

Ikon Fostering Limited

Ikon Fostering Ltd, Pool Street, Walsall WS1 2EN

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Ikon Fostering is a private limited company based in Walsall. The agency was registered in December 2014. The agency provides a range of fostering placements, including long-term, short-term, emergency, parent and child, and respite placements.

At the time of this inspection, there were 77 fostering households. The registered manager has been in post since October 2017. She is a qualified social worker and an experienced manager.

Inspection date: 16 April 2020

Date of previous inspection: 10 June 2019

This monitoring visit

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ofsted did not physically visit the service. The inspector gathered evidence in several different ways, including talking to the registered manager and staff. The registered manager and staff also provided electronic documents for the inspector to review.

This monitoring inspection was undertaken after Ofsted received notification of concerns about several aspects of the service. The previous requirements and recommendations were not reviewed fully at this inspection. Some progress has been made and an action plan is in place. Two new recommendations were made during this inspection in regard to the panel and the agency decision-making process.

The agency has an independent consultant who provides supervision for the registered manager and is available for all staff to approach should they have any concerns. The registered manager keeps a clear record of complaints that have been made, which allows her to monitor any patterns or trends

Assessments completed by the agency are good quality and completed within reasonable time frames. Quality assurance processes are in place, with midpoint reviews taking place with the assessing social worker, team manager and the prospective foster carers. This provides monitoring and scrutiny of assessments prior to them being presented at the agency's fostering panel.

The agency's fostering panel's quality assurance processes are good and provide additional safeguards to keep children and young people safe. Overall, the panel provides clear recommendations. On one occasion the panel members did have differing views and did not provide an agreed recommendation. Individual panel members can have different views. The panel chair should document these in detail and provide a clear recommendation. In addition, it is not always clear how many children the panel feels the foster carer should/could support.

The agency's decision-maker does not document key considerations in enough depth when she is deciding on the approval status of foster carers. Therefore, it is not clear how she reaches her decisions or what her views are regarding the applicant's skills and abilities and how many children they could safely care for.

The agency has a placements officer. He helps to identify suitable foster carers for children and young people to live with. The registered manager and supervising social workers work closely with him to appropriately match foster carers with children and young people.

The 'skills to foster' training provided by the agency is positive and helps to prepare applicants before they are approved as foster carers. Their engagement in the training is documented in the fostering assessments.

The agency has a good monitoring system in place for tracking foster carers' training and any health and safety checks that need to be completed. This is regularly reviewed and updated by supervising social workers.

What does the independent fostering agency need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The panel chair ensures written minutes of panel meetings are accurate and clearly cover the key issues and views expressed by panel members, and record the reasons for its recommendation. ('Fostering services: National Minimum Standards', 14.7)
- 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. ('Fostering services: National Minimum Standards', 14.9)

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: SC486357

Registered provider: Ikon Fostering Limited

Registered provider address: 1 Coton Lane, Birmingham B23 6TP

Responsible individual: Shiv Pattni

Inspector

Lisa O'Donovan, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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