

Lika Family Fostering

Lika Family Fostering Ltd
Davis House, 4th Floor, 1 Robert Street, Croydon CR0 1QQ
Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Lika Family Fostering is an independent fostering agency.

The fostering agency's ethos, philosophy and basis of care are firmly embedded in therapeutic ideas, namely systemic family therapy.

The fostering agency aims to offer a range of placements. These include emergency, short-term, bridging, long-term, short breaks, care for disabled or chronically ill children, young people aged 16+ and 'staying put' arrangements.

The company's two directors have held the roles of the responsible individual and the registered manager since the agency registered with Ofsted in September 2015.

At the time of this inspection, the fostering agency has nine approved fostering households caring for nine children.

Inspection dates: 2 to 6 December 2019

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: 13 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children flourish within nurturing placements, which have a positive impact on their emotional and physical well-being. Children present as happier and more confident. They improve their resilience and have increased self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

Children receive highly individualised care that is tailored to meet their specific needs. They live in family settings that specifically focus on the recovery and rehabilitation of children who have suffered abuse, neglect and other traumas.

Children benefit significantly from the attention paid by the fostering agency to their emotional and therapeutic well-being. Foster carers receive expert support and training to enable them to sensitively communicate with children and explore their emotional well-being.

Careful matching of children with foster families contributes to the stability in their lives. Other factors that underpin the stability of placements are the resilience of foster carers and the extra support that they and the children receive from the agency.

A local authority commissioner said of the agency, 'This is an agency who always ask the right questions. They require full information on any potential referral, which is an art form, and they get it. An excellent agency, where they have been able to stabilise a child who is now making significant progress.'

Staff and foster carers explore and assess how the placements can enhance children's emotional well-being and resilience. Skilled practitioners support foster carers to develop safe strategies to communicate effectively and engage positively with the children based on a systemic family model of intervention.

Enthusiastic, experienced, proactive supervising social workers support the children and the foster carers. They purposefully fill the gaps left by the children's social workers, tenaciously advocating so that children's often complex needs are met.

Children's experiences are widened through a range of social activities organised by their foster carers and the agency. Age-appropriate books broaden their knowledge and provide them with inspiration. In one case, the agency obtained an author's signed book for a child who had said that the author's experiences mirrored her own.

Foster carers value education and strongly advocate on behalf of the children. All of the children are in education or training that meets their individual educational needs.

Children are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles, through diet and exercise. There

is good attention paid to their health needs.

Children have opportunities to prepare for living independently. The agency has advocated that two 'staying put' children need to be further assessed by their placing authority due to their additional vulnerabilities. Foster carers have supported these children to map out a sense of their future hopes and aspirations and to develop independent living skills. A child said, 'For the first time in my life, my foster carer broke things down to me. She helped me to understand the detrimental effects my actions have on others. The love they have for me has enabled me to remain living with them until I am ready to be independent.'

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

Foster carers work to a model of positive parenting that gets to the heart of the children's need for long-lasting, non-judgemental relationships. Foster carers succeed in instilling boundaries and purposeful routines with children. This enables the children to develop socially acceptable behaviour.

The service has an extensive range of resources to help carry out effective direct work with children. It delivers a therapeutic package of life-story work, talking therapy and other aspects of therapeutic parenting to children. This has enabled the children to better understand and name their feelings and emotions. As a result, children gain an understanding of their differing emotions and are less likely to randomly act out in a negative way.

Foster carers and staff are very well trained in all aspects of safeguarding, including the risks of sexual exploitation and self-harm. This knowledge is further enhanced by training on brain development and therapeutic parenting. As a result, foster carers have a better understanding of what may lie behind a child's behaviour.

Children benefit from excellent safeguarding arrangements. The agency carefully monitors placement stability and any causes for concern. This ensures that issues are promptly and efficiently addressed. Staff and foster carers use a wide range of interventions to ensure that all actions benefit the children. For example, therapeutic role modelling with foster carers enables them to understand how to positively interact with the children.

