

Nurture Fostering Ltd

The Old Fire Station, 340 Lewisham High Street, London, Greater London SE13 6LE

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

This independent fostering agency has been registered with Ofsted since December 2017. The fostering agency aims to provide a range of placements for children on a planned or emergency basis for either a short- or a long-term duration, and for respite care. The agency also offers parent and child placements.

The agency has 11 fostering households, and 8 children were in placement.

Inspection date: 11 April 2019

Date of previous inspection: 25 February 2019

This monitoring visit

This monitoring visit was undertaken to address specific concerns received by Ofsted.

The concerns related to:

- The poor supervision of social workers.
- Inappropriate behaviour support strategies used by foster carers.
- The quality of the agency's support of foster carers.
- Leaders and managers' lack of understanding of their safeguarding role.

The visit focused on the arrangements for the supervision of the agency's supervising social workers and foster carers. In addition, the inspector reviewed the quality of behaviour support strategies for individual children and assessed managers' understanding of their role in safeguarding children. The responsible individual was interviewed during the visit, the registered manager was on annual leave. Foster carers were also spoken to during the visit.

At the time of the monitoring visit, the registered manager was on leave and other members of staff were unable to provide the inspector with all the information that

they requested. This raised concerns regarding who had responsibility for the agency in the absence of the registered manager. The responsible individual said that any member of staff had access to the registered manager or her, 24 hours a day.

The responsible individual refuted the concerns shared with Ofsted. They maintained that safeguarding is a priority of the service and that the agency held this notion as central to its functioning and operation. However, problems with the agency's internet connection hampered the ability of agency staff to access information and documents, said to be located on its computerised system, and subsequently hampered the inspector's investigation of the concerns shared with Ofsted.

A review of supervision documents evidenced that staff received supervision, on average, once every three months. The supervision log of a newly appointed supervising social worker showed that they had received supervision only once, in the first month of being employed. This was despite the supervising social worker stating that they were feeling overwhelmed in their role. The responsible individual said that the documentation was not a true reflection of the regularity that supervising social workers receive supervision.

Some foster carers said that they felt that the agency did not support them emotionally and often failed to recognise the impact of complex placements on their well-being. Other foster carers said that information on the duration and purpose of a placement was not clearly set out prior to a child arriving at the foster carer's home.

The responsible individual acknowledged that when a supervising social worker raised concerns on inappropriate behaviour support strategies used by a foster carer, the action taken by the agency was to transfer the foster carer to a different supervising social worker rather than to ensure that the carer received training on positive behaviour support strategies.

The agency is in its infancy, and the monitoring of staff and support for foster carers to safeguard children and maintain the stability of placements are vital. Leaders and managers' oversight is critical if the service is to provide good-quality care to children. Improvements are required to the overall running of the agency and the quality of management oversight.

This monitoring visit concluded that some of the issues raised in the concerns received by Ofsted are justified. However, other concerns could not be fully investigated or appear unjustified.

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.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The fostering service provider must–</p> <p>keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose and children’s guide;</p> <p>notify the Chief Inspector of any such revision within 28 days; and</p> <p>if the children’s guide is revised, supply a copy to each foster parent approved by the fostering service provider, and each child placed by them (subject to the child’s age and understanding).</p> <p>(Regulation 4(a)(b)(c))</p>	20/05/2019
<p>The fostering service provider must promote the educational achievement of children placed with foster parents.</p> <p>In particular, the fostering service provider must–</p> <p>implement a procedure for monitoring the educational achievement, progress and school attendance of children placed with foster parents.</p> <p>(Regulation 16(1), (2)(a))</p>	20/05/2019
<p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 17(1))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all foster carers receive training on positive behaviour support strategies.</p>	20/05/2019

<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>improve 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).</p> <p>(Regulation 35(1)(a)(b), (2), (3))</p>	<p>20/05/2019</p>
--	-------------------

Recommendations

- The fostering service must ensure that children can take up issues in the most appropriate way with support, without fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. (National Minimum Standards 1.6)
In particular, ensure that the complaints system is easily accessible to children and young people.
- Each foster carer is aware of all necessary information available to the fostering service about a child's circumstances, including any significant recent event, to help the foster carer understand and predict the child's needs and behaviour and support within their household. The fostering service follows up with the responsible authority where all such necessary information has not been provided by the authority. (National Minimum Standards 3.9)
In particular, achieving good practice and consistency in relation to behaviour support plans which provide strategies to promote positive behaviour.
- Children's safety and welfare is promoted in all fostering placements. (National Minimum Standards 4.1)
In particular, achieving consistency of good practice in relation to written risk management (individual children's safe care) plans.
- Ensure that foster carers are trained in appropriate safer care skills. (National Minimum Standards 4.6)
In particular, ensure that safer care plans are devised which meet the specific

needs of each individual child, including care for children who have been abused.

- Ensure that telephone enquiries are made to each referee to verify written references. (National Minimum Standards 19.1)
- Staff, volunteers and panel members and fostering households understand the nature of records maintained and follow the service's policy for the keeping and retention of 'files. Managing confidential information and access to files (including files removed from the premises). There is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed. (National Minimum Standards 26.2)

In particular, ensure that the agency's systems for record keeping is always accessible and kept up to date.

- The registered person has a system in place to notify, within 24 hours, persons and appropriate authorities of the occurrence of significant events in accordance with regulation 36. The system includes what to do when a notifiable event arises at the weekend. (National Minimum Standards 29.1)

In particular, this relates to implementing an effective system for sending appropriate and good-quality notifications to Ofsted consistently.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the independent fostering agency since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Independent fostering agency details

Unique reference number: 1265010

Registered provider: Nurture Fostering Ltd

Registered provider address: Meriden Hall, Main Road, Meriden, Coventry, Warwickshire CV7 7PT

Responsible individual: Jillian Valenti

Inspector

Juanita Mayers, 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.

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 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.

This publication is available at 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019