

Sandwell Local Authority Private Fostering Arrangements Agency

Inspection report for la fostering agency

Unique reference number	SC079382
Inspection date	14 May 2007
Inspector	David Morgan
Type of Inspection	Key

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Registered manager	Sharon Storrod
Responsible individual	Sharon Storrod
Date of last inspection	

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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

A private fostering arrangement is made without the involvement a local authority for the care of a child under 16 years of age. Care is provided by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention of lasting more than 28 days. The local authority does not approve or register such carers, but it has a duty to ensure the welfare of the child is promoted and safeguarded. Sandwell Borough Council has arrangements in place through its Community Support Services to fulfil its legal responsibilities in this matter. The current role of Ofsted in Private Fostering Arrangements is solely to report on the degree to which the relevant National Minimum Standards have been implemented. Central government will review this in 2009.

Summary

The Authority was unable to present any information at the time of inspection and the inspector was informed that no children were known to be privately fostered. In the following two weeks the Authority submitted such information as was available but this was too late to be effectively inspected. The information included a draft Statement of Purpose, an information leaflet and certain data. The data indicated that three children were being privately fostered.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

There are no National Minimum standards under this outcome.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

NMS 2 Notifications to the Local Authority The local authority has produced a leaflet about private fostering that is available to the public and satisfactorily meets the standard. There is no programme of publicity or communication. Similarly, there was no evidence of communication with staff. The inspector was informed that social workers have responded to three referrals. This could not be checked and neither could other parts of this Standard. NMS 3 Welfare of Children. It was not possible to inspect this Standard. The Authority reported that it was unable to confirm that all carers had been vetted; this must be addressed forthwith. NMS 4 Advice and Support to Carers The fact that some children have become known to the local authority indicates that their carers had had an opportunity to speak to a social worker. However, this could not be verified. NMS 5 Advice and Support to Parents It was not possible to inspect this Standard. NMS 6 Information to Children. It was not possible to inspect this Standard

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

There are no National Minimum standards under this outcome.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

There are no National Minimum standards under this outcome.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

There are no National Minimum standards under this outcome.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

NMS 1 Statement of Purpose A draft statement of purpose was provided to the inspector. This addresses many of the requirements of this standard. However, it must be confirmed as acceptable by the authority, dated and circulated as necessary. It must also address the remainder of the criteria in this standard. NMS 7 Monitoring Currently, there is no monitoring of these 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, The Fostering Services Regulations 2005 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
1	arrange for the statement of purpose to be confirmed as acceptable by the authority, dated and circulated as necessary, and, for it to include all the matters identified in this standard (Standard 1)	2 July 2007
1	must provide Ofsted with an action plan showing how and when it will implement both the legislation and its associated National Minimum Standards (Children Act 1989).	2 July 2007
3	arrange for all vetting checks of carers to be undertaken forthwith (Regulation 4)	2 July 2007
7	organise a system for monitoring the private fostering arrangements (Regulation 12).	25 June 2007

Recommendations

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