protect children. There is good communication between foster carers, staff, the police and local authority social workers, which helps to promote children's safety.

The recruitment, assessment, preparation and support of foster carers have a strong focus on keeping children safe. Managers and leaders monitor, reflect and report on

all safeguarding concerns. The management of complaints and allegations against foster carers is robust, fair and has children's welfare at the centre of all investigations. Staff work effectively with safeguarding professionals to ensure that children are protected from harm.

The fostering agency's recruitment and vetting of staff and panel members are robust and in accordance with safe recruitment practices. This ensures that staff are suitable to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The leadership and management of the fostering service are strong. Leaders are ambitious for change and strive for the continual improvement of the fostering service. A staff member said, 'My opinion of the company is very positive, and it is clear to me that the needs of the children placed in our care is paramount at all times. Everyone is prepared to assist their colleagues where necessary, and there is always a good team spirit, with colleagues going above and beyond to deliver an excellent experience for the children and carers.'

The registered manager is a qualified social worker with some 15 years' experience of working in and managing the agency's fostering team. The registered manager's leadership skills are effective, and this is highly appreciated by the staff team and foster carers. Managers demonstrate the positive impact the fostering service is having on children's lives.

Leaders and managers have successfully resolved the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. The exception to this is that leaders do not always ensure that foster care agreements accurately reflect foster carers' current terms of approval.

Stakeholders, including children, have access to clear information that outlines the aims and objectives of the fostering service as documented in the statement of purpose. Children's guides are a child-focused summary of the services offered and are available in age-appropriate, easy-read formats and in various community languages.

The service is yet to secure a larger pool of foster carers, which will offer greater opportunities of respite to existing foster care households. This is an area that some foster carers identify for improvement.

The support, supervision and training of foster carers are excellent. A foster carer said of the agency, 'It's like a family. They know you; you are not just a number. The support and care you get is 24/7. You're valued and supported.' Other foster carers spoke about feeling well appreciated by a visible management team.

The fostering panel promotes safe, secure and stable placements. The administration of panel meetings is very organised, and panel discussions and recommendations are thorough and well considered. Panel members have the necessary knowledge and expertise. Staff complete foster carer assessments that

are of a high standard. The annual reviewing process is thorough. This promotes the regular review of foster carers' suitability to continue to care for children.

In recent years, there has been a high turnover of staff. Currently, staff work collaboratively to provide consistency and stability to children. Managers provide staff with very good support and supervision. Individual staff supervision is frequent and meaningful, and staff participate in peer and practice meetings. Staff induction, development and training opportunities are good. Managers conduct staff appraisals each year.

Children benefit from the close partnership working between their foster carers, staff of the fostering service and other professionals. Communication between the parties is consistent and effective. This supports the coordination of children's care and their safe, positive experiences and progress.

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>If a fostering service provider decide to approve X as a foster parent they must—</p> <p>give X notice in writing specifying any terms on which the approval is given, and</p> <p>enter into a written agreement with X covering the matters specified in Schedule 5 (the “foster care agreement”). (Regulation 27 (5)(a)(b))</p>	<p>1 November 2023</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the fostering service implements an effective strategy to ensure that there are enough foster carers to be responsive to current and predicted future demands on the service. (‘Fostering Services: national minimum standards’, 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that the fostering service has and implements a written policy that clarifies the purpose, format and content of information to be kept on the fostering service’s files, on the children’s files and on case files relating to foster carers. This relates to risk assessments and safe care plans. (‘Fostering Services: national minimum standards’, 26.1)
- The registered person should ensure that at least one unannounced visit takes place each year. (‘Fostering Services: national minimum standards’, 21.8)

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: SC036587

Registered provider: Chrysalis Care Limited

Registered provider address: Gransden, East Hill Road, Knatts Valley, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 6YB

Responsible individual: Alle Pflaumer

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Inspectors

Sandra Jacobs-Walls, Social Care Inspector
Aneta Wasilewska, Social Care Inspector

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