

SWAP Foster Care

43-47 Kings Street, Bedworth, Warwickshire CV12 8NB

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

This privately run independent fostering agency provides short- and long-term foster placements, and parent and child placements. At the time of this inspection, the agency was providing care for 54 children and one parent. The agency had 34 fostering households.

The manager was registered by Ofsted on 17 June 2020. She is not currently in day-to-day charge of the agency. The deputy manager is currently acting as the manager.

Inspection date: 21 July 2021

Date of previous inspection: 19 April 2021

This monitoring visit

This independent fostering agency was last inspected by Ofsted on 19 April 2021. As a result of this visit, a compliance notice was issued under regulation 11. Ofsted conducted a monitoring visit of this independent fostering agency on 21 July 2021. This visit was conducted to monitor the action taken by the provider to meet the compliance notice.

Since the full inspection, one supervising social worker has left the service. In addition, two members of staff are on long-term absence. This has adversely impacted on the functioning of the service. In response, managers have implemented an emergency action plan to address staffing shortages. Recruitment of new staff is ongoing, and managers anticipate an improved picture by August 2021.

Inspectors found that managers have continued to make improvements to risk assessments. However, these do not go far enough to secure the safety and welfare of children and, where applicable, parents. Inspectors found that practice was inconsistent, and omissions remained. For example, one risk assessment failed to identify that a parent living in the placement had a nut allergy. In addition, risks of emotional abuse to a child by their parent were omitted from the child's risk assessment.

These shortfalls leave foster carers without all the essential information to manage risk and safeguard the children living in their homes. As a result of managers' insufficient action to promote the welfare of children and parents, Ofsted has issued a further compliance notice under regulation 11.

Managers have implemented a new checklist to support their oversight of recruitment and undertaken an audit of staff recruitment records. Despite this, omissions identified at the previous inspection remain. For example, despite staff seeking verification of a current member of staff's previous roles, this has not been received. There was no evidence that staff pursued this information. These continued omissions place children and foster carers at risk from people who may not be suitable to work with them. As a result of these shortfalls, Ofsted has issued a compliance notice under regulation 20.

The acting manager has undertaken a review of the quality of care. However, senior managers have not implemented a system to provide them with sufficient current understanding of the quality of care that is provided by the fostering agency. This has prevented senior managers achieving the required improvements within the necessary time frame. As a result of these shortfalls, Ofsted has issued a compliance notice under regulation 8.

Managers are now quick to respond when new training needs are identified for foster carers. However, managers have not implemented a system to assure themselves that this training is then undertaken. This means that managers are unable to assure themselves that foster carers have the skills necessary to meet children's needs and that children receive the individualised care they require.

Despite the continued shortfalls, there have been some areas of positive development. Staff have devised a new children's guide that meets the requirements. This is a document specifically written for children to support them to understand the purpose of the agency, how they will be cared for and how they can make a complaint. It also provides children with information on their rights and entitlements.

Managers have improved policies and procedures regarding the assessment of foster carers and the information presented to agency panel. This has helped provide clarity to applicants.

Staff now receive supervision that is clearly linked to personal development targets. However, managers have failed to meet requirements for staff training within the timeframe set. This continues to leave staff without the essential skills and knowledge for their specialist role.

As a result of this inspection, three compliance notices have been issued under regulation 8, regulation 11, and regulation 20 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011. This is the third time that Ofsted has raised a compliance notice in relation to the welfare of children placed within the fostering agency.

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, and the numbers and needs of the children placed by the fostering 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. (Regulation 8 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p> <p>This specifically refers to senior managers implementing a system which enables them to demonstrate their understanding of, and responses to, issues arising from the quality of care of the fostering service.</p> <p>This specifically refers to senior managers ensuring that staff receive suitable training for their role. This should include, but is not limited to: safeguarding children, assessment of foster carers, managing allegations, supervision of foster carers training.</p>	5 September 2021
<p>* The registered person in respect of an independent fostering agency must ensure that—</p>	5 September 2021

<p>the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster parents is safeguarded and promoted at all times, and</p> <p>before making any decision affecting a child placed or to be placed with a foster parent due consideration is given to the child's—</p> <p>wishes and feelings (having regard to the child's age and understanding, and</p> <p>religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p> <p>This specifically refers to ensuring that all placement risk assessments (for children and, where applicable, parents) and children's risk assessments include all identified risks for the child.</p> <p>This specifically refers to ensuring that all placement risk assessments (for children and, where applicable, parents) are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect all new and emerging risks.</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that all placements risk assessments (for children and, where applicable, parents) provide foster carers with clear guidance of how to understand and manage identified risks.</p>	
<p>The fostering service provider must provide foster parents with such training, advice, information and support, including support outside office hours, as appears necessary in the interests of children placed with them. (Regulation 17 (1))</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p> <p>This particularly refers to ensuring that the fostering service supports foster carers' learning in relation to children's emerging needs.</p>	5 September 2021
<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>	5 September 2021

<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>This paragraph applies to any person who is employed, other than by the fostering service provider, in a position in which that person may in the course of their duties have regular contact with children placed by the fostering service.</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.</p> <p>The fostering service provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that any person working for a fostering service who is not employed by the fostering service, and to whom paragraph (2) does not apply, is appropriately supervised while carrying out their duties. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(a)(b)(c) (4))</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p> <p>This specifically refers to ensuring that all staff employed by the fostering service are subject to the checks as set out in Schedule 2 of the regulations before they commence work for the fostering service.</p>	
<p>The fostering service provider must ensure that all persons employed by them—</p> <p>receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal. (Regulation 21 (4)(a))</p>	<p>5 September 2021</p>

<p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p> <p>This particularly refers to ensuring that staff employed by the fostering service have access to training that is relevant to their specialist roles.</p>	
<p>The fostering service provider must maintain and keep up to date the records specified in Schedule 2. (Regulation 22 (1))</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p> <p>This particularly refers to the registered person ensuring there are systems in place to escalate when relevant information has not been received from a child's placing authority.</p>	5 September 2021

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: SC409413

Registered provider: Social Work Assessment Partners Limited

Registered provider address: Mitre House, School Road, Bulkington, Bedworth, Warwickshire CV12 9JB

Responsible individual: Lorraine Walker

Registered manager: Jessica Robertson

Inspectors

Jodie Lewis, Social Care Inspector

Tracey Coglán Greig, Social Care Inspector

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