

Avanti Fostering

Avanti Fostering, Devonshire House, 582 Honeypot Lane, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 1JS

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Avanti Fostering is an independent fostering agency and was registered with Ofsted in June 2020.

The registered manager post has been vacant since 16 March 2021. Apart from the responsible individual, all staff working at the agency are new. This includes a manager, both supervising social workers and the quality assurance officer. The manager, who has been in post since 19 October 2021, has applied to register with Ofsted.

The agency provides short-term, long-term, emergency, and parent and child placements.

At the time of this monitoring visit, the agency had nine approved fostering households. The agency provided placements for nine children. Two sisters live together with their brother in one foster family. One baby is placed together with their adult mother.

Inspection date: 8 December 2021

Date of previous inspection: 20 September 2021

This monitoring visit

The independent fostering agency was judged inadequate at the full inspection in September 2021. The purpose of this monitoring visit was to review the progress that the agency has made since then.

At this monitoring visit, the inspector reviewed evidence that the manager presented to demonstrate the progress that the agency has made in the last 10 weeks.

Leaders and managers have made significant progress in addressing the shortfalls which were identified at the full inspection.

In October 2021, the manager completed the agency's first monitoring report on the quality of care provided. The report honestly examines the agency's failures and includes a clear action plan to move the service forward. The report demonstrates that the agency is making positive changes and moving in the right direction.

Leaders and managers have met 15 out of 19 requirements raised at the full inspection. The agency now provides a safer and better-quality fostering service.

There are many examples of improvements made. The agency now has an up-to-date risk management plan for each child. There is comprehensive health information that shows how each child's health needs are met. The practices around promoting children's culture and identity have improved. The voice of the child is stronger within the agency. Children know how to raise any worries with the agency. The agency ensures that all children are supported to learn and engage in education. Foster carers are better supported and receive training that helps them to develop their knowledge and skills. The management oversight has improved. Ofsted receives appropriate notifications of significant events.

Four requirements have been repeated. Leaders and managers have taken action to address those requirements, however, more evidence is needed to demonstrate compliance. All children currently placed with the agency are recorded on the agency's children's register. However, the information about the children who have left the agency is not available. As these records must be kept for 15 years, this requirement has been restated.

The records relating to how the agency ensures the suitability and fitness of staff do not demonstrate that all the required information is always obtained before staff start in their roles. An example of this is that the agency did not obtain an up-to-date Disclosure and Barring Service check for a supervising social worker when this person moved into that role from being a panel member.

Two other requirements that have been restated relate to the assessment of prospective foster carers and placing of children within the conditions of foster carers' approval. These requirements were repeated as the agency has not completed any assessments, has not approved any foster carers and has only admitted one child since the full inspection.

One new requirement was raised at this inspection. This is with regard to keeping records relating to allegations made against foster carers. These records are fragmented and do not demonstrate clearly what happened, what steps the agency took and when, to safeguard children. These allegations were made prior to the full inspection in September 2021 and the agency is still dealing with them.

Leaders and managers work closely with placing authorities to ensure that children are not adversely affected by the inadequate inspection judgement and changes at the agency. Some children showed anxiety about the possibility of being moved from their foster families with whom they felt settled and safe, following the inadequate inspection judgement. Overall, however, they have continued to have positive experiences and have continued to make good progress.

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
The fostering service provider must prepare and implement a written policy which— is intended to safeguard children placed with foster parents from abuse or neglect, and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure under paragraph (1)(b) must, subject to paragraph (4), provide in particular for— notification of the instigation and outcome of any child protection enquiries involving a child placed by the fostering service provider, to the Chief Inspector, written records to be kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and of the action taken in response, consideration to be given to the measures which may be necessary to protect children placed with foster parents following an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 12 (1)(a)(b) (3) (4)(c)(d)(e)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that clear records are kept in relation to allegations and safeguarding of children under the circumstances, and that Ofsted is informed of the outcome of the current investigations.	1 February 2022
The fostering service provider must not— employ a person to work for the purposes of the fostering service unless that person is fit to do so, or	1 February 2022

allow a person to whom paragraph (2) applies, to work for the purposes of the fostering service unless that person is fit to do so. This paragraph applies to any person who is employed, other than by the fostering service provider, in a position in which that person may in the course of their duties have regular contact with children placed by the fostering service. For the purposes of paragraph (1), a person is not fit to work for the purposes of a fostering service unless— 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)(b) (2) (3)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the records demonstrate that full and satisfactory information has been obtained for all staff and contractors before they start working for the agency. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The fostering service provider must maintain and keep up to date the records specified in Schedule 2. The records referred to in paragraph (1) must be retained for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 22 (1) (2)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that a register in respect of each child placed with the agency is maintained with the detail required. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	1 February 2022
Where a person ("X") applies to become a foster parent and the fostering service provider decide to assess X's suitability to become a foster parent, any such assessment must be carried out in accordance with this regulation. At the end of the 10 working days referred to in paragraph (2)(d) (or when X's observations are received, whichever is sooner), the fostering service provider must send—	1 February 2022

the report prepared under paragraph (2)(c), X's observations on that report, if any, and any other relevant information obtained by the fostering services provider, to the fostering panel. (Regulation 26 (1) (4)(a)(b)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure better quality of the assessments of prospective foster carers, so that the assessment reports include, scrutinise and evaluate all relevant information before those reports are sent to the fostering panel for its consideration. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
If a fostering service provider decide to approve X as a foster parent they must— give X notice in writing specifying any terms on which the approval is given, and enter into a written agreement with X covering the matters specified in Schedule 5 (the "foster care agreement"). (Regulation 27 (5)(a)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children are placed in line with the foster carers' terms of approval. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	1 February 2022

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: 2587129

Registered provider: Avanti Fostering Ltd

Registered provider address: Devonshire House, 582 Honeypot Lane, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 1JS

Responsible individual: Dilber Bhamra

Inspector

Seka Graovac, Social Care Inspector

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