

# Red Kite Fostering

Red Kite Fostering Limited  
The Old Surgery, The Meads, Kington, Herefordshire HR5 3DQ  
Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

Red Kite Fostering is a private limited company based in Herefordshire. It also has access to premises in Telford that provide a more accessible base for training for carers who live in the West Midlands. The agency provides a range of fostering placements, including long-term, short-term, emergency and respite placements.

At the time of the visit, the agency was providing placements for 21 children. It had 24 fostering households, of which three provided respite care only. The agency has not recruited any fostering households since the last inspection.

**Inspection dates:** 14 to 16 May 2019

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

**Date of last inspection:** 18 February 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate**

Management oversight and the quality of the agency's core functions have significantly deteriorated since the last inspection. This leaves the overall experience and progress of children significantly compromised. For example, senior managers are unable to demonstrate that effective systems are in place to ensure that the quality of care provided by the agency is having a positive impact on children's progress and experience.

Foster carers are not provided with enough support and oversight of their practice to ensure that children are safeguarded. Senior managers have failed to ensure that all foster carers receive supervision in line with the agency's policy. For example, some foster carers have not received a visit for over three months. This leaves supervising social workers without current knowledge about the situation in the foster carer's home. Senior managers have failed to document the reasons when decisions are made to vary the frequency of foster carers' supervisions. There is no evidence that managers consult with placing authorities or that these decisions are regularly reviewed. This means that the agency is not responsive to changes in need or risk.

The chaotic state of the agency's recording systems means that senior managers are unable to demonstrate that foster carers have been provided with the necessary training to enable them to meet the complex needs of the children who are placed with them. For example, seven fostering households approved in the past year have not received preparation training. Only six households have received training regarding safe management of medications. Seven households are without any current safeguarding training.

Matching of new placements is weak. Matching processes fail to consider the needs of the individual child or to identify when foster carers may need extra training or support to enable them to care for the children being placed in their care. For example, the agency has placed children who have a history of being at risk of child sexual exploitation, online grooming and self-harm with foster carers who have not received training in these areas. This poor consideration of the needs of children leaves carers ill-equipped to provide the care that children need.

Senior managers have failed to address the recommendations raised at the last inspection regarding the fostering panel. Agency social workers continue to be highly represented in the central panel list, panel members have not received annual training in the past three years and shortfalls in the recording of panel appraisals remain. In addition, the panel does not have access to legal advice. These shortfalls have the potential to have a detrimental impact on the quality and independence of the panel.

Despite the significant shortfalls in the agency's operation, some children do have good experiences. This is because some foster carers act as good parents and have

used their skills well to help children in their care to have positive experiences.

Children are actively encouraged to share their views about their fostering experience and of the agency. This enables children to have the opportunity to express their views.

Recent changes to amalgamate the children's guide with the foster carers' individual family welcome book has resulted in omissions. In particular, the children's guide now lacks information about the agency statement of purpose and the agency complaints process. This leaves children without access to key information about the agency.

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

Poor communication between senior managers has had a negative impact on safeguarding practice. For example, this poor communication has meant that the sharing of information between the fostering agency and a placing authority during an ongoing child protection investigation has been poor. This failure to share information has placed children at risk due to the lack of management oversight of the safeguarding process.

Managers have failed to take appropriate action following a significant complaint regarding the standards of care provided by foster carers. Despite knowing this information, the registered manager authorised the placement of a child in the fostering household before an investigation had been carried out. The supervising social worker's risk assessment was inadequate, and managers have failed to notify the child's placing authority of the concerns. This lack of clear and detailed oversight places children at potential risk of harm.

Senior managers have not maintained accurate and up-to-date information regarding the progress of either of these matters. This lack of clear record keeping significantly impacts on the agency's ability to have a comprehensive overview of such important events.

Senior managers have failed to identify that an allegation made by a child against their foster carer had been investigated by the police. Staff have failed to ensure that this is appropriately reported, and that Ofsted has been notified. This significant failure to follow safeguarding procedures once again places children at risk of harm.

Managers have failed to initiate post-allegation review processes for this fostering household. The absence of any review of this incident has prevented staff and foster carers from reviewing and reflecting on their practice.

Senior managers do not give enough attention to the vetting of staff who work on behalf of the agency. For example, managers have failed to seek full employment histories, to take sufficient references or secure the verification of the reasons why individuals who have previously worked with children or vulnerable adults left their posts. This leaves children vulnerable to being cared for by people who may not be suitable to work with them.

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

Conflict between the registered manager and the responsible individual is having a severe impact on the agency's everyday operations. The registered manager is not currently in day-to-day charge of the agency. In his absence, the responsible individual is overseeing the service.

