



Inspection Report on

Foster Care Values Ltd

**Foster Care Values Ltd
Energy House
Tir Llwyd Industrial Estate
Rhyl
LL18 5JA**

Date Inspection Completed

4 & 5 October 2023.

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About Foster Care Values Ltd

Type of care provided	Fostering Service
Registered Provider	Foster Care Values Ltd
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	22 February 2018.
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	This service is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and demonstrates a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.

Summary

This agency provides short and long-term placements for children up to the age of 18. At the time of this inspection, the agency had 26 fostering households and 43 children being cared for by foster carers. The manager is appropriately qualified and there is a Responsible Individual (RI) who oversees the service.

Children are at the centre of this agency. They experience care that is child-centred and individualised. They are supported to develop positive, trusting relationships with their foster carers and their families, and agency staff. These relationships underpin the positive progress that many children make in all areas of their lives. There is an emphasis on fostering together that runs throughout the agency. This includes everyone in the fostering household and where possible their extended family.

Well-being

The agency ensures that children who wish to speak Welsh are placed with Welsh speaking foster carers, so children receive care in the language of their preference. There are various methods to capture the views of children, such as supervision with foster carers, foster carer groups, carer reviews, contributions to announced and unannounced visits to foster carers homes in order to consult with children. Children living in foster families are regularly seen by agency staff. Children know agency staff and support workers well. They recognise them as adults who they can trust, and they know they are there to help them. Agency staff listen to children and ensure their voices are heard. Children's attendance at activity groups are centred around their wishes and foster carers encourage children to take part.

Information about the agency is available for children in a variety of format to suit their age and level of understanding. There is information about how to make a complaint and who to talk to if they have any worries. Children are welcomed into their foster families and where possible, agency staff support children to learn about their foster family and to meet their carers before moving in. This supports children to develop a sense of belonging and to settle into their foster family.

A strength of the agency is the team's ability to support foster carers to build trusting and caring relationships with children. In general, children noted in records they feel safe and happy and are supported by their foster carers. Records also confirmed children are safe, and enjoy living with their foster family and feel included in their foster families lives. The agency supports children to live with their siblings if this is in line with their personal plan and safer carer plan. When applicable, children are supported to spend time with their family, and this helps them to develop their sense of identity and self.

Policies and procedures are followed by foster carers and agency staff. Children are active members of clubs and community-based activities. Foster carers work closely with other professionals, including teachers, Social Workers, and health staff. As a result, children's needs are being identified and met and they are supported to make positive progress. All children attend some order of education, either primary, secondary or college.

Care and Support

There are examples of good practice when managing safeguarding incidents. Foster carers, supervising social workers and external professionals work together to ensure children are safe. When children go missing from foster care, there is a protocol followed by foster carers to report them missing to the appropriate authorities to ensure they are located and returned safely. Processes for speaking to children following incidents are continuing to be strengthened to ensure that children can share their views in a way that works for them. Foster carers are supported to understand and appropriately respond to children's individual risks and vulnerabilities. They are helped to understand what is going on for children and can talk to children about issues that affect them. This helps children to develop their understanding of risks in the home, community and online and supports them to make safer choices and to understand healthy relationships. Some children are supported to stay with their foster family's long term, and many continue to benefit from this support throughout their lives.

Children's health needs are met by foster carers and agency staff. They work effectively with other professionals as part of a team to support children they care for. The agency staff are proactive in ensuring that children receive specialist support they require. A safer carer document is available for foster carers and professionals which provides a snapshot about children's health, care and support needs and behaviours. Supervising social workers visit foster carers at least monthly to discuss the children's progress or any needs they may have. Children's education is a priority and is well supported. Foster carers are proactive in ensuring that children have access to education. When children do not attend education, agency staff and foster carers work closely with placing authorities to identify suitable alternatives.

The agency matches children with suitable foster carers to support linguistic and cultural needs. For example, a Welsh speaking child has been matched with Welsh speaking foster carers. This has supported the child to continue to communicate in Welsh and respect their cultural needs and requirements. The child has continued to build strong relationships with other children in the Welsh medium school and within the locality of the foster carers home. When concerns arise regarding the standard of care provided by some foster carers, appropriate action is taken to minimise the impact on children.

Environment

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) does not consider the Environment theme in full due to the nature of the independent fostering agency.

The office premises for the fostering agency are suitable and fit for purpose. The office space is large and provides space for delivering training and meetings. Records relating to children and foster carers are stored securely. The service has an electronic system for records which is password protected with individual access codes. Agency staff files and other documentation which are paper based are stored securely in locked cupboards.

Foster carers monthly supervisions are completed in the home to ensure supervising social workers assess the home environment. Standards of health and safety in foster carer's homes are considered as part of the formal annual review process, together with pet assessments to assess safety. Arrangements are in place to ensure Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are completed at the point of recruitment and renewed at the required periods.

Leadership and Management

The leadership and management is highly effective and are committed to providing safe and secure foster homes for children. They are proactive in engaging more specialist services to ensure that foster carers and agency staff have a strong understanding of their roles in keeping children safe. The Responsible Individual, management team, supervising social workers and foster carers are cohesive and collaborate in their practice. The Responsible Individual supervises the management of the service and is highly committed to providing appropriate advice and guidance. The Responsible Individual and manager ensure supervising social workers have access to support and advice via daily discussions and regular supervisions to allow them to reflect and develop their knowledge.

Since the last inspection, there have been changes in the leadership and management of the agency. These transitions have been managed well, and agency staff feel valued by managers and are positive about the support they receive. The workforce is stable, with some staff having worked for the agency for many years. Children and foster carers benefit from being supported by a stable workforce.

The fostering panel meets as and when required, to quality assure foster carer annual review of their registration and / or new prospective foster carers application to register with the agency. The recruitment and approval processes for foster carers are robust. All required checks are undertaken before an application is presented to the agency's fostering panel. We observed a panel meeting being held, where panel members examined reports and discussed at length matters identified to explore areas to ensure foster carers are safe, suitably fit, and competent to continue to, or to commence in their role as new foster carers. Fostering panel documentation evidence scrutiny and decision-making in respect of changes of approval status, and foster carer agreements are reviewed and signed following any change. The agency's panel and decision-making processes are effective. Minutes of panel meetings clearly reflect discussions that underpin recommendations and decision making.

Foster carers and supervising social workers have access to mandatory and optional training to underpin their knowledge. Additional training is made available to foster carers particularly when the needs of children change or become more challenging. Foster carers complete regular safeguarding training to develop and underpin their understanding in their role in safeguarding and protecting children. The matching of children with foster carers is effective, and as a result, breakdown in foster placements are low. Records confirmed foster carers are involved in the planning and matching process of any new placements. In addition, moves are managed sensitively and at the pace children are comfortable with.

The agency has safe recruitment practices in respect of employing supervising social workers. There is an induction process to prepare supervising social workers for supporting foster carers and children. Safer recruitment processes for agency staff and panel members are followed to ensure they are suitable to work with children. The Responsible Individual's quality assurance reports includes sections for documenting which records have been audited and evidence of consultations with children, foster carers, supervising social workers and placing authorities. The quality-of-care review provides an analysis of data; to understand and identify any patterns and trends to shape and develop the service.

Summary of Non-Compliance	
Status	What each means
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people's well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

Area(s) for Improvement		
Regulation	Summary	Status

N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A
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