

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. A small private company now owns this agency. It was re-registered in December 2017.

There are currently 21 fostering households caring for 26 children. The agency offers short- and long-term, emergency and planned placements.

A new manager started work in February 2020. They propose to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 6 to 8 April 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. Two compliance notices were raised at the full inspection.

A compliance monitoring visit on 3 February 2020 found that the responsible individual had not taken sufficient action to meet all the required steps in both compliance notices. The two notices were reissued.

This monitoring inspection took place off-site. The inspector held a detailed discussion with the responsible individual and manager by telephone. They were asked to provide documentary evidence of their actions to meet the compliance notices. The inspector reviewed their evidence of children's records, policy and procedure and agency records. Placing authorities were asked for their views.

The inspector found that the responsible individual has now taken sufficient action to meet the two compliance notices.

All safeguarding and standard of care issues are now concluded. The agency has improved systems to review safeguarding concerns and is able to better plan to reduce risk. Risk management plans and safe care plans are now up to date and are more likely to reduce risk and help children.

The responsible individual and newly appointed manager have carried out a further review of all previous serious incidents, complaints and safeguarding concerns. They have now implemented all remedial actions necessary to safeguard children's welfare. These actions have prioritised children who are still in placement with the agency.

It remains for the responsible individual to complete a clear summary of allegations for the foster carer file.

The responsible individual and manager now monitor all concerns and safeguarding issues on a weekly basis to prevent drift or delay in keeping children safe.

The agency has now implemented an approved written policy to safeguard children placed with foster parents from abuse or neglect. They have made sure all staff and foster carers know about it.

These actions and other changes planned to policy, procedure and practice should improve the ability of the agency to safeguard children in the future.

The agency's published statement of purpose now accurately describes roles and services. Information for children now tells them what the agency will do in response to their complaints. Children and their placing authorities now know what to expect from the agency. This includes writing to children with an outcome of their complaint. This will help children to feel that their concerns are taken seriously.

One social worker told the inspector about their experience of a foster carer's dedication and professionalism. They described, '...a carer who puts the needs of the child at the centre of her work.' They were also positive about how the agency shared information with the placing authority.

The responsible individual, social work staff and panel members have now undertaken a range of training at a level commensurate with their roles. This includes the core functions of the agency, such as: supervising staff; foster carer assessment; safeguarding; helping children who go missing from care; panel functions; quality assurance; and staff management. These skills promote positive foster care.

There are now enough qualified fostering social workers to supervise the number of children living in fostering households. Roles and responsibilities and accountability for decision-making are much clearer. This provides improved clarity and accountability.

The agency has notified Ofsted about new issues of concern and about how they have concluded historical matters. This gives the regulator confidence that the agency is transparent when things go wrong for children.

The agency now has an electronic recording system to identify that supervising social workers meet children at least quarterly. This aims to ensure a focus on children's experience of foster care.

Improvements are also planned to how the agency matches new children to foster carers, respite arrangements, risk assessments and safe care plans, bedroom sharing, delivery of the child's care plan, and the foster carer annual review processes. Many of these improvements are untested because they are very new. Additionally, the agency has not been able to demonstrate how it has fully met some regulatory shortfalls because of current national Covid risk management conditions.

The agency is making progress. Ofsted will carry out a full inspection of this service at the earliest opportunity.

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 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>	01/07/2020
<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>	01/07/2020
<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.</p>	01/07/2020
<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>	01/07/2020
<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>	01/07/2020
<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>	01/07/2020

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)
- Ensure a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made against a particular member of the fostering household, or staff member, including details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, a record of any action taken and the decisions reached, is kept on the person's confidential file. A copy is provided to the person as soon as the investigation is concluded. The information is retained on the confidential file, even after someone leaves the organisation, until the person reaches normal retirement age, or for ten years if this is longer. (NMS 22.7)

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.

Ofsted is aware of the challenges that Covid-19 is currently posing to those we inspect. During this inspection, the inspectors took into consideration the impact of any measures being taken to slow the spread of Coronavirus by the agency. This has included the effect these have had on staffing arrangements.

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

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 children looked after, 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

<http://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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2020