

Achieving For Children

Achieving For Children, Guildhall 2, High Street, Kingston Upon Thames, KT1 1EU

Monitoring visit

Information about this independent fostering agency

Achieving for Children is a community-interest company created in 2014 by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames to provide their children's services. The agency delivers fostering services to children in these two boroughs, as well as for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

The fostering agency provides the following types of placements: short term, long term, specialist, respite, emergency and sibling placements. Additionally, the service provides foster care placements for parents and babies and asylum-seeking children. The fostering agency covers a wider range of fostering arrangements than a traditional independent fostering agency, and this includes 'connected' or 'family and friends' carers.

The fostering service registered with Ofsted in August 2018.

Inspection date: 17 October 2023

Date of previous inspection: 26 June 2023

This monitoring visit

Inspectors were aware during this monitoring visit that a serious incident, which had occurred within the agency since the last inspection, was 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 monitoring visit to inform inspectors' judgements.

The agency was judged as good in June 2023. The purpose of this monitoring visit was to review the actions taken in response to a serious incident involving a foster carer that took place in August 2023.

As part of the inspection activity, a review was undertaken of the recruitment, training, support and oversight of foster carers. There was also exploration of whether the fostering agency had failed to notify Ofsted of a previous concern about the child in placement, which had arisen earlier in the year.

The fostering household had been subject to all the relevant checks and was managed in line with the agency's policies and procedures and the national minimum standards. The independent fostering agency has provided appropriate oversight of the placement, and the support and supervision provided to the foster carer were also appropriate.

At the agency's full inspection in June 2023, a requirement was made in respect of notifiable events under Regulation 36 (1) and Schedule 7. At this monitoring visit, the requirement was found to be met.

In relation to the possible failure to notify Ofsted of a previous concern about the child in the fostering household, it was established that while there were some queries regarding the child's health, no safeguarding concerns were raised by professionals at that time. Consequently, it was deemed that the fostering agency had not failed to notify the regulator of a previous concern regarding harm to the child.

Subsequent medical investigations determined that there were no signs of injury or trauma to the child. As such, the medical assessments do not indicate that the child suffered harm in relation to the concerns raised.

Ofsted was notified promptly by the agency about the recent incident in the foster placement. Child protection procedures were followed and were concluded on 17 September 2023. The outcome was that the concerns were unsubstantiated.

Following this monitoring visit, the requirement made at the last inspection, in relation to notifiable events under Regulation 36 (1) and Schedule 7, is deemed to be met. The seven recommendations made at the last inspection were not looked at and will be considered at the next inspection.

What does the independent fostering agency need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children have access to independent advice and support from adults who they can contact directly and in private about problems or concerns, which is appropriate to their age and understanding. Children should know their rights to advocacy, how to access an advocate and how to contact the Children's Rights Director. Specifically, the provision of advocacy to children with additional needs is necessary to ensure transition plans are implemented effectively. ('Fostering services: National Minimum Standards', 1.5)
- The registered person should ensure that foster carers are able to evidence that the training, support and development standards have been attained within 12 months of approval, or within 18 months for family and friends foster carers. This relates specifically to family and friends carers. ('Fostering services: National Minimum Standards', 20.3)
- The registered person should ensure that support and training is made available to foster carers, including hard to reach carers, to assist them in meeting the specific needs of the children they are caring for or are expected to care for. Specifically, training in meeting the needs of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children should be provided for foster carers. ('Fostering services: National Minimum Standards', 20.8)
- The registered person should ensure that foster carers are provided with breaks from caring as appropriate and that these are planned to take account of the needs of any children placed. Specifically, ensure that respite is discussed as a package of support for foster carers at the beginning of placements, with appropriate respite carers being identified early. ('Fostering services: National Minimum Standards', 21.5)
- The registered person should ensure that the fostering service's child protection procedures identify how the service will respond to contextual safeguarding matters. This specifically relates to the responses to safeguarding children at risk of child criminal exploitation, modern-day slavery, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. ('Fostering services: National Minimum Standards', 22.4)
- The registered person should ensure that those on the central list are given the opportunity of attending an annual joint training day with the fostering service's fostering staff. ('Fostering services: National Minimum Standards', 22.10)
- The registered person should ensure that the systems in place to monitor all records kept by the service to ensure compliance with the service's policies are effective and address any issues raised by this monitoring, specifically the

auditing of foster carers' files. ('Fostering services: National Minimum Standards', 25.2)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to evaluate the action taken by the fostering agency in response to concerns raised about possible harm to a child. The host local authority for the fostering placement submitted a serious incident report that raised concerns regarding possible harm to the child. Ofsted was notified of the situation on 23 August 2023.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Independent fostering agency details

Unique reference number: 1280297

Registered provider: Achieving For Children Community Interest Company

Registered provider address: 1st Floor Civic Centre, 44 York Street, Twickenham
TW1 3BW

Responsible individual: Matthew Edwards

Inspector

Colin Bent, Social Care Inspector

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