

Clover Fostering

Clover Fostering, The Atrium, 1 Harefield Road, Uxbridge UB8 1PH

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Clover Fostering is a privately owned independent fostering agency. It registered with Ofsted on 3 March 2023. The agency's statement of purpose states that the fostering agency provides respite, bridging, short-term and long-term placements and placements where brothers and sisters can live together.

At the time of this monitoring visit, the registration of the fostering agency was suspended by Ofsted. All foster carers had resigned from the agency and no fostering households were approved by the agency.

The manager was appointed in August 2024, taking up her post in September 2024. She has not yet applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 14 January 2025

Date of previous inspection: 12 March 2024

This monitoring visit

Ofsted carried out a full inspection of this independent fostering agency between 12 and 14 March 2024. The inspection identified significant and widespread shortfalls in the operation of the agency, resulting in a judgement of inadequate. Ofsted issued a notice of suspension to the fostering agency on 14 March 2024.

Ofsted carried out monitoring visits on 28 May, 21 and 22 August and 5 November 2024. At each visit, inspectors found that there continued to be serious and widespread omissions in the arrangements of the fostering agency. There had been a lack of progress in addressing the significant shortfalls identified at the full inspection in March 2024. Ofsted issued further notices of suspension to the fostering agency on 7 June, 21 to 22 August and 9 November 2024.

This announced monitoring visit was carried out to review compliance with the

suspension notice and to review progress by the fostering agency provider to meet the identified regulatory shortfalls.

The provider has not breached the notice of suspension. However, a new website launched by the responsible individual provided misleading information concerning foster carer recruitment and the availability of children's placements. The responsible individual has now closed the website.

There has been a continued lack of progress by the agency's leaders in addressing the regulatory shortfalls previously identified. Only one of the 10 requirements raised at the last inspection has been met in full. The remaining nine requirements are restated. In addition, two new requirements are raised.

The responsible individual has not implemented and sustained the necessary changes to address omissions in the service. In addition, they have not demonstrated a commitment to working transparently with Ofsted. This included providing inaccurate information to inspectors.

The agency's staffing arrangements remain unstable. Since the last monitoring visit, the recently appointed panel adviser has left the service. The acting manager has yet to apply to register with Ofsted. Continual staff changes affect the responsible individual's ability to develop the agency into a strong, safe fostering service.

There has been some progress in improving the recruitment processes for staff, with the agency decision-maker and independent chair now having been subject to full recruitment checks. However, despite the manager having worked for the agency in various roles since May 2024, full recruitment checks have still not been carried out. In addition, when references are taken, there is a lack of professional curiosity about the information provided. Because of this, it is not always clear that all relevant information has been considered when reaching a decision about the suitability of potential employees.

The agency does not have a quorate fostering panel. This means it remains unable to carry out functions relating to the approval, review or termination of foster carers' approval.

Despite ongoing work by leaders, policies and procedures still contain inaccurate information. For example, assessment processes still do not always comply with regulations and statutory guidance. The inconsistent and inaccurate information provided leaves staff and potential foster carers unclear about agency processes and expectations.

The responsible individual has yet to implement any supervision arrangements for the acting manager. This means that the acting manager is without the professional support and guidance that is expected for the manager of a fostering agency.

The responsible individual has provided the previously requested financial information to Ofsted.

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The fostering service provider must— keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose and children's guide, notify the Chief Inspector of any such revision within 28 days, and if the children's guide is revised, supply a copy to each foster parent approved by the fostering service provider, and to each child placed by them (subject to the child's age and understanding). (Regulation 4 (a)(b)(c)) In particular, ensure that the statement of purpose reflects the services that the fostering agency provides, and that when this is updated a copy is supplied to the Chief Inspector within 28 days. Additionally, ensure that the children's guide reflects the fostering agency and the services that it provides. This requirement was made, in part, at the last inspection and is restated.	21 March 2025
A person must not carry on a fostering agency unless— in the case of an organisation carrying on a fostering agency, where the organisation has given notice to the Chief Inspector of the name, address and position in the organisation of an individual ("the responsible individual") who is a director, manager, secretary or other officer of the organisation and is responsible for supervising the management of the fostering agency, the responsible individual, satisfies the requirements of paragraph (2) as to fitness.	21 March 2025

The requirements are that— the person is of integrity and good character, the person is physically and mentally fit to carry on the fostering agency, and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the person in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 1. (Regulation 5 (1)(d) (2)) In particular, ensure that the individual identified as the responsible individual of the fostering agency fulfils the requirements of this regulation.	
The registered provider and the registered manager must, having regard to— the size of the fostering agency, its statement of purpose, and the numbers and needs of the children placed by the fostering agency, and the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children placed by the fostering agency, carry on or manage the fostering agency (as the case may be) with sufficient care, competence and skill. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure that where concerns are raised regarding social work practice, these are managed, reported and escalated to relevant registration bodies. Additionally, ensure that staff of the fostering agency engage with planning processes, reviews and arrangements for children alongside foster carers and other professionals, retaining oversight of children's plans and care. Additionally, ensure that the records of the agency are individual, do not use cut and paste, do not reflect other fostering agencies and that they provide evidence of individualised decision-making. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	21 March 2025

