

Foundation Fostering Limited

Acorn Business Centre, Office 7, Roberts End, Hanley Swan, Worcester WR8 0DN
Monitoring visit
Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

The responsible individual has operated the agency since 2013, when he was the sole provider. This agency is now owned by a small private company. It was re-registered in December 2017.

There are currently 21 fostering households caring for 30 children. The agency offers short- and long-term, emergency and planned placements.

The manager resigned and cancelled their registration on 3 January 2020. A new manager started work in February 2020. They propose to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 3 February 2020

Date of previous inspection: 9 December 2019

This monitoring visit

This independent fostering agency was judged inadequate at the last full inspection, conducted between 9 and 13 December 2019.

The purpose of this monitoring inspection was to review the action taken by managers to meet the two compliance notices raised at the full inspection.

The responsible individual has worked with external consultants to improve. They have not taken sufficient action to meet all the required steps in both compliance notices.

The responsible individual has carried out a review of all serious incidents, complaints and safeguarding concerns within the last 12 months. This identified gaps in managerial decision-making and delays around risk management, training, skills and knowledge of staff and foster carers.

However, the review was ineffective because the responsible individual did not ascribe responsibilities or timescales for action. He did not prioritise individual children in this review.

The responsible individual has not yet obtained a conclusion about a local authority investigation into a historical safeguarding concern to inform the risk management of children still living with the agency's foster carers.

He has not taken the remedial action identified to assess and document risk immediately or give advice to foster carers about how to meet children's needs. Plans are out of date and still too vague about how to keep children and foster families safe.

Consequently, systems to ensure the conclusion of all safeguarding and standard of care issues are still not effective. This lack of skill continues to hinder monitoring, delay action and jeopardise children's safety.

There are not currently enough qualified fostering social workers to supervise the number of children living in fostering households. The responsible individual has not yet finalised plans to fill a social worker vacancy. The responsible individual and new manager are holding some responsibility for foster carer supervision.

This blurring of roles and short-staffing has the potential to confuse decision-making accountability and further delay improvement. There is the potential for children to be overlooked again.

The agency has prepared a new safeguarding policy and procedure and submitted it for consideration to the local safeguarding children partnership and the designated officer in the local authority for comment.

The responsible individual, social work and office staff have received training from the safeguarding children partnership about safeguarding responsibilities. Further training and workshops are planned to ensure that the policy and procedure, once approved, is known to all staff and foster carers.

Other training is also planned to improve the level of knowledge and skill in the core functions of the fostering agency, such as assessment, panel functions and managing staff performance.

The agency has worked closely with a placing authority to conclude one historical issue of concern. The agency has now made referrals about foster carers to the police and to the Disclosure and Barring Service where necessary. That authority reports no outstanding concerns.

The responsible individual has begun to make improvements within the agency, but these are not sufficiently well established and do not prioritise children. It remains for the planned developments to be effective in practice to ensure that children's welfare is protected.

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 provide a copy of the statement of purpose to the chief inspector, place a copy on their website, produce a written guide to the fostering service ('the children's guide') and ensure that the fostering service is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 3(1)(2)(3)(5))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that information about services, facilities and types of placement is accurate, and that the children's guide tells children what the agency will do in response to any informal or formal complaint.</p>	01/04/2020
<p>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.</p> <p>The registered provider must ensure that where the registered provider is an organisation, the responsible individual undertakes from time to time such training as is appropriate to ensure they have the experience and skills necessary for carrying on the fostering agency. (Regulation 8(1)(a)(b)(2)(b))*</p>	05/04/2020
<p>The registered person in respect of an independent fostering agency must ensure that the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster parents is safeguarded and promoted at all times. (Regulation 11(a))</p> <p>This relates to delivery of actions in each child's care or placement plan and management of risk in foster homes.</p>	01/04/2020
<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</p>	05/04/2020

<p>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 written records to be kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and of the action taken in response. (Regulation 12(1)(a)(b)(3)(d))*</p>	
<p>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>	01/04/2020
<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(a)(b))</p>	01/04/2020
<p>The fostering service provider must ensure that all persons employed by them receive appropriate training and supervision. (Regulation 21(4)(a))</p> <p>This relates to good-quality staff supervision, training in safeguarding and assessment for the manager and social work staff and appropriate training for the panel in panel functions.</p>	01/04/2020
<p>The fostering service provider must maintain and keep up to date the records specified in Schedule 2. (Regulation 22(1))</p> <p>In this case, this refers to a record of each child's placements with foster parents and a record of each person working for the fostering service provider.</p>	01/04/2020
<p>Ensure that panel oversees the conduct of assessments carried out by the fostering service provider. (Regulation 25(4)(b))</p> <p>This is with regard to the panel ensuring the good quality of foster parent assessments and reviews.</p>	01/04/2020
<p>Ensure there is a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals, and for improving the quality of foster care provided by the fostering agency. (Regulation 35(1)(a)(b))</p> <p>This is with regard to monitoring all the required matters in sufficient detail to meet the needs of the agency and Ofsted.</p>	01/04/2020

<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)(2))</p> <p>Specifically, notify Ofsted of any serious complaint about foster parent and child protection enquiries.</p>	01/04/2020
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* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- Ensure that appointees to the role of registered manager who do not have the management qualification enrol on a management training course within six months, and obtain a relevant management qualification within three years, of their appointment. (NMS 17.3)
- Ensure that the decision-making process and outcome of a bedroom sharing assessment are recorded in writing. (NMS 10.6)

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: 1264335

Registered provider: Foundation Fostering Limited

Registered provider address: Acorn Business Centre, Office 7, Roberts End, Hanley Swan, Worcester WR8 0DN

Responsible individual: Nicholas Eadon

Inspector

Christy Wannop, social care inspector

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