The responsible individual does not have the required level of understanding of the fostering services regulations that would be expected of an individual in her role. This has prevented her from identifying shortfalls in the agency and taking effective action to address these shortfalls.

The responsible individual is unable to demonstrate that the registered manager has received regular training and/or professional development to ensure that he has the skills required for the role. There are currently no records held at the agency office relating to the supervision of the registered manager. Records of the supervision were provided to Ofsted by an independent social worker who has undertaken these meetings with the registered manager. The records do not meet the regulatory requirements relating to the level of supervision required. In addition, senior managers have been unable to provide inspectors with organisational evidence that the registered manager has received regular professional supervision.

The agency has not had an agency decision maker since the last full inspection in February 2019. The absence of a suitably qualified person in this role prevents the agency from carrying out the full range of its core responsibilities, in particular the approval and review of foster carers. Because of this significant shortfall, seven fostering households have not had their annual review carried out within 12 months of their approval, or within 12 months of their last review. The lack of urgency to address this omission demonstrates the lack of management oversight of the service.

Senior managers have failed to ensure that staff receive regular supervision. Some staff have not received formal supervision for over four months. No member of staff has received an appraisal of their performance carried out within the 12 months preceding the inspection. This leaves staff without essential opportunities to reflect on and to develop their practice.

Staff have not had the opportunity to receive the training that would reasonably be expected for their role. For example, no member of staff has received training regarding managing allegations or in relation to supporting and supervising foster carers. Not all staff have received training in carrying out fostering assessments. This leaves staff without the essential skills and expertise necessary for their specialist role.

Senior managers have failed to clearly document complaints made to the agency. This means it is not clear how the agency responds to the complaints that it receives, or how it learns from these to help to support service improvement.

Senior managers have not addressed previous shortfalls identified in the registered manager's review of the quality of the service. The lack of wider consultation in this process affects the ability of managers to use this information to inform service development.

The responsible individual has acted to address shortfalls in the finance systems, and foster carers told inspectors that this area has improved since the last inspection. However, managers introduced a finance system that linked to foster carers' training portfolios. This was introduced without consultation, is unequal and results in the agency permanently withholding elements of a foster carer's allowances.

## 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
The fostering service provider must produce a written guide to the fostering service ("the children's guide") which includes a summary of the statement of purpose and a summary of the procedure (the representations and complaints procedure) established (i) in the case of an independent fostering agency, under regulation 18(1). (Regulation 3(3)(a)(b))	22/07/2019
A person must not carry on a fostering agency unless in the case of an organisation carrying on a fostering agency, where the organisation has given notice to the Chief Inspector of the name, address and position in the organisation of an individual ("the responsible individual") who is a director, manager, secretary or other officer of the organisation and is responsible for supervising the management of the fostering agency, the responsible individual, satisfies the requirements of paragraph (2) as to fitness. The requirements are that the person is of integrity and good character. (Regulation 5(1)(d)(2)(a))	22/07/2019
A person must not manage a fostering agency unless they are fit to do so. A person is not fit to manage a fostering agency unless that person is of integrity and good character. (Regulation 7(1)(2)(a))	22/07/2019
The registered provider and the registered manager must, having regard to the size of the fostering agency, its statement of purpose, and the numbers and needs of the children placed by the fostering agency, and the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children placed by the fostering agency, carry on or manage the fostering agency (as the case may be) with sufficient care, competence and skill. The registered provider must ensure that where the registered provider is an organisation, the responsible individual, from time to time, such training as is appropriate to ensure that they have the experience and skills necessary for carrying on the fostering agency. The registered manager must undertake from time to time	23/06/2019

<p>such training as is appropriate to ensure that they have the experience and skills necessary for managing the fostering agency. (Regulation 8(1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(3))*</p>	
<p>The fostering service provider must prepare and implement a written policy which is intended to safeguard children placed with foster parents from abuse or neglect, and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure under paragraph (1)(b) must, subject to paragraph (4), provide in particular for liaison and co-operation with any local authority which is, or may be, making child protection enquiries in relation to any child placed by the fostering service provider, written records to be kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and of the action taken in response and 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.</p> <p>In this regulation "child protection enquiries" means any enquiries carried out by a local authority in the exercise of any of its functions conferred by or under the 1989 Act relating to the protection of children. (Regulation 12 (1)(a)(b)(3)(a)(d)(e)(5))*</p>	<p>23/06/19</p>
<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. (Regulation 17 (1))*</p> <p>In particular, ensure that anyone who is being assessed to become a foster carers receives preparation training that prepares them to become foster carers. This is to include practical techniques to manage the issues that they are likely to encounter. This preparation training should identify the applicants competencies and areas for further development.</p> <p>In particular, ensure that foster carers have completed the organisations mandatory training, that their skills gaps are known and that foster carers undertake training that is specific to the needs of the children in their care.</p> <p>In particular, ensure that foster carers received supervision in line with the agency policy and where there is a decision to reduce this, that this is documented and reviewed with all parties.</p> <p>In particular, ensure that matching of children with foster carers is individual and clearly documents the child's needs, the carers ability to meet these and, where there are gaps, how the agency will support the carers to meet these.</p>	<p>23/06/19</p>