Few significant incidents are reported by the agency. This is because the support needs of the children are identified and explored prior to placement. Information is verified, ensuring that it is factual and relevant. This allows carers to be prepared for any potential challenging and risky behaviours.

Children reported feeling safe and comfortable to talk about anything with their foster carers and with any of the agency's staff.

Assessments of prospective foster carers are completed promptly. Assessments are of good quality and highlight the applicants' strengths and their ability to reflect. Assessments also include research and theory linked to the carers' ability to care for a child.

The fostering panel is a strength of the agency. Members are skilled and experienced professionals, with strong leadership via the panel chairperson. They provide detailed analysis of the information obtained from the assessment process and make well-evidenced recommendations. Staff and panel members also consider the learning that has been gathered from serious case reviews and research to inform their practice.

The fostering agency's recruitment and vetting of staff, panel members and consultants is robust and in accordance with safe recruitment practices. The process is well organised and comprehensive.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The members of the highly experienced management team lead with confidence. They are ambitious to provide a quality service for children.

Leaders and managers use systemic family therapy and research in the development of the service. The use of systemic practice highlights the importance of relationship-based working. Feedback from placing authorities and social workers is overwhelmingly positive.

Supervising social workers hold dual qualifications in social work and in the systemic family therapy model of care. Staff and foster carers all share the same vision and enthusiasm of their leaders and managers. Foster carers said, 'They say what they do and do what they say.'

Supervising social workers regularly receive valuable, reflective supervision. Supervision and appraisal systems are effective. Staff and foster carers' personal development plans inform training plans that maintain and develop their skills. All of the supervising social workers said that they held manageable caseloads.

The promotion of diversity and equality is built into all aspects of the agency. Leaders and managers are highly ambitious about what children can achieve, regardless of their past experiences.

Leaders and managers provide highly valued support to children and foster carers. They are solution-driven and communicate effectively with professionals and strongly advocate for the needs of the children.

The agency is financially sound, and its business plan outlines plans for the service's future.

Leaders and managers ensure that the agency is operating within the ethos as outlined in the statement of purpose. This document is up to date and combined with the agency's website, provides useful information to external stakeholders. However, amendments to the document were not provided to Ofsted in a timely manner.

The children' guide is well written and provides a short summary of the services provided for children. However, it does not contain good enough information on access to children's rights and advocacy services.

Good-quality assurance systems permeate all aspects of the agency's work, which contributes to continuing improvement. However, managers have not provided Ofsted with reports on any such reviews.

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.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The fostering service provider must—</p> <p>(a) keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose and children’s guide,</p> <p>(b) notify the Chief Inspector of any such revisions within 28 days, and</p> <p>(c) if the children’s guide is revised, supply a copy to each foster parent approved by the fostering service provider, and to each child placed by them (subject to the child’s age and understanding). (Regulation 4 (a)(b)(c))</p>	<p>02/03/2020</p>
<p>(1) The registered person must maintain a system for—</p> <p>(a) monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals, and</p> <p>(b) improving the quality of foster care provided by the fostering agency.</p> <p>(2) The registered person must provide the Chief Inspector with a written report in respect of any review conducted for the purposes of paragraph (1) and, on request, to any local authority.</p> <p>(3) The system referred to in paragraph (1) must provide for consultation with foster parents, children placed with foster parents, and their placing authority (unless, in the case of a fostering agency which is a voluntary organisation, it is also the placing authority). (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2)(3))</p>	<p>02/03/2020</p>

Recommendations

- The Children's Guide includes a summary of what the fostering service sets out to do for children, how they can find out their rights, how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors, and how to secure access to an independent advocate. (Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 16.4)

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: SC489561

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Registered provider address: 650 Anlaby Road, Hull, Yorkshire HU3 6UU

Responsible individual: Linda Hill

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Inspector

Juanita Mayers, social care inspector



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