

TACT Fostering South West

The Adolescent And Children's Trust

Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, BRISTOL BS16 2QQ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

The Adolescent and Children's Trust (TACT) is a charity that provides registered fostering services. The service offers short-term, long-term, respite and emergency care.

At the time of this inspection, the agency was supervising 45 approved foster carers, providing care for 54 children. In addition, seven young people who were aged 18 and over were living with their foster carers in 'staying put' arrangements.

The registered manager has been in post since 2003.

Inspection dates: 7 to 11 April 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The independent fostering agency provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 June 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are welcomed into their foster homes with suitable planning. This helps to ensure that children's language, cultural and religious needs are met well, including those children who are new to the UK. The agency provides gifts for children to help them to feel welcomed. In addition, the children's guide is translated into different languages for children who require this.

Most children live in stable homes and make considerable progress from their starting points. For instance, some children who have not attended school for lengthy periods are now making great academic progress. Another child has surpassed their developmental milestones due to the love and care afforded to them by their foster carers. In addition, some children remain with their foster carers beyond their 18th birthday or keep in touch with them in adulthood.

However, too many children experience disruption when foster carers are challenged by the child's needs and their care arrangements end abruptly. In response, foster carer training to support carers to meet children's needs throughout their teenage years has been introduced. However, data about unplanned endings is not analysed to identify wider patterns and trends to inform any additional actions that may be needed to reduce children leaving their care arrangements in this way.

Children attend school and most move on to college or attend training courses. Their learning experiences and career plans are enhanced by the input of the agency's education team. For instance, arrangements were made for one child to complete work experience in a healthcare setting to support their career aspirations and other children have been supported to learn English as an additional language.

Foster carers support children to participate in social, leisure, and faith-based activities, in line with their wishes. In addition, children have enjoyed attending activities and events facilitated by the agency, including a residential music camp and an awards ceremony that celebrated their achievements. These activities help children to build positive memories.

Children are helped to understand their health needs, including how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. One child said that they attend the gym with their fostering family members and another child said that their foster carers are helping them to achieve a healthy diet. The agency ensures that foster carers have access to training and support to meet children's specific health needs. However, not all foster carers have received training relating to the administration of medication.

The agency has increased its support that is offered to children. Staff team members have been recruited successfully to invest time with children to build positive relationships and to support them to talk about their experiences.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

For some children, protective care approaches do not increase children's safety or promote their welfare. For instance, approaches to increase a child's safety in the community and to help them to achieve healthy routines in the home are not effective. For another child, concerns raised with the agency about the child's physical health and hygiene have not been acted on.

Children's risk management plans, including individual safer care plans, do not comprehensively address all known vulnerabilities. In addition, social workers visit records often lack detail to understand how foster carers are supported and appropriately challenged to ensure that risks are reduced effectively.

There are not effective systems in place that easily track actions taken in response to concerns, including when allegations are made. This reduces the monitoring and review of actions needed to safeguard children and to ensure that responses are effective. At times, there has been delay in the response to concerns raised. In addition, investigations into allegations of harm and discussions about poor standards of care are not clearly defined.

Foster carers have access to a range of training relevant to children's needs, including training to support foster carers to develop effective communication and de-escalation techniques. However, not all fostering household members have received training relating to safer caring.

The agency is responsive to the needs of the whole fostering household. Therapeutic support is provided when this is identified as a need. This helps foster carers to better understand the impact of children's early life experiences and supports positive relationships to develop within the fostering household. This has directly improved some children's care experiences.

Recruitment procedures are in place that reduce the risk of unsuitable persons working for the agency. This includes necessary checks completed. In one example, the rationale for decision-making to appoint a staff team member where there were concerns about their suitability was not recorded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Management arrangements have been turbulent. Due to unforeseen circumstances, there has been inconsistent management and leadership of the agency. This has contributed to reduced oversight of the agency's functions.

Recently, management arrangements have improved and there is increased oversight from senior managers. Action plans have been implemented to address some of the shortfalls that they, and inspectors, have identified. This has led to

areas of improved practice, including the frequency of unannounced visits. Staff feedback indicates that staff morale has improved.

Systems to monitor the agency's activities, including the adequacy of records, are not effective. Records often lack detail to understand how foster carers are supported to develop their competencies and skills to meet children's needs. Some records are missing important information about children's care and the measures taken to safeguard them.

Furthermore, the registered manager's footprint across records is weak. This does not ensure that gaps in the quality of care are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity. Reviews of the quality of care and the actions taken to continually improve children's care and experiences have not been submitted to Ofsted.

During this inspection, feedback about the agency was mostly positive. Foster carers often stay with the agency for many years. They are positive about the support that they receive, including from the agency's out of hours service. One foster carer said that the small nature of the agency provides a 'family feel'. Some carers described the management of allegations and complaints as confusing and lacks transparency.

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

Statutory requirement

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.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The registered person in respect of an independent fostering agency must ensure that—</p> <p>the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster parents is safeguarded and promoted at all times. (Regulation 11 (a))</p> <p>In particular, individual safer care plans must be comprehensive to address the vulnerabilities identified.</p> <p>In addition, safeguarding measures must be well documented, monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure that the child's safety and welfare needs, in and out of the home, are responded to effectively.</p>	11 July 2025
<p>The registered person must maintain a system for—</p> <p>monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals, and</p> <p>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. (Regulation 35(a)(b)(c)(d))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that records kept by the service to ensure compliance with the agency's policies are monitored regularly to identify any concerns, including patterns and trends to reduce unplanned endings for children.</p>	11 July 2025

<p>In addition, the registered person must ensure that there is regular management oversight of social workers visit records and foster carer logs to identify and address any gaps in the quality of care delivered to children.</p> <p>In addition, reviews of the quality of care must be submitted to Ofsted.</p>	
<p>The fostering service provider must prepare and implement a written policy which—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard children placed with foster parents from abuse or neglect, and</p> <p>sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>The procedure under paragraph (1)(b) must, subject to paragraph (4), provide in particular for—</p> <p>the prompt referral to the area authority of any allegation of abuse or neglect affecting any child placed by the fostering service provider</p> <p>written records to be kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and of the action taken in response</p> <p>consideration to be given to the measures which may be necessary to protect children placed with foster parents following an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 12 (1)(a)(b) 3(b)(d)(e))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that there are effective recording and monitoring processes in place to ensure that actions are implemented swiftly in response to any allegation of harm.</p> <p>In addition, the registered person must ensure that there is a clear distinction between the response to any allegation of harm and discussions about poor standards of care.</p>	<p>11 July 2025</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the rationale for decision-making, to appoint staff team members where there are concerns about their suitability, is recorded. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 19.5, page 39)

- The registered person should ensure that foster carer training records are reviewed to ensure that any gaps, including safer caring training provided for all members of the fostering household, are identified at the earliest opportunity and addressed promptly. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 20.9, page 41)

Independent fostering agency details

Unique reference number: SC050500

Registered provider: The Adolescent And Children's Trust

Registered provider address: 98 Station Road, Sidcup DA15 7BY

Responsible individual: Andrew Elvin

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Inspectors

Louise Bacon, Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Katie Ratcliffe, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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