

Hope Fostering Services

Castle Cavendish Enterprise Centre, 63–67 St Peter’s Street, Nottingham,
Nottinghamshire NG7 3EN

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

This agency is privately owned and provides a wide range of placements, including emergency, short term, long term and parent and child.

A full inspection was carried out on 5 December 2022 and the service received an inadequate judgment. The service was subsequently suspended, and a compliance notice was issued.

Inspection date: 7 March 2023

Date of previous inspection: 5 December 2022

This monitoring visit

Since the previous monitoring visit, significant progress has been made. As a result, the fostering agency’s suspension notice has been lifted. All compliance notices have been met. Although this is positive, there are some areas for development which remain.

The staff team has improved their knowledge base by completing contextual safeguarding training. The learning from this course is being embedded through weekly safeguarding meetings. An escalation process has been devised which clearly states how staff should escalate safeguarding concerns to the registered manager.

Social workers have completed training which specifies what the role of the supervising social worker entails. The manager has set clear frameworks and expectations for staff. These frameworks outline what staff need to do to support foster carers and keep children safe. Overall, significant steps are being made to improve safeguarding practice within the agency.

The manager has set up a new system which will ensure that children are seen regularly by staff. Social workers now have a better understanding of why children need to be spoken to on their own. The manager has an auditing system in place to ensure that this is happening.

The manager is not yet receiving regular, effective supervision which offers professional challenge and scrutiny. Furthermore, the manager and social work staff do not have development plans. This is a shortfall because without these, it is difficult to assess progress, and the manager is less able to hold staff to account for their performance.

Some one-to-one work with staff is taking place to improve safeguarding knowledge and professional curiosity. However, most of this work is happening in a group setting. There are limitations to this method because it does not assess the individual learning needs of staff. This is necessary to ensure that all staff can practise safely.

The manager is leading the team with more confidence and visibility. As a result, staff are clear about what is expected of them. The manager is demonstrating improved oversight and planning. However, the manager's recordings do not yet evidence her decision-making effectively. This is an area for development.

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 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(a) The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011)	3 May 2023
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 written policy must include a statement of measures to be taken to safeguard any child before making parent and child arrangements with that foster parent. The procedure under paragraph (1)(b) must, subject to paragraph (4), provide in particular for— liaison and co-operation with any local authority which is, or may be, making child protection enquiries in relation to any child placed by the fostering service provider, the prompt referral to the area authority of any allegation of abuse or neglect affecting any child placed by the fostering service provider, 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,	3 May 2023

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, and arrangements to be made for persons working for the purposes of the fostering service, foster parents and children placed by the fostering service, to have the address (including email address), and telephone number of— the area authority, and the Chief Inspector, for the purposes of referring any concern about child welfare or safety to them. Sub-paragraphs (a) and (c) of paragraph (3) do not apply to a local authority fostering service. In this regulation “child protection enquiries” means any enquiries carried out by a local authority in the exercise of any of its functions conferred by or under the 1989 Act relating to the protection of children. (Regulation 12 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(i)(ii) (4) (5) The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011)	
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 take all reasonable steps to ensure that foster parents are familiar with, and act in accordance with the policies established in accordance with regulations 12(1) and 13(1) and (3). 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) (2) (3) The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011)	3 May 2023

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) The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011)	3 May 2023
The fostering service provider may carry out an assessment of any person who applies to become a foster parent and whom they consider may be suitable to become a foster parent ("X"), and any such assessment must be carried out in accordance with this regulation. The fostering service provider— must obtain the information specified in Schedule 3 relating to X and other members of X's household and family, and any other information they consider relevant. (Regulation 26 (1) (2)(a) The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011)	3 May 2023
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. Any notification made in accordance with this regulation which is given orally must be confirmed in writing. (Regulation 36 (1) (2) The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011)	3 May 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the fostering service has a record of the recruitment and suitability checks which have been carried out for foster carers and those working (including as volunteers) for the fostering service which includes:
 - a. identity checks;
 - b. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosures, including the level of the disclosure, and the unique reference number (in line with eligibility to obtain such checks);
 - c. checks to confirm qualifications which are a requirement and those that are considered by the fostering service to be relevant;
 - d. at least two references, preferably one from a current employer, and where possible a statement from each referee as to their opinion of the person's suitability to work with children;
 - e. checks to confirm the right to work in the UK;
 - f. where the person has lived outside of the UK, further checks, as are considered appropriate, where obtaining a DBS is not sufficient to establish suitability to work with children. (National minimum standard 19.4)
- The registered person should ensure that in reaching a decision or making a qualifying determination, the decision maker considers *Hofstetter v LB Barnet and IRM* (2009) and approach a case accordingly. ('The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services' 5.40)

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: SC367371

Registered provider: Hope Fostering Services Limited

Registered provider address: C/o Brockhurst Davies, 11 The Office Village, North Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 1QJ

Responsible individual: Bovell Palmer

Inspectors

Andi Lilley-Tams, Social Care Inspector
Laura Walker, Social Care Inspector

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