

Nexus Fostering

Nexus Fostering Ltd

4 Jardine House, Harrovian Business Village, Bessborough Road, Harrow HA1 3EX

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Nexus Fostering provides fostering services in London, the Home Counties, the south east and south west of England, and East Anglia. In December 2024, the original registration divided in two, forming a second registration of Midlands & West.

The fostering agency provides a wide range of placements – short-term, long-term, parent and child, sibling placements, children who have disabilities, enhanced therapeutic placements, unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors and 'staying put' for young people.

At the time of the inspection, there were 149 fostering households providing care for 197 children.

Inspection dates: 22 to 26 September 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 5 December 2022

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 fostering agency continues to offer an outstanding service to children in foster care. Children's experiences and progress are excellent. One member of staff said, 'Due to children's previous experiences, progress could appear small, but its massive for these children.'

Children receive highly individualised care from foster carers who are trained in responding to children using therapeutic parenting techniques. This care is enhanced by an effective network of professional staff, such as clinicians, therapists, education specialists, children's workers and supervising social workers. Staff continually review children's needs to ensure that appropriate packages of care are available that can address levels of complexity. The fostering agency monitoring systems show that children do not experience significant levels of unplanned endings. This means that children experience high levels of stability and security in foster care, developing nurturing and meaningful relationships with those that care for them.

One of the fostering agency's strengths is how it involves children and listens to their experiences of being in foster care. For example, some staff and foster carers use symbols to help children with limited speech to share their views.

Children have helped create a new guide about foster care, designed like a comic book to make it fun and easy to understand. Former foster children are invited to talk about their experiences, including gender transitioning and being an unaccompanied asylum seeker, to help the agency learn more about these issues.

Children also get training so they can take part in interviews for new staff. There is a children's ambassador group that gathers children's views and shares a newsletter every few months with advice, updates and local events. One ambassador said being part of the group has helped them feel more confident and comfortable to take on more responsibility.

Children benefit from the excellent education support service provided by the fostering agency. Their progress at school is closely tracked, and quick action is taken to keep them engaged in learning. Sometimes, education staff visit schools to train teachers on how to support children who have experienced trauma or attachment issues. Foster carers and staff can get expert advice and support from this service, not just for foster children, but for their own children too. Staff have also been trained to understand how the education system works, which helps them speak up for children and make sure they get the right support.

Foster carers proudly shared stories of children who have faced tough challenges and still gone on to attend university.

Children enjoy lots of fun, educational and social activities through the fostering agency. The children's ambassador group and staff organise local events for children and foster families. Recently, children took part in a volunteer day at a nature reserve and animal sanctuary.

The participation lead supports children and young people taking part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. This was a new idea at the last inspection, and now four young people have completed the gold and will be invited for the ceremony at one of the royal palaces. Several others are working towards the same goal.

Support workers build direct, purposeful relationships with children as part of specific care packages. Children's achievements are celebrated across the agency, in meetings, newsletters, personal records, and with certificates. These experiences help children build confidence, self-esteem and resilience.

Foster carers, staff and managers all work hard to support children's emotional and physical well-being. The fostering agency has access to therapeutic specialists who train and advise carers and staff on how to respond to children who have experienced trauma. These specialists also help shape children's care plans to make sure that their changing emotional needs are taken into account.

Recently, the agency introduced a neurodiversity lead to support children who may or may not have a formal diagnosis. This has become an important topic in the agency. The lead provides coaching to help staff, carers and young people better understand themselves, what neurodiversity means and the approaches it needs. This is another way the agency helps children feel stable and understood by recognising their experiences and how they see the world.

Children's identity needs are well met by foster carers and staff. When children speak different languages, interpreting services are used to ensure that their views are fully understood. Wherever possible, children are matched with foster carers who share the same cultural, religious and language backgrounds, particularly for unaccompanied minors.

A former child in care, who arrived in the UK as an unaccompanied minor, now works as a mentor. They have received training and support to help newly arrived children settle in, using their own experiences to offer guidance and reassurance. The fostering agency has also created a new role focused on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). This role helps make sure children's individual needs are properly considered and that EDI is part of everyday practice. Work has already started on creating a safe space where children can talk openly about gender identity.

Foster carers and staff help children become more independent and prepare for life after foster care. The participation and education teams offer support with writing CVs and run training sessions on moving into adulthood through a pathway to independence programme.

The agency also provides access to an online platform with helpful information on housing, health and well-being, budgeting, jobs, safety and staying put. Foster carers and staff work closely with local authority social workers and personal assistants to make sure each child's pathway plan is followed and the right support is in place.

