

Flying Colours Foster Care

Flying Colours Foster Care Limited

The Dairy House, Brockton, Eccleshall, Stafford ST21 6LY

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

A small private company operates this fostering agency. The foster carers, who live in England and Wales, provide long-term and short-term care.

At the time of this inspection, the fostering agency was providing placements for six children living in four fostering households in England.

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 dates: 5 to 11 October 2021

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The independent fostering agency provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 19 June 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make progress from their starting points because of the care they receive from their foster carers. Most of the children placed with this agency have lived with their foster carers for many years. Foster carers welcome children into their families. They prepare welcome books for social workers to share with children before they move into placement. Children enjoy opportunities such as holidays and horse riding and become integrated members of the family. Foster carers preserve these memories for children by creating memory books for them.

Foster carers describe receiving 'above and beyond' support from their supervising social worker. Foster carers advocate for children and the supervising social worker challenges children's placing authorities. This helps to achieve individualised care and best outcomes for children.

Children's social workers value the support children receive from their foster carers. They recognise the importance of care planning to support children to feel secure in their placements now and in the future. Several children continue to live with their foster carers after their 18th birthday. They receive encouragement while they are studying or training. This supports children to prepare for adulthood.

A small number of children have moved placement in an unplanned way. They were, however, supported in their move by their foster carer and the agency's supervising social worker. This provides children with some reassurance and positive memories of their time living with their foster carers.

Foster carers state that they feel welcomed and valued by the agency. Preparation training and assessments of potential foster carers are thorough. This ensures that foster carers understand and are committed to the ethos of the agency. Children contribute to foster carer's annual reviews. This enhances the overall experience for all children living in fostering households.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Foster carers understand risks for children, and they are proactive in keeping children safe. Foster carers discuss their concerns with teachers and health professionals when necessary. This helps foster carers to implement additional care strategies, which reduce risk for children. One social worker, when describing how the foster carer responded to a child's low mood, stated, 'I don't have to worry about the carers. They do the right thing. I wish all my children could be placed with this family.'

One child described how her foster carers encourage her to walk to and from school with friends. She now has an after-school job and says that her foster carers pick her up if it is dark so that she does not have to walk alone. The foster carers balance their support to encourage independence and confidence-building while

ensuring that the child feels safe.

The registered manager and supervising social worker respond quickly to identified risks for children. The registered manager does not always submit notifications to inform Ofsted of serious events. This does not allow the inspector to monitor the agency's response to safeguarding a child. However, the agency works effectively to address risk. The supervising social worker creates safe care assessments for foster carers, which are regularly reviewed. Foster carers are guided by children's risk assessments and demonstrate understanding of their role in minimising risk for children.

The fostering panel chair ensures that assessments of prospective foster carers include all necessary checks and explore issues pertinent to fostering. Fostering panel members prepare for panel by identifying areas of vulnerability to explore with the assessor and prospective foster carers. This provides robust consideration and recommendation on the prospective foster carer's suitability to foster.

A newly appointed agency decision-maker, who is social-work qualified, provides a clear rationale when approving foster carers. This gives further assurance that foster carers have the skills and resilience to care for children and keep them safe. The registered manager has not reviewed the statement of purpose to update details of the agency decision-maker. The registered manager has also not requested a written employment history from the agency decision-maker to enable full safe recruitment checks to be undertaken. This has, however, had no impact and children placed with this agency are safeguarded by the foster carers they live with.

Some foster carers have not completed their mandatory first-aid or safeguarding refresher training. This is because of changes to the delivery of courses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the agency has not yet responded to provide a foster carer with requested legal proceeding and life-story training. The agency has not been proactive in exploring other training models to support the further development of foster carers' knowledge and skills.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager knows the strengths of the agency. He also acknowledges that his areas of weakness have an impact at times on the effective operation of the fostering service. For example, the registered manager has not progressed his appropriate management training. The registered manager has not, therefore, sufficiently developed the skills he requires to lead this fostering agency.

Foster carers have annual reviews within timescale. However, the registered manager has not coordinated the annual review process effectively during the COVID-19 pandemic. In one case, the registered manager did not arrange for a first review to be presented to fostering panel. In addition, the agency decision-maker has not reviewed some foster carer annual reviews in a timely way. This delays

confirmation for foster carers of the decision that they continue to be approved as suitable to foster for the agency.

The administrator audits case files and identifies where documents are missing. She requests the information from children's placing authorities. The registered manager does not have a process to escalate when documents are not returned in a timely way. This does not provide foster carers with the information they require when caring for children.

