

F5 Foster Care Limited

First Floor Amington House, 95 Amington Road, Birmingham B25 8EP

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

F5 Foster Care Limited is a private limited company based in Birmingham. The agency offers a range of placements, including long term, short term and respite placements. At the time of this inspection, the agency had two fostering households and was providing a placement for one child.

The agency has been without a registered manager since September 2019. A new manager was appointed in January 2020. She has applied to register with Ofsted and her application is currently being processed.

Inspection date: 21 July 2020

Date of previous inspection: 29 July 2019

This monitoring visit

This independent fostering agency was judged inadequate at their first full inspection in July 2019. As a result of the inspection, Ofsted issued three compliance notices. A monitoring inspection was conducted on 8 October 2019 and found that managers had made significant progress in addressing the shortfalls. All compliance notices and nine requirements were found to be met.

The purpose of this monitoring inspection was to review progress. Due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, Ofsted did not physically visit the agency. The inspector gathered evidence in several different ways, including talking to a range of stakeholders. The responsible individual also provided electronic documents for the inspector to review.

This inspection found that the initial progress has not been sustained.

Managers have made good improvement in the quality of the safe care plans and risk assessments that are provided to foster carers. However, these plans are not

always updated to reflect new and emerging risks. This leaves foster carers without the essential information that they require to enable them to safeguard children.

Managers have not maintained their development in matching children to foster carers. In two cases, managers have moved ahead to propose new placements with foster carers despite the foster carers not being in the position to take a new child.

Managers have failed to notify Ofsted of a significant event. This failure has prevented the regulator from having effective oversight of the service.

Managers have not reviewed one fostering household within 12 months of their approval. Both fostering households have not achieved their training, support and development portfolio within their first year of fostering. There is a lack of clear plans to address these delays.

Managers have completed a quality of care review. However, they have failed to identify that the information contained in the report is inaccurate. This limits the impact of the review on service improvement.

There has been one fostering panel held this year. The minutes of the meeting lacked the necessary quality assurance to ensure that they were an accurate reflection of the discussions and decisions.

Managers have implemented a new electronic recording system. This means that case records are accessible. However, the process of ensuring that children's records are up to date with key documents is weak. This means that foster carers do not always have access to the most up-to-date information to help them to be well informed about children's care.

Managers have not considered the conflict of interest of the agency decision maker carrying out the manager's supervisions.

Despite the shortfalls found in the management oversight of the agency, the care provided by foster carers is good. The child placed with the agency has enjoyed a period of stability and feels part of her foster family.

The agency has sustained good levels of contact with foster carers throughout the national restrictions in response to COVID-19. As a result, carers have felt well supported and informed the inspector that it felt as if nothing had changed.

Ofsted has requested financial information. This is to assure Ofsted of the financial viability of the organisation.

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—</p> <p>the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster parents is safeguarded and promoted at all times. (Regulation 11 (1)(a))</p> <p>In particular ensure that risk assessments are updated in a timely manner to reflect new and emerging risks.</p> <p>In particular, to ensure that where foster placements are suggested for children by the agency, that these are available and that the foster carers are suitably approved.</p>	01/09/2020
<p>The fostering service provider must not—</p> <p>employ a person to work for the purposes of the fostering service unless that person is fit to do so, or</p> <p>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.</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (1), a person is not fit to work for the purposes of a fostering service unless that person—</p> <p>is of integrity and good character,</p> <p>has the qualifications, skills and experience necessary for the work they are to perform,</p> <p>is physically and mentally fit for the work they are to perform,</p> <p>and 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)(a)(b)(c))</p>	01/09/2020

<p>The fostering service provider must review the approval of each foster parent in accordance with this regulation.</p> <p>A review must, where reasonably practicable, take place not more than a year after approval, and thereafter whenever the fostering service provider consider it necessary.</p> <p>The fostering service provider must on the occasion of the first review under this regulation, and may on any subsequent review, refer their report to the fostering panel for consideration.</p> <p>(Regulation 28 (1)(2)(5))</p>	<p>01/09/2020</p>
<p>The registered person must maintain a system for—</p> <p>monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals, and</p> <p>improving the quality of foster care provided by the fostering agency.</p> <p>The registered person must provide the Chief Inspector with a written report in respect of any review conducted for the purposes of paragraph (1) and, on request, to any local authority.</p> <p>(Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b)(2))</p>	<p>01/09/2020</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.</p> <p>(Regulation 36 (1))</p>	<p>01/09/2020</p>
<p>The registered provider must carry on the fostering agency in such manner as is likely to ensure that it will be financially viable for the purpose of achieving the aims and objectives set out in its statement of purpose.</p> <p>The registered provider must—</p> <p>ensure that adequate accounts are maintained and kept up to date in respect of the fostering agency, and</p> <p>supply a copy of the accounts, if requested to do so, to the Chief Inspector.</p> <p>The registered provider must provide the Chief Inspector with information requested for the purpose of considering the financial viability of the fostering agency, including—</p>	<p>01/09/2020</p>

the annual accounts of the fostering agency, certified by an accountant,

a reference from a bank expressing an opinion as to the registered provider's financial standing,

information as to the financing and financial resources of the fostering agency,

where the registered provider is a company, information as to any of its associated companies, and

a certificate of insurance for the registered provider in respect of liability which may be incurred by him in relation to the fostering agency in respect of death, injury, public liability, damage or other loss.

(Regulation 37(1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e))

Recommendations

- Foster carers are able to evidence that the Training, Support and Development Standards have been attained within 12 months of approval (or within 18 months for family and friends foster carers). For foster carers who were approved as such before April 2008, the Standards are attained by April 2011 (or by April 2012 for family and friends foster carers). Fostering households may use the same evidence workbook. ('Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards', page 40, paragraph 20.3).
- Suitable arrangements exist for professional supervision of the agency's registered person or manager of a local authority fostering service. ('Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards', page 49, paragraph 24.3).
- The panel must keep written minutes of its business, including the reasons for recommendations made. It is important that these are full and accurate so that the fostering service is clear about matters discussed and the reasoning behind recommendations, as they will form the basis of decision making by the fostering service. ('The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services', page 43, paragraph 5.25).
- There should be explicit policies in place to enable foster carers and staff to keep clear records about children in placement and the work of foster carers with those children. Information recorded should be non-stigmatising and distinguish between fact and opinion. Children must be made aware of policies regarding their access to all records kept about them, whether by the foster carer or the fostering service itself. ('The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services', page 52, paragraph 5.75).

In particular, ensure that children's records are maintained with up-to-date information and that failure by a placing authority to provide this information is escalated.

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: 1277076

Registered provider: F5 Foster Care Limited

Registered provider address: First Floor Amington House, 95 Amington Road,
Birmingham B25 8EP

Responsible individual: Hamait Ali

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Tracey Cogan Greig, social care inspector

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