<p>The registered person must ensure that a written record is made of any complaint or representation, the action taken in response to it, and the outcome of the investigation. (Regulation 18(4))</p>	<p>22/07/2019</p>
<p>The fostering service provider must ensure that there is a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working for the purposes of the fostering service, having regard to the size of the fostering service, its statement of purpose, and the numbers and needs of the children placed by it, and the need to safeguard and promote the health and welfare of children placed with foster parents. (Regulation 19(1)(a)(b))*</p>	<p>23/06/2019</p>
<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, or allow a person to whom paragraph (2) applies, to work for the purposes of the fostering service unless that person is fit to do so. 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)(a)(b)(3))</p>	<p>22/07/2019</p>
<p>The fostering service provider must ensure that all persons employed by them receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal, and are enabled from time to time to obtain further qualifications appropriate to the work they perform. (Regulation 21(4)(a)(b))</p>	<p>22/07/2019</p>
<p>fostering service provider must review the approval of each foster parent in accordance with this regulation. A review must take place not more than a year after approval, and thereafter whenever the fostering service provider consider it necessary, but at intervals of not more than a year. (Regulation 28(1))</p>	<p>22/07/2019</p>
<p>(Regulation 30(1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(e)(f)) A fostering service provider must maintain a case record for each foster parent approved by them which must include copies of the documents specified in paragraph (2) and the information specified in paragraph (3). The documents referred to in paragraph (1) are the report prepared under regulation 26(3)(b) and any other reports submitted to the fostering panel, any recommendations made by the fostering panel, the notice of approval given under regulation 27(5)(a), any report of a review of approval prepared under regulation 28(4), and any notice given under regulation 28(12).</p>	<p>23/06/2019</p>
<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. The registered person must provide the Chief Inspector with a written report in respect of any review</p>	<p>22/07/2019</p>



<p>conducted for the purposes of paragraph (1) and, on request, to any local authority. 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>	
<p>If any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 7 takes place in relation to a fostering agency, the registered person must without delay notify the persons or bodies indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. (Regulation 36(1))</p>	22/07/2019
<p>Where there is more than one registered person in respect of a fostering agency, anything which is required under these Regulations to be done by the registered person, need only be done by one of the registered persons. (Regulation 41)</p>	23/06/19

\* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Recommendations

- Fostering panels have access to medical expertise and legal advice, as required. (Fostering services: National minimum standards, 14.6)
- Fostering panels are intended as multi-disciplinary bodies with a considerable element of independence from the fostering service. (The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations volume 4: Fostering services, page 38, paragraph 5.2) This relates to potential conflicts of interest for the social worker panel member.
- Each person on the central list is given the opportunity of attending an annual joint training day with the fostering service's fostering staff. (Fostering services: National minimum standards, 23.10)
- Each panel member's performance, including that of the chair, should be reviewed annually against agreed performance objectives. The service's decision-maker should review the performance of the panel chair, and for this purpose may attend a proportion of panel meetings but only as an observer. Views about the chair's performance should be sought from other panel members and from those who attend panel meetings, such as prospective foster carers and social workers who present reports to the panel. For all other panel members, the panel chair should conduct the performance review. (The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations volume 4: Fostering services, page 41, paragraph 5.15)
- Allowances and any fees paid are reviewed annually and the fostering service consults with foster carers in advance of any change to the allowance and fee. (Fostering services: National minimum standards, 28.3)

## **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:** SC417504

**Registered provider:** Red Kite Fostering Limited

**Registered provider address:** Rhos House, Old Radnor, Presteigne, Powys LD8 2RP

**Responsible individual:** Carole Barnes

**Registered manager:** Anthony Collier

**Telephone number:** 01544 231 657

**Email address:** [carolebarnes@red-kite-fostering.co.uk](mailto:carolebarnes@red-kite-fostering.co.uk)

## **Inspector(s)**

Tracey Coglan Greig, social care inspector  
Dawn Bennett, social care inspector



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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)  
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