The registered person in respect of an independent fostering agency must ensure that— the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster parents is safeguarded and promoted at all times. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)) In particular, ensure that agency practice is delivered in a way that provides oversight of the safety of, and the quality of, care provided to children placed with foster carers. This includes regular visits by social work staff to foster homes and regular meetings with all household members. Also, the effective use of unannounced visits to understand the child's day-to-day experiences. Additionally, ensure that individual risk assessments and safe care plans are in place to inform the care of all children placed. Additionally, ensure that information provided for staff and foster carers about whistleblowing reflects current legislation and guidance. This requirement was made, in part, at the last inspection and is restated.	21 March 2025
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. 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 (1) (3)) In particular, ensure that foster carers are provided with, and supported to engage in, training relevant to their role and to the individual needs of the children in their care. Additionally, ensure that foster carers are provided with all necessary information to enable them to provide	21 March 2025

individualised care to children, in line with their current plans. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must ensure that a written record is made of any complaint or representation, the action taken in response to it, and the outcome of the investigation. (Regulation 18 (4)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	21 March 2025
The fostering service provider must ensure that there is a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working for the purposes of the fostering service, having regard to— the size of the fostering service, its statement of purpose, and the numbers and needs of the children placed by it, and the need to safeguard and promote the health and welfare of children placed with foster parents. (Regulation 19 (a)(b)) In particular, ensure that there are sufficient staff, including qualified and registered social workers, for the fostering agency to operate in line with regulations and guidance. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	21 March 2025
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 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.	21 March 2025

For the purposes of paragraph (1), a person is not fit to work for the purposes of a fostering service unless that person— is of integrity and good character, has the qualifications, skills and experience necessary for the work they are to perform, is physically and mentally fit for the work they are to perform, and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to that person in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 1. The fostering service provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that any person working for a fostering service who is not employed by the fostering service, and to whom paragraph (2) does not apply, is appropriately supervised while carrying out their duties. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(a)(b)(c) (4)) In particular, ensure that agency recruitment processes adhere to this regulation. This requirement was made, in part, at the last inspection and is restated.	
The fostering service provider must ensure that all persons employed by them— receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal. (Regulation 21 (4)(a)) In particular, ensure that all staff receive supervision from a suitably qualified individual, including the registered manager. This requirement was made, in part, at the last inspection and is restated.	21 March 2025
The fostering service provider must ensure that the fostering panel has sufficient members, and that individual members have between them the experience and expertise necessary, to effectively discharge the functions of the panel. (Regulation 23 (7))	21 March 2025

The functions of the fostering panel in respect of cases referred to it by the fostering service provider are— to consider each application for approval and to recommend whether or not a person is suitable to be a foster parent, where it recommends approval of an application, to recommend any terms on which the approval is to be given, to recommend whether or not a person remains suitable to be a foster parent, and whether or not the terms of their approval (if any) remain appropriate— on the first review carried out in accordance with regulation 28(2), and on the occasion of any other review, if requested to do so by the fostering service provider in accordance with regulation 28(5), and to consider any case referred to it under regulation 27(9) or 28(10). In considering what recommendation to make under paragraph (1), the fostering panel— must consider and take into account all of the information passed to it in accordance with regulation 26, 27 or 28 (as the case may be), may request the fostering service provider to obtain any other relevant information or to provide such other assistance as the fostering panel considers necessary, and In relation to the case of a person in respect of whom a report has been prepared in accordance with regulation 26(3), the fostering panel must either— request the fostering service provider to prepare a further written report, covering all the matters set out in regulation 26(2)(c); or recommend that the person is not suitable to be a foster parent. The fostering service provider must obtain such information as the fostering panel considers necessary and send that	21 March 2025
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information to the panel, and provide such other assistance as the fostering panel may request, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The fostering panel must also—

advise, where appropriate, on the procedures under which reviews in accordance with regulation 28 are carried out by the fostering service provider, and periodically monitor their effectiveness,

oversee the conduct of assessments carried out by the fostering service provider, and

give advice, and make recommendations, on such other matters or cases as the fostering service provider may refer to it.

In this regulation "recommend" means recommend to the fostering service provider.

(Regulation 25 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b)(c) (5))

In particular, ensure that the fostering agency provides panel with information to date that is up to date, accurate and of sufficient detail to enable panel to make a recommendation of suitability.

In particular, ensure that the fostering panel understands and acts on their responsibility in relation to overseeing the conduct of assessments completed by the fostering service.

This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.

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: 2704179

Registered provider: Clover Fostering

Registered provider address: Clover Fostering, The Atrium, 1 Harefield Road,
Uxbridge UB8 1PH

Responsible individual: Salman Idrees

Inspectors

Tracey Coglan Greig, Social Care Inspector
Jenny-ellen Scotland, Social Care Inspector

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