

# Attachments Fostering Limited

2 Lenvale House, East Street, Snodland ME6 5BA

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

Attachments Fostering Ltd is an independent fostering agency, based in Snodland, Kent. Qualified, permanent staff are employed, and the agency also uses a regular bank of qualified independent social workers for additional assessment and review work. The agency has its own established fostering panel, chaired by an independent person.

The agency currently has nine approved fostering households supporting 13 children and young people situated across a small area within the Kent region. Services offered include emergency, short-term, long-term and bridging placements, and parent and child placements.

**Inspection date:** 27 February 2020

**Date of previous inspection:** 12 March 2018

## This monitoring visit

This monitoring visit was conducted in response to several complaints from various anonymous sources about the management dynamics at the agency and the negative impact this was having on staff, carers and ultimately children. Information received said that staff and foster carers do not feel supported, the training on offer does not help them to develop, the behaviour of the registered manager is unprofessional and leads to both staff and foster carers leaving, and that foster carers are pressured into keeping children whose needs they feel they cannot meet.

To evaluate the progress the agency has made in addressing these concerns, an unannounced monitoring visit was undertaken.

The inspectors found significant shortfalls in the leadership and management arrangements in the agency. The registered manager had been absent for a substantial amount of time between April and December 2019. Ofsted was not made aware of this, and the interim arrangements put in place to cover the registered manager's role were not satisfactory. These included other members of staff

undertaking roles and tasks that they were not qualified to do. For example, the responsible individual has been involved in accepting referrals and placing children with foster carers. One example was placing a child at risk of harm with foster carers who didn't have the necessary skills, knowledge or experience to protect the child.

The monitoring systems are not effective. Leaders and managers do not ensure that the agency's records are compliant with internal policies and procedures, or ensure that they are consistent with the fostering regulations and standards. The registered manager has failed to provide Ofsted with written reports following a review of the quality of care. The registered manager acknowledged that it was her responsibility to ensure that this was done, but said that she had delegated this task to the responsible individual.

The lack of management oversight has led to other shortfalls. The statement of purpose has not been kept under review and the current version is inaccurate. The registered manager has not submitted a copy of the document to Ofsted since the last inspection in March 2018. The registered manager has also failed to notify Ofsted of significant events. These include one child being admitted to hospital and increasing safeguarding concerns for another child.

More recently, allegations about financial misconduct at board level have strained the relationships in the management team. This has led to questions being raised about the honesty, trust and integrity of those involved. The registered manager and responsible individual are aware of this and have agreed to put these matters aside and focus on the day-to-day management of the agency.

The recruitment, induction and supervision of new staff are not satisfactory. The registered manager had not carried out all the relevant pre-employment checks to comply with safer recruitment practice. A newly qualified social worker did not have an induction plan and has only had one formal meeting with managers in three months. The record of this meeting identifies that she does not have the necessary knowledge or experience to supervise foster carers and support them in their roles.

Training records for foster carers are not clear. Records show what courses have been attended but lack any evaluation as to whether they are compliant with mandatory or core training, or whether carers have access to specific training to meet children's individual and complex needs. Feedback from foster carers states that the programme has not been reviewed for some time, and therefore it is impossible to progress and develop within the agency.

Guidance for foster carers is not effective. Safer care plans looked at were incomplete and the risk management process did not contain effective strategies to reduce or minimise risk, or potential risk, of children coming to harm.

Ofsted will consider the findings of this monitoring visit to determine any further action to take.

The requirements and recommendations made at the last full inspection in March 2018 have not been reviewed and therefore remain in force.

## 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
Ensure foster carers are provided with such training as appears necessary in the interest of children placed with them. (Regulation 17 (1))	06/06/2018
This is in particular relation to parent and child placements.	

### Recommendations

- Ensure that the fostering service provider's decision-maker makes a considered decision that takes account of all the information available to them, including the recommendation of the fostering panel and, where applicable, the independent review panel, within seven working days of receipt of the recommendation and final set of panel minutes. (NMS 14.8)
- Ensure that suitable arrangements exist for professional supervision of the agency's registered person or manager of a local authority fostering service. (NMS 24.3)

## 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:** SC061808

**Registered provider:** Attachments Fostering Limited

**Registered provider address:** 24 Downsview, Chatham, Kent ME5 0AP

**Responsible individual:** Osman Koca

**Registered manager:** Dorothy King

## Inspectors

Amanda Harvey, social care inspector  
Stephen Collett, social care inspector

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