

Compass Fostering West

Unit G1, New Venture House, Venture Business Park, Worcester WR2 4AY

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Compass Fostering West is a private limited company operating as an independent fostering agency. It offers a number of different types of placements for children and young people - emergency, short-term, long-term, parent and child, and permanent placements. At the time of the inspection, the service had 151 carers caring for 181 children and young people.

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.

Inspection date: 1 September 2021

Date of previous inspection: 8 April 2019

This monitoring visit

Ofsted carried out this monitoring visit after receiving a complaint about how the agency manages safeguarding concerns, the behaviour management practices used by foster carers, the quality of support provided to foster carers and placement stability. During the monitoring visit, the inspector reviewed the agency's response to safeguarding concerns and what measures they put in place to keep children safe. The inspector also considered the resources and support provided to foster carers and placement stability.

The inspector found that the agency responds promptly to safeguarding concerns and takes appropriate action to keep children safe. Allegations against foster carers are reported to the designated officer and a partnership approach is taken to consider children's needs. When necessary, foster carers are placed on hold until safeguarding concerns have been concluded and suitability reviewed.

When investigations into allegations are concluded, the agency initiates an independent review and takes foster carers back to panel to determine if their approval should continue. Panel minutes demonstrate that all information is

reviewed, and consideration is given to the foster carer's strengths and any areas of concern. Panel members give clear reasons for the recommendations they make.

The agency provides additional guidance to foster carers who need support with managing children's behaviour. On one occasion, there was a concern about how a child had been restrained by a foster carer during an incident. This was reported to the designated officer and the child's social worker. An action plan was implemented to provide additional support to the foster carers and the child. This included therapeutic support sessions, further behaviour management training, life-story work to be carried out with the child and increased supervision for the foster carers.

All foster carers have access to an out-of-hours on-call service. This means they can contact someone from the agency at any time to seek guidance and support. Foster carers are allocated a supervising social worker. When supervising social worker vacancies occur, the registered manager and operations managers take on the responsibility for supervising carers until a new worker is appointed. Additional supervising social workers are recruited in conjunction with the steady growth of the agency. This means that foster carers have continued support and other supervising social workers' workloads remain manageable.

The agency has a placements team that considers foster carers' skills and abilities before a child lives with them. Known risks are reviewed and if the risks are deemed too high, children will not be placed with foster carers. Over 50% of children have been living with their foster carers for 12 months or more.

The manager's monitoring and review systems are excellent. The registered manager completes monthly audits. In addition, there are independent monthly audits and mock inspections. This means she has a good understanding of the agency's strengths and areas for development and the service is continually striving to develop and improve.

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: SC360525

Registered provider: Compass Fostering West Limited

Registered provider address: Mountfields House, Off Squirrel Way, Epinal Way, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3GE

Responsible individual: Kathryn Swift

Registered manager: Linda Meir

Inspector

Lisa O'Donovan, Social Care Inspector

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