

ISP Enfield

Integrated Services Programme

ISP, 64a Church Street, Enfield, Middlesex EN2 6AX

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

This independent fostering agency registered in 2006 and is part of a limited company. It is based in London. The other settings are in Buckinghamshire, Sussex and Kent. The manager registered with Ofsted on 25 October 2022.

At the time of this inspection, 51 fostering households were caring for 64 children. The agency provides long-term, short-term, parent and child and some emergency placements. Most foster carers live in London or Greater London.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 13 to 17 February 2023

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 **outstanding**

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: 25 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

This agency has a strong child-centred ethos. Children make exceptional progress from their starting points because they are cared for by devoted and valued foster carers who receive consistent support from a dedicated multi-disciplinary team of professionals. Many foster carers describe the agency as 'like a family'.

Every child attends school or college. Committed and knowledgeable education support staff ensure that every child's education and learning targets are front and centre of their work. Agency staff's consistent attendance at every child's personal education planning meeting enables the team to positively influence discussions and act swiftly to intervene when additional help or support may be required. As a result, children excel in education, and some go on to university. Several young people remain living with their foster carers under 'staying put' arrangements. This provides further continuity, time and stability during early adulthood.

The cultural diversity of this agency is a significant strength. Children learn about Black history and share their knowledge with others. One child produced a presentation to demonstrate their learning. An agency outing to the National Windrush museum helped children to celebrate and take pride in Black culture. Careful matching means that many children benefit from living with families from the same or familiar cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The agency's therapeutic approach permeates the organisation. Children live with foster carers who are empathetic and attuned to the children's emotional and mental health needs. Children can have individual talking or expressive therapy. This ensures that every child has the emotional support and help they need at the right time.

Children thrive and flourish. Many children experience permanence. Some children live with their brothers or sisters. The agency staff and foster carers go above and beyond to help children to spend quality time with their birth family. The agency provides facilities and transport to help to reduce any barriers to children seeing their family. This helps children to retain their identity.

The agency is quick to recognise and celebrate children's individual achievements. Children benefit from an enriching array of experiences and activities, including holidays and day trips, with their foster families and with the agency staff. This helps to ensure that children maintain optimum well-being and physical health.

The inclusive support offered to looked after children mirrors that of the foster carers' birth children. Consultation and collaboration with children are embedded across the service. High calibre photographic and written records focus on children's experiences, strengths and resilience. This ensures that children have meaningful opportunities to recollect positive childhood memories.

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

Children feel valued, safe and respected. The children speak to a range of different adults from the agency, and each member of the team proactively involves themselves in the children's day-to-day welfare.

The team purposefully interacts with the children. The staff organise group and individual sessions to encourage the children to learn, in an enjoyable and stimulating way, about keeping safe, decision-making and personal safety. This helps the agency staff to remain up to date with how individual children spend their time. The agency staff tailor sessions so that they offer relevant, current advice to the children, for example about the effects of drugs and the risk of exploitation. Incidents reduce and children seek out their foster carers or the staff for guidance. This means that assessments of risk are dynamic. The written assessments clearly pinpoint potential areas for concern and the favoured strategies to increase children's safety.

Thorough and analytical prospective carer assessments ensure that suitable people are recommended to become foster carers. The foster panel is superbly culturally and professionally diverse. Panel enquiries include questions written by foster children. Since the last inspection, a member has been included on the panel who has lived experience and offers additional improvement in scrutiny and oversight. The agency decision-maker is considerably experienced and the rationale for approval is clear. Strengths and areas for development are highlighted.

The staff and managers work with other agencies to understand and identify solutions to help and protect children effectively. Allegations or concerns about the standards of care are shared promptly and transparently with the local authority designated officer. The managers' routine meetings with the head of safeguarding help to ensure that 'no stone is left unturned' when reviewing the actions following safeguarding incidents.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Since the last inspection, there has been a seamless change in the management structure of the agency.

The inspirational registered manager has worked at the agency for several years. Prior to being appointed to the position of registered manager, the manager was the agency's deputy manager. The registered manager at the time of the last inspection is now the responsible individual. They remain closely involved and share their wisdom, overseeing the success of the service. The harmonious transition has offered confidence and continuity for all foster carers, children and staff.

For many years, the agency has successfully employed a strong therapeutic model. However, since the last inspection, the managers and leaders have taken action to

build on the model. The modular therapeutic pathway enables experienced foster carers and staff to collaboratively expand the breadth of their understanding of trauma and loss in childhood. This solution-focused method to training results in a united approach to helping children and an irrepressible agency ethos.

The managers and leaders closely monitor performance. They act to reward and recognise staff potential and interest in developing professional expertise. Several staff have had the opportunity to complete career enhancing qualifications in practice teaching and the neurobiology of trauma. This ensures that the children, foster carers and other staff benefit from messages from current research.

The wider organisation has recently celebrated its 35th birthday. Since the last inspection, careful incremental growth of this local agency ensures that foster carers' ongoing support is not compromised. Foster carers report excellent support and high levels of guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Foster carers' retention rates are high, with several families looking after children for many years.

The agency has developed many traditions over the years, including award ceremonies and celebration events. The result is cohesion and a shared vision for children in foster care to reclaim their childhood.

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: SC067431

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