

# Talawa Fostering Services

Talawa Fostering Services Limited  
319 Baker Street, Enfield, Middlesex EN1 3LF  
Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

This privately owned agency offers fostering placements in 16 households. The agency provides a range of placements from short-term to long-term and permanence, and parent and child placements. Thirteen children and young people are currently in placement, three of whom are in parent and child placements. The agency also provides independent parenting assessments, independent psychological assessments and direct therapeutic work with children and young people.

One of the company directors is the registered manager for the agency. She has been in this position since the agency was registered with Ofsted on 23 December 2005.

**Inspection dates:** 6 to 10 August 2018

**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:** 1 February 2016

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Key findings from this inspection

This independent fostering agency is good because:

- Children and young people experience stability and enjoy having a good family life.
- Children and young people receive good-quality care that is sensitive to the full range of their needs and their potential.
- Children and young people make good progress in all areas of their lives.
- Despite the high vulnerabilities of children and young people, the incidence of behaviours that raise safeguarding concerns is very low. The risk taking and challenging behaviours of children and young people have either significantly reduced or stopped completely.
- Children and young people have excellent school attendance and make good educational progress from their starting points.
- The agency's therapeutic support enhances the emotional well-being of children and young people.
- The agency provides effective parent and child placements and placements for children who have disabilities.
- The agency is managed effectively and efficiently.
- Anti-discriminatory practices and promotion of equality and diversity are integral to the agency's activities and practices.
- Low caseloads allow the supervising social workers to spend quality time with the foster families and this enables their practice to be reflective and collaborative.
- The agency provides safe fostering families through a thorough approval process and comprehensive ongoing support.
- The agency's panel and an independent decision-maker enhance the robustness of the decision-making.
- The planning of placements is effective and includes excellent matching.
- The leaders, managers and staff work in close partnership with other professionals and advocate well for children and young people.

The independent fostering agency's areas for development:

- Monitoring is not thorough. The monitoring reports do not cover all required areas. Ofsted has not received any monitoring reports from this agency.
- The registered manager did not notify Ofsted of one serious event.
- The registered manager does not maintain central logs of complaints and behaviour control measures.
- Staff recruitment information on one file lacked the required detail.
- Unannounced visits to carers are not always carried out on an annual basis.

- Some foster carers have not attained the Training, Support and Development Standards within 12 months of approval.
- Some foster carers and the panel members have not completed relevant training for their roles, and the agency does not have any arrangements for them to have training on preventing radicalisation and extremism.

## 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.

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Due date</b>
<p>The registered person must, on request, supply the Chief Inspector with a statement containing a summary of any complaints made during the preceding 12 months and the action taken in response. (Regulation 18 (6))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must keep a central log of complaints.</p>	01/11/2018
<p>The fostering service provider must not employ a person to work for the purposes of the fostering service unless that person is fit to do so.</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (1), a person is not fit to work for the purposes of a fostering service unless full and satisfactory information is available in relation to that person in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 1. (Regulation 20 (1) (3) (c))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must have a record of a full employment history, together with a satisfactory written explanation of any gaps in employment for each staff member.</p>	01/11/2018
<p>The registered person must maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals, and improving the quality of foster care provided by the fostering agency.</p> <p>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>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>	01/11/2018

<p>The registered person must without delay notify the persons or bodies indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table, if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 7 takes place in relation to a fostering agency.</p> <p>Any notification made in accordance with this regulation which is given orally must be confirmed in writing. (Regulation 36 (1) (2))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must notify Ofsted of any serious illness or serious accident of a child placed with foster parents and of any serious incident relating to a child placed with foster parents necessitating calling the police to the foster parent's home.</p>	<p>01/10/2018</p>
--	-------------------

## Recommendations

- Unannounced visits to each fostering household should take place at least annually. (Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards' 10.5)
- Ensure that telephone enquiries are made to each referee to verify the written references. (Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards' 19.1)
- Ensure that foster carers are able to evidence that the Training, Support and Development Standards have been attained within 12 months of approval. (Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards' 20.3)
- Ensure that support and training is made available to foster carers, including hard to reach carers, to assist them in meeting the specific needs of the children they are caring for or are expected to care for. (Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards' 20.8)  
Specifically, ensure that all foster carers and panel members complete the relevant training, and make arrangements for them to have training on preventing radicalisation and extremism.

## Inspection judgements

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

Children and young people develop close relationships with their foster families. The positive nature of these relationships underpins the feelings of safety and well-being that the children and young people enjoy. Children and young people receive good-quality care and make good progress in all areas of their lives.

Children and young people enjoy having a good family life. One young person said, 'Living here is great and they [the foster carers] are very nice, caring, loving and comforting. They give me a good home and family. And I am very happy here.' Children and young people engage in a wide range of recreational activities and they go on holidays in this country and abroad.

Children and young people experience stability in their lives. One social worker said that the brother and sister whom he worked with did not see themselves as children in care any longer. They called their foster carer 'mum' and the placing authority was considering formalising this relationship through adoption. One of the agency's foster carers has already adopted the children's older sister.

Planning of placements is excellent and includes robust matching. Children and young people receive good support to settle into their new home with ease. The agency's supervising social worker is always there to welcome the child or young person when they move in.

Therapeutic support contributes to the stability of placements and improves the emotional well-being of everybody involved. The therapists work in close partnership with the child and adolescent mental health services to improve the mental health of children and young people.

Children and young people have excellent school attendance. Foster carers ensure that children and young people have all the support they need in order to achieve in education, for example by making interesting books available and spending time reading with children. One child has become a reading ambassador for her school.

Foster carers promote the independence of children and young people well. This includes teaching them life skills and preparing them for independent study and the world of work.

