

Wigan Social Services Private Fostering Arrangements

Inspection report for private fostering arrangements

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Inspector	Sarah Oldham
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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

Wigan Children and Young People's Services covers the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan. At the time of the inspection the service was not aware of any children or young people in a private fostering arrangement.

Summary

This was an announced inspection. An interview was held with the temporary named member of staff responsible for overseeing the arrangements for private fostering. At the time of the inspection the authority did not have anyone in a private fostering arrangement. The policies and procedures for private fostering had been agreed in August 2007. Staff had not received any training regarding private fostering and the authorities policies and procedures although training sessions had been planned. As the service had recently developed the policies and procedures the Annual Quality Assurance Assessment and Data Set was unable to be completed in full due to it being too early in the development of the service to obtain information. The service acknowledged that 'the allocation of resources to develop a new service has taken time to identify because of ongoing problems with the recruitment of staff'.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the first inspection of the service, therefore this is not applicable.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Wigan Children and Young People's Service has developed the procedures for private fostering in August 2007. A programme of raising awareness has commenced and has included a leaflet for professionals working with children and young people, information in the children's services publication and a poster campaign. The programme of raising awareness had only recently commenced and therefore the impact of this had not been widely received. It was unclear what information was to be provided to children and young people about private fostering. The written procedures contain clear information detailing what a member of staff would be required to do when a private fostering arrangement is made known to the service. The procedures detail the assessment that is required to be undertaken to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of the child is assessed. This includes a health and safety checklist and an assessment of the carers ability to promote the child's health. The allocated worker will undertake visits to the young person every six weeks in the first year to ensure that the arrangement continues to meet the needs of the child or young person. Staff had however, not received training with regard to the procedures and were unclear about private fostering, the Private Fostering Standards and the Private Fostering Regulations 2005. A series of training had been planned and was due to commence in November 2007. At the time of the inspection the authority had not been notified of any young person who was privately fostered. A file of a young person

who had previously been privately fostered was inspected. The file although containing relevant information did not comply with the current written procedures that the authority had in place.

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 inadequate.

Wigan Children and Young People's service have commenced work in relation to private fostering. However, they acknowledge that there is further work to be undertaken to ensure that they comply with the standards and The Private Fostering Regulations 2005. The service has developed the procedures and has initialised an information campaign throughout the borough. Staff have not undertaken any training or formal briefing with regard to private fostering and there was a general lack of knowledge and understanding of the standards of the Private Fostering Regulations 2005. A programme of training has been identified for staff which is due to commence at the beginning of November 2007. Wigan does not have an identified officer to continue with the work commenced by a previous senior manager. The policies and procedures for private fostering agreed in August 2007 were not known to staff of the department. The service does not have systems in place to ensure that monitoring of notifications, the annual reporting to the Local Safeguarding Children Board or disqualifications of private foster carers. It is envisaged that a nominated officer will be appointed to take the lead role of the private fostering to ensure that the work already undertaken will be further developed.

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):

- provide information to professionals, who may come into contact with children and young people, information relating to private fostering (NMS 2)
- continue to promote awareness for people within the community about private fostering arrangements (NMS 2)
- provide information for children and young people about private fostering (NMS 2)

- develop an effective monitoring system to ensure compliance with the standards and the regulations (NMS 7)
- implement the policies and procedures (NMS 1)
- provide training or briefing for staff on the private fostering arrangements (NMS 1)
- appoint a suitable person to be the nominated officer for private fostering (NMS 1)
- create a Statement of Purpose which meets the National Minimum Standards(NMS 1)
- develop an appropriate reporting system to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. (NMS 7)

Annex

Annex A

National Minimum Standards for private fostering arrangements

Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- the local authority is notified about privately fostered children living in its area (NMS 2)
- the welfare of privately fostered children is safeguarded and promoted. (NMS 3)
- private foster carers and parents of privately fostered children receive advice and support to assist them to meet the needs of privately fostered children; privately fostered children are able to access information and support when required so that their welfare is safeguarded and promoted (NMS 4)
- the local authority identifies and provides advice and support to the parents of children who are privately fostered within their area (NMS 5)
- children who are privately fostered are able to access information and support when required so that their welfare is safeguarded and promoted. Privately fostered children are enabled to participate in decisions about their lives (NMS 6).

Ofsted considers 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 the key standards to be inspected.

Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

Achieving economic well-being

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

Organisation

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- relevant staff are aware of local authority duties and functions in relation to private fostering (NMS 1)
- the local authority monitors the way in which it discharges its duties and functions in relation to private fostering (NMS 7).

Ofsted considers 1 and 7 the key standards to be inspected.