

Hillcrest Care Ltd - Orange Grove Fostercare

Inspection report for independent fostering agency

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Inspector	Muhammed Harunur Rashid
Type of Inspection	Key

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Registered manager	Terri Patricia Cooper
Responsible individual	Tony Myers
Date of last inspection	15 October 2008

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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

Orange Grove Fostercare is an independent fostering service provider. It consists of seven regions and all are registered under their parent company Hillcrest Care Ltd based in Havant, Hampshire. The Three Shires regional office is based in Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire.

Summary

At this first announced full inspection the majority of the National Minimum Standards including all key standards were inspected. This is a good service. Children and young people's welfare is enhanced by the good relationships that exist between staff, foster carers, children and young people. Children and young people's health care needs are well met. They are living in a safe environment, they are attending schools regularly and young people have opportunities to develop independent living skills in preparation for leaving care. However, all foster carers have not completed their first aid and Children's Workforce Development Council training yet. The Registered Manager is in the process of completing her National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 4 training in Management. The Registered Manager has commitment to promoting the welfare of children and young people and focusing on improvement.

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 Orange Grove Fostercare, Three Shires region against the National Minimum Standards for fostering services and associated regulations.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children and young people's health care needs are well met. The fostering agency has comprehensive policies and procedural guidance for meeting children and young people's health care needs. Foster carers are well supported through the provision of various health care training and the support provided by the fostering agency. This helps to develop their knowledge and skills to meet children and young people's individual health care needs. The agency maintains a good link with health professionals in order to meet children and young people's health care needs. Foster carers maintain records of all medical appointments children and young people have attended or refused to attend. They also keep records of medication administered to children and young people. Foster carers purchase first aid equipment and the majority of them have attended first aid training. The Registered Manager advised the inspector that first aid training is booked for foster carers to ensure that they all complete the training.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The fostering agency staff are recruited in accordance with the staff recruitment policy and procedure of the Orange Grove Fostercare. The Human Resources department carries out all relevant checks on staff prior to their appointments. All relevant checks on foster carers, fostering team staff, panel members and others involved with children and young people are

carried out. The Registered Manager and social workers are qualified and experienced in the field of fostering and other child care settings.

Foster carers provide a comfortable and safe environment for children and young people. The homes visited were warm, furnished and maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene. Foster carers are provided with first aid and basic health and hygiene courses. They purchase first aid equipment. Health and safety in the foster home and the condition of the home are explored during assessment and at supervisory visits and annual reviews.

The matching process takes into account the needs of the children and young people and the foster carer's skills to meet such needs.

A comprehensive child protection policy and procedure is in place which protects children and young people. All staff and foster carers are provided with child protection training. Foster carers spoken to are aware of their responsibilities within the area of child protection. All foster carers complete a monthly report form on each child which covers all areas of staying safe.

The fostering agency shares the South Fostering Panel of the Orange Grove Fostercare, based in Malvern, Worcestershire. The fostering panel meeting's minutes demonstrated the correct composition as required by regulation. The meetings were quorate. There are clear decision making processes in place to support the effective functioning of the panel. Panel members come from a variety of professions and have a range of experience.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The fostering agency promotes diversity and equality through various training for staff and foster carers. 'Skills to Foster' training provides opportunities for foster carers to develop various skills in the areas of matching needs, sex and sexuality, behaviour management and health and safety.

The agency actively promotes education for children and young people with foster carers. Foster carers encourage and support children and young people to attend schools. The agency works closely with the placing authorities to secure formal education for children who do not have this. Foster carers' monthly reports and monthly supervision covers children and young people's educational attainments. The agency ensures that children's Personal Education Plans are up to date.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Foster carers encourage children and young people to maintain and develop family contacts. Where possible foster carers have established good relationships with birth parents. Foster carers understand the importance of maintaining these relationships and are positive about the arrangements made for contact. Issues raised are recorded and discussed in supervisory visits.

There are appropriate mechanisms in place by which to consult children and young people, for example, they are consulted during the Looked After Children's reviews and supervisory reviews.

Young people spoken to and who have completed questionnaires informed the inspector that foster carers and social workers consult with them and discuss their concerns and issues.

The fostering agency has a complaints policy and procedure in place. Staff keep records of all complaints received and how these are resolved within timescales.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The fostering agency closely works with the placing authorities to ensure that young people who are over 16 are put in Pathway plans. There are written requirements of what is expected of foster carers in terms of preparing children and young people for independent or semi-independent living. Foster carers encourage and support young people to develop living skills, for example, looking after personal spaces and budgeting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Orange Grove Fostercare, Three Shires region has a clear Statement of Purpose which was recently reviewed. This outlines the aims and objectives of the fostering agency. They have also developed a Children's Guide.

Overall there are good systems and support for staff, foster carers, children and young people. The agency is well managed with an effective management structure in place. The Registered Manager is appropriately qualified and currently undertaking NVQ Level 4 in Management. Staff and foster carers are supported through the provision of training, regular supervision and appraisals. The fostering agency has recently recruited a family support worker and is considering recruiting a senior practitioner.

There is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of records, and remedial action is taken when necessary. The fostering staff are supported by an administrator. The administrator informed the inspector that the facilities and equipment provided are sufficient to do the work. The agency is in the process of upgrading their Information Technology system which will enable staff to get access to organisational information and data in a more effective way.

The Registered Manager informed the inspector that at present foster carers have completed 75% of their Children's Workforce Development Council training. The agency is anticipating that foster carers will complete this training soon.

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.

Standard	Action	Due date
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23	ensure that all foster carers complete first aid and the Children's Workforce Development Council training in order to develop their knowledge and skills in fostering (Regulation 20)	31 October 2009
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Recommendations

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

- make sure that the Registered Manager completes her NVQ Level 4 in Management (NMS 2)