

# Fostering Barnardo's - Yorkshire

Inspection report for independent fostering agency

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC068456           |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 14 August 2007     |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Jacqueline Malcolm |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key                |

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| <b>Registered manager</b>      |  |
| <b>Responsible individual</b>  | Ronald Fletcher Oliver   |
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 14 August 2007   |

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## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Outstanding:  | this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality |
| Good:         | this aspect of the provision is strong                        |
| Satisfactory: | this aspect of the provision is sound                         |
| Inadequate:   | this aspect of the provision is not good enough               |

## **Service information**

### **Brief description of the service**

Fostering Barnardo's Yorkshire was launched in April 2007. It aims to provide quality foster placements for children and young people, with a special emphasis on placing children and young people with families that meet their racial and cultural heritage. The fostering service recruits foster carers who undergo a thorough assessment and when approved, they receive support and further training from a designated, qualified and experienced social worker.

### **Summary**

This is the first inspection of the fostering service. The aim of this inspection was to inspect the service offered by the Yorkshire office against all of the five outcome areas. The inspection took place over three days between Tuesday 14 August 2007 to Thursday 16 August 2007. Two foster carers have been approved and no children or young people have been matched with them yet. At the time of the inspection both foster carers were away on holiday. A number of files and documents were read and applicants who were coming to the end of their assessments were visited. Discussions were held with the responsible individual, Registered Manager and members of the fostering team and fostering panel, including the panel agency decision maker.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

This is the first inspection of this service.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The training for prospective foster carers makes clear the importance of ensuring that young people receive the health care they need, and the foster care agreement and practice reflects the importance of this. The foster care handbook also contains detailed information about health issues and foster carers are expected to refer to this. Foster carers are also expected to record health information and discuss these aspects during their monthly supervision meetings. Foster carers who are being assessed are aware about their responsibilities, and are very experienced in meeting the health needs of young people with complex and life limiting health needs. In discussion, they understand their responsibilities and have sound contacts with health professionals. The fostering service has access to support from the panel medical advisor who is also a local community paediatrician. The fostering service plans to forge links with health services in promoting good health outcomes for young people, particularly when looking after young people with complex health needs who may need invasive treatment. The fostering service also plans to set up specific training workshops that will focus on issues, such as caring for a sexually abused child, positive intervention, first aid, and health and safety.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

There are proper systems in place to ensure that those who work in or for the fostering service are safe and suitable to work with children and young people. All checks are completed before staff take up appointments. There is evidence that Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks have

been done. Any issues identified are meticulously followed up. The CRB documents are not kept in line with the policy for destroying them. Some of the photographs on personnel files are not clear and no photographic identification was seen in one of the files. Assessments of foster carers are thorough and competency based. The recently approved foster carers have attended preparation training, facilitated by the fostering service and this forms part of their assessment. All checks are completed and references are followed up. Health and safety checks are also completed. The potential foster carers assessments are completed by senior practitioners. These documents are detailed, reflective and scrutinised by the foster panel. The foster panel chair and vice chair are suitably experienced and child-focussed. The foster panel members are representative of the different disciplines and included a number of independent members, who have received an induction and training. The agency decision maker is clear about their role and responsibilities and ratifies recommendations made at panel. The foster panel currently has a vacancy, however, there are enough members at the last panel for it to go ahead. The minutes of this foster panel provides a summary of discussions and reasons for the decisions made and signed by the agency decision maker to show their decision. The prospective foster carers attend panel and questions are posed to them and they also contribute. Discussions with panel members indicate that the panel members all have a say in the decision-making process and give feedback about the assessment process. Safe caring policies are to be developed in the recently approved foster carers households prior to a placement being made. Homes visited as part of the inspection are clean, tidy and suitably furnished. The fostering service has clear child protection policies and procedure and information about safe care practices and this information is included in the foster care handbook. This comprehensive document also contains information in relation to complaints, bullying, missing from home, behaviour management and allegations against foster carers. Foster carers have had training and discussions in safe care practices during preparation training as part of the approval process and in discussion, potential carers are clear about their responsibilities to keep children and young people safe. Foster carer agreements are on the files of the recently approved foster carers. One of them was awaiting the foster carers signature. The fostering service has a system for recording complaints, allegations of abuse and their outcomes. They are also aware about their responsibility to report any notifications to Ofsted. No Placements have been made yet with the newly approved foster carers. The fostering service places importance on proper matching of children and young people with carers who can meet their needs and promote stable placements.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The fostering service values diversity in all aspects of service delivery and this is supported by policy and practice. The fostering service has a sound equal opportunities policy and are committed to meeting the needs of different groups, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, gender, disability or sexuality. During discussion with various members of the service, a number of examples have been given to support this view. Valuing diversity is promoted during the assessment process and explored with potential foster carers. Preparation training groups are also held within the area for Asian languages. Same race place placements are promoted and there is specific training to counter homophobic attitudes as well as valuing diversity training. The fostering service is positive about the care and support they can offer to children and young people with disabilities and health needs and are targeting foster carers to meet this need. The fostering service understand the importance of education. They will make sure that foster carers support children and young people to promote good life chances in conjunction

with other agencies. There is an educational advisor who attends fostering panel who has the knowledge and experience to advise the panel, and is also available to the fostering team and foster carers. A number of educationally based services exist within the organisation that can be accessed for advice and support.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

