

F5 Foster Care Limited

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

Assurance visit

Information about this independent fostering agency

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

The registered manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2 September 2020. The registered manager is currently working towards a level 5 diploma in leadership and management.

Visit dates: 13 to 14 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 29 July 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Inadequate

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

The one child currently placed with the fostering agency is thriving physically, emotionally and socially. She has a trusted relationship with her foster carer and feels part of the foster carer's extended family.

The foster carer has worked hard to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the child. The foster carer has ensured that the child continues to enjoy a range of activities that reflect her interests.

Since September the child has started to attend college and enjoys going every weekday. This is significant progress for the child and is down in part to the encouragement she has received from her foster carer to succeed in life. As a result, the child now has aspirations for her future.

The agency maintains good links with foster carers. Despite the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, social workers have had regular contact with foster carers, including carrying out virtual supervision visits. As a result, foster carers feel well supported and told the inspector that there is always someone available to them.

The safety of children

The registered manager has made significant improvements in helping the staff to understand risk. She has ensured that risk assessments are detailed and up to date. This ensures that the child placed with the fostering agency receives the individual care that she needs. As a result, her risks have significantly reduced.

There have been no incidents of self-harm or of the child going missing from her foster carer's home. The manager has been proactive in implementing processes to ensure that if these situations do arise the child's foster carers are well equipped to safeguard the child.

Despite the good progress, there are still some shortfalls in how children are matched to foster carers. Since the last inspection, one child has been placed with the fostering agency. Senior managers did not gain enough information about the child's needs to enable them to make an informed matching decision. As a result of these omissions, the child was placed with foster carers who did not have the training or experience required to meet her needs. In addition, senior managers did not challenge the placing authority when the child's move was poorly planned, resulting in the absence of key elements such as school and respite. The placement quickly broke down and resulted in the child experiencing an unplanned move. The

registered manager has now implemented new systems to prevent this from happening again.

Improvements to the safe recruitment of staff have helped to ensure that only people who are safe to work with the children are employed by the fostering agency.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager has been in post since January 2020. She has implemented a range of new systems and processes to increase her oversight and monitoring of the service. As a result, five of the six requirements and three of the four recommendations from the last monitoring inspection in July 2020 are now met. The manager is committed to the success of the fostering agency and has a clear plan to continue to make improvements.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, managers have used the amendments to regulations to enable the fostering agency to continue to operate and to prevent delay in the progression of applications to foster. However, the use of these amended regulations is not well documented.

Improvements to the recording of the fostering panel meetings mean that these meetings are now well documented and recommendations are clear. However, the fostering agency does not always ensure that they meet their own policy requirements when presenting prospective foster carers to panel. As a result, full information is not always available to inform the panel's decision-making process.

The responsible individual is very involved in the day-to-day operation of the fostering agency. However, his knowledge of fostering and the relevant regulations is still in its infancy. This means that he does not always have the skills or knowledge required for the roles that he undertakes.

There are no arrangements in place for the supervision of the registered manager. This fails to provide the opportunity for her to review and reflect on her own practice. Action has been taken to address this shortfall and recruitment of someone for this role has commenced.

A financial assessment of the fostering agency by Ofsted is ongoing. The responsible individual has now provided additional information to the regulator to inform this process.

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 provider and the registered manager must, having regard to—</p> <p>the size of the fostering agency, its statement of purpose, the numbers and the needs of the children placed by the agency, and</p> <p>the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children placed by the fostering agency,</p> <p>carry on or manage the fostering agency (as the case may be) with sufficient care, competence and skill.</p> <p>(Regulation 8 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the agency follows its own organisational policies and procedures regarding the assessment and approval of foster carers.</p>	31/12/2020
<p>The registered provider must ensure that—</p> <p>where the registered provider is an individual, that person,</p> <p>where registered provider is an organisation, the responsible individual,</p> <p>where the registered provider is a partnership, one of the partners, undertakes,</p> <p>from time to time, such training as is appropriate to ensure that they have the experience and skills necessary for carrying on the fostering agency.</p> <p>(Regulation 8 (2)(a)(b)(c))</p>	31/12/2020
<p>The registered person in respect of an independent fostering agency must ensure that—</p>	31/12/2020

<p>the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster parents is safeguarded and promoted at all times.</p> <p>(Regulation 11 (1))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the agency only offers placements for children where the foster carers have the necessary skills, training and experience to meet the child's needs.</p> <p>In particular, when considering the suitability of a placement, ensure that sufficient information is received regarding the needs of the child to enable a decision of suitability to be reached.</p> <p>In particular, ensure that when practice of a child's local authority does not meet expected standards, that this is appropriately challenged in the child's best interests.</p>	
<p>The fostering service provider must ensure that all persons employed by them—</p> <p>receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal, and</p> <p>are enabled from time to time to obtain further qualifications appropriate to the work they perform.</p> <p>(Regulation 21 (4)(a)(b))</p>	<p>31/12/2020</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>the annual accounts of the fostering agency, certified by an accountant,</p> <p>a reference from a bank expressing an opinion as to the registered provider's financial standing,</p>	<p>30/10/2020</p>

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))

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: Emma Turnham

Inspector

Tracey Coglan Greig, 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 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 www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020