

Credo Care

Setting address: 12 High Street, Lydd, Romney Marsh, Kent TN29 9AJ

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

The agency was founded in 2000 and is based in Lydd, Kent. The office covers three regions being the South, Midlands, and East. The agency specialises in caring for children with physical disabilities and those who have complex medical needs, learning difficulties and/or autism spectrum disorder. The agency offers short-term, long-term, staying put and specialised respite care placements.

At the time of this inspection, there were 76 children placed and 75 fostering households, some of which offer respite care only.

The current manager registered with Ofsted in July 2019.

Inspection date: 19 July 2023

Date of previous inspection: 29 April 2019

This monitoring visit

This announced monitoring visit followed the notification of the unexpected death of a child in foster care. The agency has experienced the deaths of five children in a 20-month period. The majority of the children had life-limiting conditions, and some were receiving end-of-life care. At the last full inspection on 3 May 2019, inspectors found the service to be good and made five requirements. These requirements were judged to be met at a monitoring visit on 20 August 2020.

The focus of this monitoring visit was on establishing whether the agency conducts learning reviews following each child death. There was also a review of the training and support that the agency provides to foster carers and staff. This was to gain assurance that children are safe at this agency.

Leaders and managers do not conduct learning reviews after the death of a child. Instead, they provide information for the responsible authority's review. The agency

has involvement in Joint Agency Response to a child death meetings. However, considering the specialism of this agency where children sometimes have life-limiting conditions, not conducting a learning review is a missed opportunity to review the care and support that the child has received, the support that carers received and whether it was adequate. It also means that there is potential for the agency to not know whether it could have done anything different or where it could improve.

As part of this monitoring visit, inspectors spoke with the police and responsible authority. They did not express any concerns about the agency. They were complimentary of the care that children receive and had no safeguarding concerns.

Staff and carers receive good-quality support following the death of a child. They have access to internal therapeutic support as well as specialist external support. Staff support each other and feel that managers are available and accessible. Foster carers continue to receive support from their supervising social worker. This means that during this difficult period, a familiar and consistent person remains available to them.

In addition to the lack of learning reviews after the death of a child or other serious incident, inspectors found that while there is an excellent training programme in place for foster carers, one foster carer had not undertaken paediatric first-aid training before receiving a child into their care. Again, considering the specialism of this agency, managers should have ensured that these carers received this essential training.

Foster carers receive regular safeguarding training. Where children have complex health needs and life-limiting conditions, hospital staff provide foster carers with some training and preparation for receiving the child. Nurse trainers in the agency provide extra training to foster carers, support workers, respite carers and back-up carers. This ensures that those involved in the care and support of a child receive training relevant to their needs.

Fostering households have fire evacuation plans. They are generic and do not take account of the specific needs of individual children. For example, there was no information about how they considered a child's visual impairment and mobility difficulties in the plan to evacuate them safely.

Suitable risk assessments are in place. Children's individual 'All About Me' plans are a strength of the agency. They are detailed and child-centred. These plans are regularly updated and reviewed in each foster carer supervision.

Supervising social workers have manageable caseloads, which means that they can offer a high level of support to foster carers. Supervising social workers provide foster carers with regular, good-quality supervision. Supervising social workers complete health and safety checks of foster carers' homes as part of their annual review.

The registered manager continues to show a strong understanding of the agency and understands the areas for improvement identified.

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<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 is with specific reference to ensuring that after any child death or other serious incident, a full learning review is implemented.</p> <p>Additionally, ensure that fire evacuation plans are specific to the individual needs of a child.</p>	4 September 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that foster carers receive guidance and training to provide appropriate care if looking after children with complex health needs. This includes ensuring that all carers have received the appropriate training before a child is placed in their care. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 6.8)

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: SC035250

Registered provider: Credo Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 12 High Street, Lydd, Romney Marsh, Kent TN29 9AJ

Responsible individual: Roy Hipkiss

Inspectors

Vevene Muhammad, Social Care Inspector
Tash Williams, Social Care Inspector

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