

# Red Kite Fostering

Red Kite Fostering Limited

The Old Surgery, The Meads, Kington, Herefordshire HR5 3DQ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this independent fostering agency

This private limited company is based in Herefordshire. The agency provides a range of fostering placements, including long-term, short-term, emergency and respite placements.

The agency provides foster placements in England and Wales. At the time of the visit, the agency was providing placements for nine children and had 11 fostering households. Of these, five of the fostering households were in England, providing care to six children.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 25 November 2020. She holds a management qualification at level 5.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 16 and 17 December 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

### Inspection dates: 9 to 13 August 2021

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

**Date of last inspection:** 24 February 2020

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate**

Managers' oversight of the agency and of the arrangements to safeguard children has significantly deteriorated since the last inspection. This compromises the quality of care that the agency provides. As a result of this inspection, Ofsted has issued three compliance notices under regulations 8, 11 and 20.

Managers have failed to provide strong oversight of assessments of foster carers. In particular, managers have failed to ensure that assessments are progressed in line with current regulations. This has resulted in the approval of foster carers without any information from a medical practitioner. In addition, assessments of prospective foster carers do not clearly evidence how applicants are able to meet the long-term needs of children, or to provide care for parent and child placements. These significant omissions have not been challenged by the fostering panel or the agency decision-maker. This is a significant failing at all levels of the agency. Because of this, it is not clear how the agency or the fostering panel are actively promoting the safety and welfare of children in the approval processes.

Despite the shortfalls, foster carers work hard to ensure that children receive a positive experience. The six children placed with the agency have all moved into their foster homes within the last 12 months. All children have settled in well and are forming good relationships with their foster carers.

Children experience a range of activities that encourage their interests. Foster carers recognise the barriers that children can face in taking part in these activities and are creative in how they support children. For example, foster carers travelled and stayed overnight close to a child's camping trip. This gave the child the confidence to take part fully in the activity with their friends.

Staff and foster carers are proactive in supporting children to keep in touch with people who are important to them. This child-centred approach enables children to make positive memories with their families.

Prospective foster carers are welcomed when they initially contact the agency. Those who go on to apply feel well prepared by the application process and the training that is provided.

Foster carers told the inspector that they are supported by the agency. Foster carers receive regular supervision from qualified social workers. This support helps foster carers to meet the demands of their role.

Foster carers have access to a range of training. The agency has identified that take up of training is an area for improvement. A member staff has been identified to focus on the individual needs of foster carers in an attempt to develop this area. This development is new, and the impact is yet unknown.

## **How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate**

Matching processes are inconsistent and put children at risk. Matching decisions are not always made before children move to live with foster carers. In addition, matching decisions are made without the agency seeking the current, relevant information that staff need about children or foster carers. For example, staff arranged the placement of a child with foster carers without considering recent significant changes in the fostering household. This poor practice means that it is not evident that staff are making safe, child-centred, informed decisions when arranging placements for children.

Risk assessment practice is inadequate. Managers do not ensure that risk assessments contain all known information about individual children. For example, a risk assessment for one child who exhibited significant aggression towards their previous foster carer did not include this known information. In addition, documents do not provide strategies to support foster carers to manage known risks. These significant shortfalls leave foster carers ill-equipped to provide safe care to the children placed with them.

Managers have failed to identify that information is being copied between children's risk assessments. Therefore, children's risk assessments are not individualised to them. Because of this poor practice, significant information about a child's health has been omitted from their risk assessment.

Staff have failed to identify or act in response to an allegation by a child against their foster carer. This failure to identify or respond to a safeguarding concern demonstrates a lack of attention to the protection of children.

Managers do not have oversight of the safe recruitment of staff. As a result, staff who are employed by the agency do not always have the required checks in place when they start work. The lack of scrutiny and professional curiosity means that managers cannot be assured that all people employed by the agency are safe to work with children.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

Leadership and management of the agency are weak. Managers were not aware of the safeguarding concerns identified during this inspection until these were raised by the inspector. This demonstrates poor oversight of the service.

Managers' systems to support their review of the service are ineffective. For example, the manager has reported on the quality of the care provided by the agency. However, these reports have not been submitted to Ofsted. In addition, the statement of purpose has not been updated despite several agency changes. These omissions leave the regulator without current information about agency operation. Managers addressed both shortfalls during the inspection.

Managers have failed to maintain the health and safety arrangements in the workplace. This demonstrates a lack of due care to staff and visitors to the agency. Again, managers took action to start to rectify this during the inspection.

Staff receive regular supervision. This provides opportunities to reflect on and develop practice. However, there are no arrangements in place to ensure that the acting manager receives supervision from a qualified social work practitioner. This omission was previously raised in 2019.

The agency provides parent and child foster placements. However, managers have failed to provide clear information about the experience or training that are required before foster carers can provide these specialist placements. This lack of clear management guidance places foster carers, parents and children at risk.

Several staff employed at the agency have established relationships outside of the workplace. Managers have failed to identify the conflict of interest that arises from this. The absence of a conflict of interest policy leaves staff without clear guidance about how these relationships are to be managed in the workplace.