A number of parent and child placements have resulted in positive outcomes. Two mothers returned to live in the community with their babies, despite this outcome being highly unlikely at the point of the referrals. One of these mothers said that the foster carers helped her to learn to trust others. Another mother said that it was the foster carer's belief in her that gave her the confidence to bond with her baby, engage more positively with the support available, and develop better parenting skills.

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

Children and young people feel safe in their placements. They have confidence that the adults will help them to be safe. Two children said that if they had any concerns, they would speak to their foster carer, the agency's social worker and their own social worker.

The arrangements for dealing with concerns and allegations against foster carers follows good practice. Leaders, managers and staff appropriately share relevant information with the partner agencies and implement agreed actions. Foster carers who were subject to allegations said that although at times it felt difficult, they felt supported by the agency throughout the process. They understood that the thorough process was necessary to safeguard children and young people.

The assessment, preparation, approval, reviews of approval, ongoing support and training of foster carers focus clearly on enhancing their understanding of children and young people's vulnerabilities. Foster carers have a good awareness of the impact of early trauma on children and young people. They know how these frightening experiences make children and young people vulnerable to negative influences. They empathise with children and young people and know how to keep them safe.

The agency has a proportionate, proactive and collaborative approach to the management of risk. When risks are identified, foster carers work closely with other professionals to agree and implement a safety plan that addresses those risks. The agency's links with local authorities, designated officers and other key safeguarding agencies, such as education, health and the police, promotes the safety of children and young people and minimises the risk of them being harmed.

Foster carers provide a positive family environment with clear routines. Emotionally warm relationships and firm boundaries contribute to a feeling of well-being and security for children and young people. The challenging and/or risk-taking behaviours of children and young people have either significantly reduced or stopped altogether.

The effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements and practices show in the low incidence of behaviours that raise safeguarding concerns. Despite the high vulnerabilities of children and young people, there have been no episodes of going missing from care. No concerns around child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation or radicalisation and extremism have been identified in the last 12 months.

The recruitment information on one staff member's file did not include evidence of the explanation of a gap in employment or that the references had been verified. One fostering household has not had an annual unannounced visit. There has been no observable impact of these weaknesses on the children and young people but there is a risk of the good safeguarding being undermined by those weaknesses.

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

The agency is managed effectively and efficiently. The leaders, managers and staff share an ambitious vision and the utmost commitment to children and young people. Team cohesion is high and the agency's fostering practices are child-centred. One foster carer said: 'They really care about children and are not about the money.'

Leaders, managers and staff work in close partnership with other professionals and advocate well for children and young people. They have built a positive reputation within the sector. A local authority social care manager said that she was really impressed by this agency and that it provided a level of support to foster carers that she had not seen with other agencies.

The supportive working environment enables the leaders, managers and staff, within their respective roles, to contribute to the fulfilment of the agency's statement of purpose. All employees of the agency have regular monthly supervision, annual appraisals of their individual performance and good opportunities for professional development.

The agency is appropriately resourced and staffed. The low caseloads allow the supervising social workers to spend quality time with the foster families, and this makes their practice reflective and collaborative. The foster carers commented on how everybody in the agency knew them and their foster children really well.

The foster carers provided positive feedback about the quality of the support that they receive from the agency, during the office hours and outside of this time. One foster carer talked about her own and her family's needs being always considered carefully by the agency. An adult birth daughter said: 'The agency is nice and like a little family, in which everybody works very well together to get things done.'

The agency provides training on a range of topics. Foster carers are also encouraged to access training provided by local authorities. For example, some foster carers attended training on female genital mutilation through this local offer. However, not all foster carers have had up-to-date training on behaviour management, first aid, medication and safeguarding. No one in the agency has received training on preventing radicalisation and extremism, and no training on this topic is planned.

Despite having been approved for over 12 months, three foster carers have still not completed the Training, Support and Development Standards. One of them has been approved for over four years. The agency has taken appropriate steps to provide additional support to those foster carers and to ensure that all foster carers are trained appropriately.

The agency's panel and the independent decision-maker contribute effectively to the agency's quality assurance processes. They promote thorough assessments and meaningful support and training for foster carers.

Leaders and the registered manager meet on a regular basis to consider monitoring information and agree on further improvement. However, the monitoring reports do



not cover all areas that are required to be monitored by the fostering regulations. For example, the agency does not keep logs of complaints or behaviour control measures. The lack of centrally held information undermines analysis and learning from what has taken place. Ofsted has not received any annual monitoring reports from the agency, as none have been completed in line with the fostering regulation 35.

The registered manager notifies Ofsted of allegations that are made against foster carers. However, the registered manager has not notified Ofsted of a serious incident that resulted in a young person staying in the hospital overnight and included police involvement. This failure and the others that have been identified in this inspection report have not had an observable negative impact on children and young people.

Staff maintain files of foster carers and children and young people in line with good recording practices. Moving to an electronic system for keeping records has been a major change and improvement since the last inspection. The new system is more efficient. For example, foster carers are now able to make their records directly on the electronic files. The records are comprehensive, clear and non-stigmatising.

Anti-discriminatory practices and promotion of equality and diversity are integral to the agency's activities and practices. There is a strong awareness of the impact of the language used and the willingness to explore any topics in an open and respectful manner. The agency is highly effective at helping children who have disabilities to make good progress.

## **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:** SC064929

**Registered provider:** Talawa Fostering Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** 319 Baker Street, Enfield, Middlesex EN1 3LF

**Responsible individual:** Lovett Akutu

**Registered manager:** Jannette Lord

**Telephone number:** 020 7688 0089

**Email address:** janlord@talawafostering.com

## **Inspector**

Seka Graovac, social care inspector



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018