

# 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 is part of a limited company. The other centres are based in Buckinghamshire, Sussex, Kent and South London.

The agency's premises contain staff offices and rooms for therapy sessions, education, meetings, contact and training. The agency provides a wide range of services, including social work support for foster carers and children, a range of therapeutic services, educational support and assistance with transport.

The agency's foster carers provide short-term, emergency, long-term, respite care and parent and child placements. The agency currently has 46 fostering households and 54 children placed with it.

**Inspection dates:** 25 February to 1 March 2019

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>Outstanding</b>
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:** 22 February 2016

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** None

## Key findings from this inspection

This independent fostering agency is outstanding because:

- Young people make exceptional progress with the support of committed and dedicated foster carers.
- Outcomes are extremely positive and placement disruptions are rare.
- Young people excel in their education, supported by a dedicated education worker.
- Young people enjoy a rich variety of experiences, including white water rafting and participating in local theatre groups.
- Foster carers are extremely well trained and advocate very strongly on behalf of the young people.
- The agency employs a strong therapeutic model that is highly effective in nurturing strong attachments between carers and young people.
- Young people benefit from a range of accessible in-house specialist services, including psychotherapists.
- Safeguarding is very strong and is supported by robust case recording and close work with key partner agencies.
- The agency benefits from an exceptional registered manager who provides strong leadership.

The independent fostering agency's areas for development:

- This inspection notes minor shortfalls in respect of the constitution of the fostering panel, one placement matching assessment, and the voice of young people was not always present in care plans and risk assessments. These shortfalls do not impact on the care of young people.

## What does the independent fostering agency need to do to improve?

### Recommendations

#### ■ 14: Fostering panels & decision-maker

Ensure that the number, skills, knowledge and experience of persons on the central list are sufficient to enable the fostering service to constitute panels that are equipped to make competent recommendations to the fostering service provider, taking into account the nature of the children and carers that the service caters for. (National Minimum Standards 14.8)

In particular, ensure that a representative who has direct experience of the care system is included on the fostering panel.

#### ■ 11: Preparation for a placement

Children are carefully matched to a foster placement. (National Minimum Standards 11.2)

In particular, ensure that a full assessment of need is conducted prior to placement and to include the views of those involved with young people already resident in placement.

#### ■ 26: Records

Children are actively encouraged to read their files, and to correct errors and add personal statements. (National Minimum Standards 26.6)

In particular, ensure that care plans and risk assessments reflect the wishes and feelings of young people.

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people make outstanding progress and are proud of their homes. A high percentage of young people remain with their carers following their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday under 'staying put' legislation. Others successfully move on to their own accommodation while maintaining contact with their foster carers.

Young people quickly feel accepted into their new homes. A warm welcome promotes close and trusting relationships. One young person commented, 'I love it so much, my carer does everything for me.'

The agency provides additional services to support placements, such as educational support and a behaviour management specialist. These services are highly effective in supporting placements. One foster carer commented, 'We couldn't manage without them.'

Progress in education is exceptional. Each young person is engaged in full-time

educational provision. The agency employs an education worker who advocates very strongly for extra services when these are needed. Young people reach their potential, with many assessed as being 'gifted and talented', and some are preparing to attend university.

Young people enjoy an extremely rich and varied range of experiences. These include holidays abroad and golfing lessons.

The agency applies a strong therapeutic model of working, known as 'the secure base model'. This is applied consistently and supports very effective behaviour management. Carers consider behaviour as an expression of an emotion and carefully unpick its possible cause. One allocated social worker commented, 'The (positive) change in behaviour is astonishing.'

Contact with the birth family is a high priority. Foster carers strive to support family contact where appropriate. This includes offering overnight stays and travelling long distances to support and foster relationships.

The views of young people are crucial to the agency. It provides groups specifically for. These groups offer a unique opportunity for young people to share experiences and gain mutual support. At present, care plans and risk assessments are limited in their inclusion of the views of the young people, restricting their effectiveness.

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

Safeguarding is extremely strong in this service. It is based on excellent case-recording practice and the prompt sharing of information with key partner agencies. There are well-established processes for senior management to monitor safeguarding across the agency.

Risk assessments are thorough. They offer important guidance and focus on inventive strategies to help support young people. Assessments are understood by foster carers and the resulting action plans help to promote confidence and trust throughout the agency.

Young people reduce and modify their risk-taking behaviour. Levels of young people going missing from placements are extremely low. When missing behaviour occurs, foster carers are proactive and follow established procedures to locate young people.

Fostering supervisors play a very important role in the agency. Supervisors work in addition to supervising social workers. Supervisors are all current or former foster carers who offer insightful coping strategies to foster carers when difficulties occur.

The agency's specialist support services are crucial to placement stability and success. Therapists work with young people and foster carers when child and adolescent mental health services deem a referral does not meet their remit.

Foster carers are extremely professional and relish their role. They advocate strongly for young people and challenge allocated social workers where appropriate. Recently, this resulted in a young person returning home to her father after her carers encouraged her social worker to explore this possibility.

Foster carers offer high levels of mutual support. One foster carer commented, 'It's like a big family, we all look out for each other.' Carers also feel highly valued by their agency. Effective respite arrangements and a monthly park walk, and lunch provided by the agency, are major highlights.

The agency is appropriately staffed, and safe recruitment practices are in place.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The registered manager has been in post since July 2017 and registered with Ofsted in October 2017. She has over 40 years of experience of working with young people and is highly respected by all those who work with her. She is central to the strong child-centred ethos of the agency.

The agency has grown since the last inspection. Managers have overseen this very effectively while maintaining extremely high standards of care.

The registered manager is highly ambitious for the young people and is continually seeking new means of improvement. A recent training session on meeting the needs of transgender young people was hugely effective. One commissioning social worker referred to the agency as 'extremely well oiled and brilliantly organised'.

The high quality of leadership in the agency is reflected in the excellent practice of the staff team. Supervision and appraisal systems are effective. Staff personal development programmes inform training plans that maintain and develop staff skills.

Staff are exceptionally well trained. They are motivated by the agency's well-co-ordinated specialist support services. The services teach supervising social workers to support carers and young people in key areas, such as the safer use of the internet.

Managers strive to support placements. Tracking systems monitor progress very closely. When difficulties occur, support services are quickly provided. On the rare occasion that a placement disruption occurs, managers learn lessons and take highly effective steps to lower the risk of a repetition.

Placement matching is a major strength of the agency. Managers understand the strengths of each foster carer and use their rigorous scrutiny of referral information to match effectively. However, on one occasion the matching assessment failed to consider the views of the social worker for the two young people already in placement.

Panel offers an outstanding source of oversight and scrutiny. The panel chair has extensive experience in fostering and is clear about the role of the panel. Despite offering a broad range of expertise, from teachers to former police officers, the panel is currently lacking the input of a member with prior experience of being in care.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the independent fostering agency knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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

**Registered provider:** Integrated Services Programme

**Registered provider address:** Tunstall Court, Gore Court Road, Sittingbourne,  
Kent ME10 1GL

**Responsible individual:** Tracy Livesey

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## **Inspector**

Barnaby Dowell, social care inspector



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