## 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 particularly refers to ensuring that: management systems for monitoring and review of the fostering agency are effective and that reporting requirements are met; management monitoring systems are in place to ensure the health and safety of the registered office of the fostering agency; the fostering agency implements a conflict of interest policy that includes management of situations where staff have established relationships outside of the workplace.</p>	<p>3 September 2021</p>
<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 (a))</p> <p>This particularly refers to ensuring that: the agency has clear matching processes in place which are undertaken prior to a child coming to live with foster carers; there is clear evidence of decision-making in matching; children’s risk assessments are individual, clearly reflect individual risks and provide foster carers with strategies to manage risk safely; the agency has in place a process for responding to changes in a</p>	<p>26 September 2021</p>

<p>fostering household, which defines actions that the agency will take to satisfy itself of the continued suitability of the fostering household in light of the change in circumstances.</p>	
<p>The fostering service provider must prepare and implement a written policy which—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard children placed with foster parents from abuse or neglect, and</p> <p>sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 12 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>This particularly refers to ensuring that staff are aware of what constitutes an allegation, and the process that they should follow in this situation.</p>	<p>26 September 2021</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 particularly refers to ensuring that the fostering agency is clear about the assessment and training requirements for foster carers who are approved to care for parent and child placements.</p>	<p>26 September 2021</p>
<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>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>26 September 2021</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) (3)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>This particularly refers to ensuring that all staff who are employed by the agency are subject to the required recruitment checks.</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>This particularly refers to ensuring that the registered manager receives supervision from a suitably qualified and experienced practitioner.</p>	<p>26 September 2021</p>
<p>The functions of the fostering panel in respect of cases referred to it by the fostering service provider are—</p> <p>to consider each application for approval and to recommend whether or not a person is suitable to be a foster parent,</p> <p>where it recommends approval of an application, to recommend any terms on which the approval is to be given.</p> <p>In considering what recommendation to make under paragraph (1), the fostering panel—</p> <p>must consider and take into account all of the information passed to it in accordance with regulation 26, 27 or 28 (as the case may be),</p> <p>may request the fostering service provider to obtain any other relevant information or to provide such other assistance as the fostering panel considers necessary, and</p> <p>may obtain such legal advice or medical advice it considers necessary.</p> <p>The fostering service provider must obtain such information as the fostering panel considers necessary and send that information to the panel and provide such other assistance</p>	<p>26 September 2021</p>



<p>as the fostering panel may request, so far as is reasonably practicable.</p> <p>The fostering panel must also—</p> <p>oversee the conduct of assessments carried out by the fostering service provider, and</p> <p>give advice, and make recommendations, on such other matters or cases as the fostering service provider may refer to it.</p> <p>In this regulation "recommend" means recommend to the fostering service provider. (Regulation 25 (1)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(b)(c) (5))</p> <p>This particularly refers to the fostering panel: demonstrating how it has been assured that applicants have the required skills for the approval terms that are being sought; identifying to the fostering agency where this information is not clearly demonstrated, and to requesting that this information is made available to them before a recommendation is made.</p>	
<p>Where a person ("X") applies to become a foster parent and the fostering service provider decide to assess X's suitability to become a foster parent, any such assessment must be carried out in accordance with this regulation.</p> <p>Where the fostering service provider have obtained all the information set out in paragraph (1A) and have not given the notification in paragraph (1B) within 10 working days of doing so, the fostering service provider must, subject to paragraph (3)—</p> <p>obtain the information specified in Part 2 of Schedule 3 relating to X and other members of X's household and any other information they consider relevant,</p> <p>consider whether X is suitable to be a foster parent and whether X's household is suitable for any child,</p> <p>prepare a written report on X which includes the following matters—</p> <p>the information required by Schedule 3 and any other information the fostering service provider consider relevant,</p>	<p>26 September 2021</p>

<p>the fostering service provider's assessment of X's suitability to be a foster parent, and</p> <p>the fostering service provider's proposals about any terms of approval, and</p> <p>notify X that the case is to be referred to the fostering panel, and give X a copy of the report prepared under subparagraph (c) inviting X to send any observations in writing to the fostering service provider within 10 working days beginning with the date on which the notification is sent.</p> <p>The fostering service provider may comply with paragraph (2)(a) even if the information required by paragraph 2 of Schedule 3 has yet to be obtained.</p> <p>A fostering service provider must keep a record of any decision made in accordance with paragraph (2A). (Regulation 26 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(d)(2A)(2B))</p> <p>This particularly refers to ensuring that the fostering agency complies with the regulatory framework when undertaking assessments, and that approvals are only granted in line with regulation and when all required information is available.</p>	
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\* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the national minimum standards.

## **Independent fostering agency details**

**Unique reference number:** SC417504

**Registered provider:** Red Kite Fostering Limited

**Registered provider address:** Rhos House, Old Radnor, Presteigne, Powys LD8 2RP

**Responsible individual:** Carole Barnes

**Registered manager:** Amelia Benson

**Telephone number:** 01544 231657

**Email address:** [ameliabenson@red-kite-fostering.co.uk](mailto:ameliabenson@red-kite-fostering.co.uk)

## **Inspector**

Tracey Coglán Greig, Social Care Inspector

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