

Five Rivers Fostering Service London and East

Five Rivers Child Care Limited

Bates Business Centre, Church Road, Harold Wood, Romford, Essex RM3 0JA

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Five Rivers Child Care Limited is a nationwide independent fostering agency delivering a variety of fostering services throughout England. It offers foster care placements for children on a short- and long-term basis, including parent and child placements.

At the time of this inspection, the agency supported 55 fostering households looking after 75 children. The manager was registered with Ofsted in May 2023.

Inspection dates: 22 to 26 September 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The independent fostering agency provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 28 November 2022

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 make progress in their health, education and overall well-being. The fostering agency ensures that children benefit from stable placements. This is achieved through suitable matching processes in which the foster carers' skills and experience are considered. As a result, children's individual needs are met, and they feel secure and well cared for. One child said, 'They have helped me so much in becoming the person that I am today.'

Children's moves into their foster carers' homes are carefully planned, with timely and thoughtful introductions. Children feel settled and comfortable with their foster families and form positive relationships with the foster carers' sons and daughters. Children are well supported to ensure that their individual needs are met. This includes providing them with opportunities to practice their faith and to prepare for independence. Those who wish to remain with their foster carers beyond the age of 18 are supported to do so.

The fostering service actively seeks the wishes, feelings and views of children, which contributes to its ongoing development. At a local level, children participate in informal, activity-based days where they identify key topics. These ideas help shape future events and initiatives for children, foster carers and staff. Local participation also informs national initiatives, ensuring that children's voices influence the wider fostering service.

A range of technologies supports children's participation with the fostering agency, which includes the completion of surveys, using service QR codes, in-person activities and overnight trips. Children attend events organised by the national youth council, which has influence on how the fostering agency is run. For example, children play a key role in shaping training for foster carers.

Children are aware of how to make a complaint. The agency's complaints policy is clear, accessible and child-friendly, and include formats for children who use alternative communication methods. When complaints are made, they are taken seriously and children receive clear feedback on the outcome.

The agency's family support services offer additional assistance to children and their foster carers, helping to promote consistent school attendance and academic achievements. The agency holds high aspirations for children and actively encourages access to further and higher education opportunities.

Children live healthy lifestyles. Foster carers are proactive in advocating for children to have timely access to health services and supporting children to attend health care appointments. This includes being able to access mental health services when required.

Children enjoy trips to local attractions, days away and overnight residential experiences. Children are routinely included in family events, religious celebrations and holidays.

The agency demonstrates a strong understanding of effective strategies to attract potential foster carers, alongside systems designed to retain and support existing foster carers. Foster carers comment that they feel valued and receive excellent support from all aspects of their work with the agency.

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

Children feel safe in their foster carers' homes. Staff and foster carers prioritise the safety and well-being of the children. Risk assessments are tailored to each child, identifying specific factors that may impact their safety. These assessments provide foster carers with clear, practical guidance on managing potential risks and are regularly updated to reflect the child's current circumstances.

If a child goes missing from their foster carers' home, a pre-agreed plan is followed to minimise the risk. Foster carers implement this plan in collaboration with the child's network, working together to ensure the child's safety and to reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

The agency demonstrates a strong commitment to placement stability. Managers and senior leaders closely monitor placements at risk of disruption and, in working closely with supervising social workers and foster carers, implement proactive strategies to support the child and maintain the placement. These efforts promote long-term stability and positive outcomes for children.

Investigations into concerns or allegations involving foster carers are carried out in accordance with statutory requirements. The agency treats such matters with seriousness and ensures that safeguarding protocols are followed. However, in one instance, a delay in the agency's response to a safeguarding issue was identified.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The agency is managed effectively by a suitably qualified, experienced and passionate registered manager, who is well established in their role. The registered manager demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting foster carers and staff, maintaining a clear focus on securing positive outcomes for children.

The care provided aligns with the agency's statement of purpose. The children's guide is available in creative formats, and there is a guide specifically for parents who are living in a parent and child placement.

The agency is appropriately staffed and resourced to meet the needs of children and foster carers. The entire staff team and foster carers comment on feeling very well supported by the leadership and management team.

Case records are up to date and written in a child-friendly manner. Notifications to relevant authorities are made promptly and in accordance with guidance. Foster carers receive regular, effective supervision sessions that focus on children's experiences, needs, plans and feedback, with all sessions clearly recorded. Foster carers also undergo formal annual reviews, with early reviews conducted when necessary.

The agency has strategies in place to recruit a diverse range of foster carers able to meet the needs of children in their care. Partnership working with external professionals are effective and this contributes to children being safe, making progress and having positive experiences.

Staff and panel members are suitably vetted, and arrangements are in place for their supervision and appraisals.

The quality of foster carer assessments is variable. One assessment reviewed did not include sufficient checks, resulting in delays, while another assessment did not confirm that the foster carer had completed appropriate training.

Some foster carers do not consistently complete the required training within a reasonable time frame. This can limit their ability to maintain their up-to-date knowledge and skills to help them meet the needs of the children in their care.

Leaders and managers regularly monitor the quality of care provided. However, while Regulation 35 reports contribute to this monitoring, these reports are very general, with limited analysis of report findings and action planning which would help to enhance service improvements.

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, The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the national minimum standards. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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. (Regulation 35)	28 November 2025
The fostering service provider must provide foster parents with such training, advice, information and support, including support outside office hours, as appears necessary in the interests of children placed with them. (Regulation 17(1)) In particular, foster carers should complete training that is in line with children's needs. Training should be completed within a reasonable timescale to ensure that foster carers have the most up-to-date knowledge and skills to respond to the child's needs.	28 November 2025
The fostering service provider must obtain such information as the fostering panel considers necessary and send that information to the panel and provide such other assistance as the panel may request, as far as is reasonably practicable. (Regulation 25(3)) In particular, the assessment of foster carers should be consistent, including checks completed before going to panel and evidence of completed training.	28 November 2025

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: SC036616

Registered provider: Five Rivers Child Care Limited

Registered provider address: Five Rivers Childcare, 47 Bedwin Street, Salisbury
SP1 3UT

Responsible individual: Jacob Strydom

Registered manager: Jeannette Elat Essoubat

Telephone number: 01708 914 244

Email address: Jeannette.ElatEssoubat@five-rivers.org

Inspectors

Richard Wyper, Social Care Inspector

Sandra Jacobs-Walls, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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