The fostering service ensures that young people maintain and develop contact with family and significant others. Initial training and the assessment of potential foster carers makes clear the importance of contact and the foster carer handbook reinforces this view. Foster carers are expected to record significant issues arising following contact and the views of young people are listened to. There is a interactive DVD children's guide aimed at younger children being fostered, adopted or going on short breaks. The fostering service has developed systems to ensure that young people are consulted and supported to express their views and foster carers understand the importance of this. The complaints procedure is available and is known to foster carers.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

Systems are in place to ensure that foster carers receive an allowance and expenses. This is known to foster carers, who will receive a breakdown on how the allowances are made up.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The fostering service has a Statement of Purpose that accurately reflects the services provided. This document has been formally approved by the responsible individual. The children's guide reflects the Statement of Purpose and is child friendly and interactive. There is a clear management structure with clear lines of accountability between managers, staff and foster carers. The fostering team consists of one deputy manager, three senior practitioners and two administrators. The manager has a childcare background and is suitably qualified and experienced. Appropriate deputising arrangements are in place. The fostering service is competently managed and there is a child focussed approach in all aspects of practice. Staff are qualified and experienced and have transferable skills to undertake the fostering task. The team understands the role of placing social workers and what is expected from them when young people are placed. Team members spoke positively about their workload and the management support they receive. The team members are included in decision-making of potential carers assessments and give each other peer support. Team and panel members spoken with confirmed that training opportunities are available to them to develop their practice and regular staff meetings are held. Contingency plans are in place to meet the demands of increasing enquiries and foster care assessments. The fostering service has a clear plans for recruiting foster carers. They are targeting foster carers who can meet the needs of disabled young people, larger sibling groups, Black and Asian young people and teenagers. There is an information pack that explains the foster care role from pre-assessment to approval. This document is written in plain English and includes an application form and contact details. There is a clear strategy in place to support foster carers, which is made known to them during preparation training and after approval. Foster carers who have attended preparation training gave positive feedback. Further training will be made available to foster carers as the service develops and

young people are placed. The administrative support is sound and the foster carers files and other records are well organised, audited and securely stored. There is an open access to records policy. Foster carers and young people are encouraged to share and comment on records made and will be invited to feed back on the information shared. There are systems in place for addressing complaints and allegations, and the responsible individual takes responsibility in ensuring that the records under Schedule 7 are monitored in conjunction with the manager.

## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

### **Statutory requirements**

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Fostering Services Regulations 2005 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

| <b>Standard</b> | <b>Action</b>   | <b>Due date</b> |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| 15              | ensure personnel files include positive proof of identity, including a recent photograph (Regulations 5,7,20, Schedule 1) | 26 October 2007 |

### **Recommendations**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that the policy for the destruction of copies of criminal records bureau disclosures is adhered to NMS 15.

## Annex

## Annex A

### National Minimum Standards for independent fostering agency

#### Being healthy

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- the fostering service promotes the health and development of children (NMS 12)

**Ofsted considers 12 the key standard to be inspected.**

#### Staying safe

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- any persons carrying on or managing the service are suitable (NMS 3)
- the fostering service provides suitable foster carers (NMS 6)
- the service matches children to carers appropriately (NMS 8)
- the fostering service protects each child or young person from abuse and neglect (NMS 9)
- the people who work in or for the fostering service are suitable to work with children and young people (NMS 15)
- fostering panels are organised efficiently and effectively (NMS 30)

**Ofsted considers 3, 6, 8, 9, 15 and 30 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Enjoying and achieving

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- the fostering service values diversity (NMS 7)
- the fostering service promotes educational achievement (NMS 13)
- when foster care is provided as a short-term break for a child, the arrangements recognise that the parents remain the main carers for the child (NMS 31)

**Ofsted considers 7, 13 and 31 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Making a positive contribution

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- the fostering service promotes contact arrangements for the child or young person (NMS 10)
- the fostering service promotes consultation (NMS 11)

**Ofsted considers 10 and 11 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Achieving economic well-being

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- the fostering service prepares young people for adulthood (NMS 14)
- the fostering service pays carers an allowance and agreed expenses as specified (NMS 29)

**Ofsted considers none of the above to be key standards to be inspected.**

#### Organisation

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- there is a clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and the fostering service ensures that they meet those aims and objectives (NMS 1)
- the fostering service is managed by those with the appropriate skills and experience (NMS 2)
- the fostering service is monitored and controlled as specified (NMS 4)



**Annex A**

- the fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently (NMS 5)
- staff are organised and managed effectively (NMS 16)
- the fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff (NMS 17)
- the fostering service is a fair and competent employer (NMS 18)
- there is a good quality training programme (NMS 19)
- all staff are properly accountable and supported (NMS 20)
- the fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers (NMS 21)
- foster carers are provided with supervision and support (NMS 22)
- foster carers are appropriately trained (NMS 23)
- case records for children are comprehensive (NMS 24)
- the administrative records are maintained as required (NMS 25)
- The premises used as offices by the fostering service are suitable for the purpose (NMS 26)
- the fostering service is financially viable (NMS 27)
- the fostering service has robust financial processes (NMS 28)
- local authority fostering services recognise the contribution made by family and friends as carers (NMS 32)

**Ofsted considers 1, 16, 17, 21, 24, 25 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.**