

Integrated Fostering Services Limited

Unit 3, Pavilion Business Centre, 1st Floor, 6 Kinetic Crescent, Enfield, Middlesex
EN3 7FJ

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

This independent fostering agency offers a range of foster care provision, including short-term, long-term, bridging, respite and parent and child placements.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2018 and is suitably qualified.

During this monitoring visit, the inspector was aware that a serious incident had occurred at the agency since the last inspection. This incident is under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the agency in response to the incident were considered (where appropriate) alongside other evidence available at the time of the visit.

Inspection date: 31 May 2023

Date of previous inspection: 21 March 2022

This monitoring visit

This monitoring visit was undertaken following the notification of a serious incident at the agency. The purpose of the visit was to evaluate the agency's safeguarding practices and their response to this serious incident.

The key areas considered at this monitoring visit included:

- delays in reporting serious safeguarding incidents to all relevant bodies and persons;
- employment and safeguarding checks on carers and support workers;
- assessment and training of foster carers and support workers;
- carer and support worker driving licence checks.

Shortfalls in the agency's reporting of safeguarding concerns were identified at the full inspection in March 2022 and a requirement was raised to address this. Leaders and managers are aware of the processes to alert the placing authorities, local authority designated officer and Ofsted of serious safeguarding incidents and they have appropriate policies in place in respect of these processes. They accept that following a recent incident they did not act as promptly as they could have to ensure that all relevant professionals were informed of the concerns. These processes have now been followed and children have been adequately protected.

Records show that all appropriate employment and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are undertaken and reviewed regularly for both foster carers and support workers. These employment and safeguarding checks are compliant with schedule 1 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

Support worker files showed that they were offered appropriate induction and mandatory training, including safeguarding, to ensure they are equipped to work with vulnerable children.

Foster carer assessments are comprehensive and include all the required checks, including detailed follow-up of any previous local authority involvement. This information is clearly discussed, documented and analysed within the assessment, which is presented at the agency's fostering panel.

Foster carers receive a wide range of training from the start of their approval process. In addition to this induction training, they are supported to complete the support and development standards for foster care in their first year of fostering. Ongoing specialist training is also offered to foster carers to enhance their learning and development. Yearly reviews identify training needs and are added to personal development plans to ensure foster carers are kept up to date with required learning.

The operations director and registered manager confirmed that driving licences and insurance documents for staff who transport children are routinely checked. Records show that driving licences and evidence of suitable insurance are requested, and records are retained by the agency. In a recent example, two support workers had been disqualified from driving in between annual checks. On receipt of this information, the agency took appropriate action to ensure that children were safeguarded.

The shortfall identified at this monitoring visit is in relation to the timeliness of notification to the local authority designated officer and to Ofsted of a safeguarding incident. The agency is aware of this shortfall and accept that, in hindsight, they should have acted more quickly. No children suffered any harm because of this shortfall. A requirement has been repeated to address this continued shortfall.

The requirement made at the full inspection in March 2022 under regulation 21, employment of staff, and a recommendation were not reviewed at this monitoring visit and therefore remain.

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, The 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 ensure that all persons employed by them receive appropriate training, supervision, and appraisal. (Regulation 21 (4)(a))</p> <p>This is particularly in relation to oversight of supervising social workers' records of foster carers' supervision.</p>	30 September 2023
<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>Particularly, ensure that all safeguarding concerns, including allegations against people who work with children or members of the fostering household, are reported to all relevant bodies and persons in a timely way.</p> <p>This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	30 September 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the service. This includes any serious incidents, allegations or complaints about the service and ensuring the quality of the service. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 25.1)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the action taken by the independent fostering agency in relation to the notification of a serious safeguarding incident.

This monitoring visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Independent fostering agency details

Unique reference number: SC400955

Registered provider: Integrated Fostering Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Unit 3, Pavilions Business Centre, 6 Kinetic Crescent, Enfield, Middlesex EN3 7FJ

Registered manager: Janice Darling

Responsible individual: Sarah Ferguson

Inspector

Christine Kennet, Social Care Inspector

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