The registered manager misses leadership opportunities to consult with stakeholders and fostering panel members. Fostering panel members feel detached from the business of the agency. As a result of poor consultation, there is ineffective planning of fostering panel dates and recruitment of panel members to enhance the central list. This hinders the development of the agency.

The foster carers, supervising social worker and registered manager receive regular supervision. However, supervision records do not show challenge, direction or actions. This does not demonstrate how effective management oversight of supervision is improving the agency and its outcomes for children.

The registered manager has not ensured that fostering panel members have regular appraisals. In addition, the agency decision-maker has not yet observed the functioning of fostering panel. This does not provide opportunities for the registered manager to review the continuing commitment and professional development of fostering panel members.

The registered manager prioritises the needs of children. He has high ambition for what children can achieve and his ethos has been cascaded down through the agency. Children's placing social workers and foster carers appreciate the practical support, commitment and dedication of the registered manager, supervising social worker and administrator. One foster carer explained that the registered manager values the loving homes that they provide to children. When describing the experiences and outcomes children in this agency have, the foster carer stated it is a 'proper team effort'.

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 fostering service provider must—</p> <p>keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose and children’s guide, and</p> <p>notify the Chief Inspector of any such revision within 28 days, (Regulation 4(a)(b))</p> <p>This is in relation to updating the statement of purpose on the fostering agency’s website to include details of the new agency decision-maker and making the updated statement of purpose available to Ofsted.</p>	26 November 2021
<p>A person is not fit to manage a fostering agency unless that person—</p> <p>having regard to the size of the fostering agency, its statement of purpose, and the numbers and needs of the children placed by it—</p> <p>has the qualifications, skills and experience necessary for managing the fostering agency. (Regulation 7 (2)(b)(i))</p> <p>This is in relation to the registered manager having the recognised management qualification and skills to manage the fostering agency.</p>	28 January 2022
<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>	26 November 2021

<p>This is in relation to facilitating mandatory and any additional training to support carers to understand the specific needs of the children they care for.</p>	
<p>The fostering service provider must ensure that, in relation to any child placed or to be placed with a foster parent, the foster parent is given such information, which is kept up to date, as to enable him to provide appropriate care for the child, and in particular that each foster parent is provided with a copy of the most recent version of the child's care plan provided to the fostering service provider under regulation 6(3)(d) of the Care Planning Regulations. (Regulation 17 (3))</p> <p>This is in relation to the registered manager escalating effectively when there are delays in receiving statutory documentation from the child's placing authority.</p>	<p>26 November 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.</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) (3)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>This is in relation to ensuring that the registered manager shows due diligence when safely recruiting all staff, including those who work for the agency on a sessional basis.</p>	<p>26 November 2021</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>26 November 2021</p>

<p>If the fostering service provider decide, taking into account any recommendation made by the fostering panel, that the foster parent and the foster parent's household continue to be suitable and that the terms of the foster parent's approval continue to be appropriate, they must give written notice to the foster parent of their decision. (Regulation 28 (5) (6))</p> <p>This is in relation to presenting first annual reviews to fostering panel and the timely review of recommendations for continued approval by the agency decision-maker.</p>	
<p>The registered person must maintain a system for— improving the quality of foster care provided by the fostering agency.</p> <p>The system referred to in paragraph (1) must provide for consultation with foster parents, children placed with foster parents, and their placing authority (unless, in the case of a fostering agency which is a voluntary organisation, it is also the placing authority). (Regulation 35 (1)(b) (3))</p> <p>This is in relation to the registered manager consulting with stakeholders and fostering panel members to develop the fostering agency.</p>	26 November 2021
<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. (Regulation 36 (1))</p> <p>This is in relation to the registered manager informing Ofsted of all serious events.</p>	26 November 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that there is a review of each panel member's performance, including that of the chair, annually against agreed performance objectives. The agency decision-maker should review the performance of panel chair, and for this purpose may attend a proportion of panel meetings but only as an observer. (Volume 4, statutory guidance, paragraph 5.15)

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: SC440078

Registered provider: Flying Colours Foster Care Limited

Registered provider address: The Dairy House, Brockton, Eccleshall, Stafford
ST21 6LY

Responsible individual: Deborah Hamil

Registered manager: James Hamil

Telephone number: 01785 857100

Email address: jim@flyingcoloursfostercare.co.uk

Inspectors

Joanna Warburton, Social Care Inspector
Kev Brammer, 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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 2021