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

Foster carers, staff and other professionals in the fostering agency always put children's safety first in everything they do. One of the agency's strengths is how well different teams work together. This means that when concerns come up, they are dealt with quickly and effectively, especially in more complex situations where risks are known and safety plans need to be regularly reviewed.

Children build trusting relationships with their foster carers and staff, so they feel safe and know who to talk to if they are worried. One child shared, 'I feel safe 24/7, and if I didn't, I would speak to my auntie (foster carer) or my social worker.'

Foster carers and supervising social workers receive child protection training to ensure that as part of the safeguarding network, they fully understand their responsibilities in communicating concerns. This is supported by clinical therapeutic staff who provide insight into how the impact of children's trauma may influence how children understand risk.

Foster carers receive training in de-escalation, which is in line with therapeutic parenting. A therapeutic lead commented that a greater focus is being placed on support workers identifying and working with risk and safety when undertaking direct work and communicating with children, especially those with limited speech and disabilities which may influence their physical responses to adults.

An example of this is the arrangement for a number of support staff to receive training in Makaton and de-escalation training as part of risk management. This ensures that staff are suitably skilled to manage risk with particularly vulnerable children. It also offers another communication option for children by removing the barrier of lack of speech in order to communicate harm.

Children do not often go missing from their foster carers homes and are not often involved in incidents within the foster home. When concerns arise regarding risks of contextual harm, such as child sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation, managers use a screening tool to consider information and review risks.

When there are concerns about a child's safety in a foster home, managers keep a close eye on how the investigation is handled and work with the local authority designated officer. This helps make sure children stay safe and foster carers get the right support.

Foster carers who have been through the allegations process are encouraged to share their experiences with newer carers. This helps others understand what to expect and how the fostering agency works to protect children.

Managers and staff take time to think about incidents where a child's safety may have been at risk and to learn what could have been done differently. During this inspection, a reflective session led by the therapeutic lead looked at things like 'disguised compliance' and the importance of staying respectfully curious. These are key factors that can either help or make it harder to spot concerns about a child's safety. This approach helps build a strong safeguarding culture in the agency and keeps staff alert to potential risks to children.

The appointment of new staff and panel members follow agreed safer recruitment procedures. This ensures that only suitable adults are employed to work in the agency and directly with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers have successfully guided the fostering agency through a period of change with minimal impact on carers, staff and children within the registration.

The registered manager is an experienced individual. They are part of a strong leadership and management team that demonstrates a high level of expertise and knowledge in the field of child placement. Leaders and managers value and embrace practice supported by a firm research base, in making a difference to children's lives.

Staff and foster carers describe leaders and managers as being instrumental in creating an environment where learning and the development of ideas and innovation can take place, leading to sustained and improved practice that influences the lives of children positively.

Leaders and managers are inspirational, confident and ambitious for children and young people. These qualities describe the attitude of all the staff and foster carers communicated with during this inspection.

Leaders and managers have created a culture where staff, foster carers and other professionals share a common goal. The fostering agency's values align with staff and foster carers' personal and professional values and the quality of the difference that can be made in children's lives is the primary motivator for working with the agency.

Leaders and managers have effective systems in place to monitor the day-to-day activity of the fostering agency and evaluate the quality of care provided. A recent review by leaders and managers of agency practice and development demonstrates the determination to clearly identify and remedy shortfalls, improve practice and sustain improvement. Examples of this include the development of a neurodiversity

lead, an equity, diversity and inclusion lead, and further expansion and embedding of therapeutic frameworks and practice.

Leaders and managers strive to do better, and this results in improved outcomes for children. Foster carers get excellent training, regular supervision, and chances to meet up and share their experiences.

Just like in the last inspection, foster carers say the support they get from the agency is outstanding. This is illustrated well by the following comment made by a member of staff, 'I have found senior managers responsive and open to ideas and feedback. It really is a caring agency.'

The service's fostering panel operates effectively and efficiently. The fostering panel undertakes clear and appropriate analysis of the work presented at panel meetings. The administration of the fostering panel is effective and panel meeting minutes are appropriately detailed. The service's process for annual review of foster carers is robust and confirms the continued suitability of foster carers.

Leaders and managers are focused on securing stability and permanence for children and have excellent oversight of children's plans. Leaders and managers work effectively with placing authorities and other partners to secure positive outcomes for children. Leaders and managers use their knowledge and expertise in initiating and leading discussions about children, which contributes significantly to robust care planning decisions.

No requirements or recommendations were raised at this inspection.

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: SC066400

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