

Wakefield Private Fostering Arrangements

Inspection report for private fostering arrangements

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Inspector	David Martin
Type of Inspection	Key

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Registered manager	
Responsible individual	
Date of last inspection	24 January 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

Wakefield Metropolitan District Council is responsible for identifying and monitoring local private fostering arrangements. It also has a duty to publicise information about private fostering both with partner agencies and the general public.

Summary

This report follows the first announced inspection of private fostering arrangements in Wakefield. The inspection was carried out to assess how well the council fulfils its duties and responsibilities in relation to National Minimum Standards under the outcomes for safeguarding and organisation. At the time of the inspection, the council was working with 12 privately fostered children and young people. The council has responded well to its responsibilities and fieldwork services have taken a strong lead in raising awareness and monitoring arrangements. There are sound systems in place to ensure that the high profile of private fostering is sustained.

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 the private fostering arrangements in Wakefield.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The council has produced a good range of publicity material including leaflets for partner agencies and information on its website and in the safeguarding bulletin. There are plans to raise further public awareness through the inclusion of publicity in the local free newspaper. A comprehensive policy statement has been drawn up which includes a clear legal definition of private fostering. This is reiterated throughout the publicity material. The council responds well to all notifications. Prospective carers are subject to an initial assessment and, as necessary, robust vetting is carried out. This includes a check with local police and the Criminal Records Bureau. In addition, all existing private fostering arrangements are agreed in consultation with a senior manager. This is good practice and ensures that the arrangements are properly scrutinised and safe. Where a private fostering arrangement has been identified, the council makes arrangements to ensure that the young person's views are taken into account. The allocated social worker carries out monitoring visits and provides ongoing support and advice to both carers and the young person. The council has well developed plans to produce an information pack for young people. Fieldwork services and the safeguarding board have taken a strong lead on the private fostering arrangements and ensure that any placement takes into consideration any needs in relation to safeguarding, health care, education and contact. These measures ensure that privately fostered children are safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The council has produced a clear and strong private fostering statement which sets out its duties and responsibilities. It identifies how it will respond to notifications and who is responsible for monitoring private fostering arrangements. The statement and publicity material has been widely distributed, ensuring that the profile of private fostering is currently high and partner agencies are aware of their responsibilities. Private fostering is a standing agenda item for safeguarding board meetings. The safeguarding board has also developed a sub group which has a responsibility for private fostering. This ensures that as many people as possible are kept informed about current good practice and local developments. Case records for privately fostered young people are well maintained and demonstrate the council's ongoing commitment to ensuring that private fostering arrangements are safe. With regard to equality and diversity, the council has produced a comprehensive policy document. The staff have a sound understanding of the issues. The individual needs of the young people are taken into account in the decision making process. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The council has identified a number of areas for improvement. This includes the provision of training opportunities for carers, the introduction of participation forums for young people and closer co-working with specialist child protection nurses. Private fostering is well managed in Wakefield and young people benefit from the current arrangements.

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, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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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):