

City of Salford Private Fostering Arrangements

Inspection report for private fostering arrangements

Unique reference number	SC072674
Inspection date	28 July 2008
Inspector	Sue Winson
Type of Inspection	Key

Address	Salford Community & Social Services Avon House Avon Close Worsley MANCHESTER M28 0LA
Telephone number	0161 603 4300
Email	
Registered person	City of Salford, Children's Services Directorate
Registered manager	Carolyn Williams
Responsible individual	Carolyn Williams
Date of last inspection	

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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

Salford City Council Children's Services carries out its duties in relation to private fostering through its child protection and courts teams, whose Head of Service monitors the notifications and arrangements. A small number of children have been identified as living in private fostering arrangements.

Summary

The authority can demonstrate that it is working to improve and refine its policies, procedures and practices in relation to private fostering. Changes in the management arrangements were made to increase the focus on safeguarding children and young people.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable as this is the first inspection of private fostering arrangements.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The local authority can demonstrate that it is working to raise the profile of private fostering and a range of activities have been carried out to inform the public, staff and other agencies about the procedures for notification. Training and information has been provided to a wide range of people who may come into contact with privately fostered children. Information to the public is clear and is available in a range of languages. Despite this, the number of notifications remains low and further strategies are planned. The manager is part of a group in the north west which meets to share information about private fostering throughout the region. The private fostering service is located within the safeguarding teams in Salford. This move has been beneficial in raising the profile of privately fostered children. Where child protection issues have arisen, appropriate action has been taken. Policies, procedures and guidance for social workers largely meet the regulations and standards. Information on prohibiting private fostering arrangements, imposing requirements and appeals against decisions is not available. Records demonstrate that private fostering arrangements are not always identified at early stages. Initial visits to carers and children are carried out within the necessary timescales and reports written which focus on the carer's ability to meet needs. The majority of subsequent visits are also carried out within required timescales. The local authority can demonstrate that the needs of children in private fostering arrangements are largely met. Multi-agency work is well established, children access specialist services and there is a strong focus on their health and development. The suitability of carers is not always assessed in line with their own policies and procedures, particularly with regard to checks being done in a timely manner. The same social worker is allocated to the child, carer and parent and there is evidence of support being provided to them in a multi-disciplinary and co-ordinated way. Children, parents and carers are aware that they can contact their social worker and do so. Contact is

encouraged and promoted. Arrangements are not in place for children to access advocacy services.

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 satisfactory.

The Statement of Purpose, policies and procedures meet regulations and standards in most respects. Systems are in place to record the number, nature and sources of any enquiries about private fostering and actions taken. These also allow for management monitoring of compliance with policies. Action plans are in place and there is a focus on continued improvement. The local authority reports annually to the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Director of Children's Services. Private fostering is included in induction and ongoing training for all social workers. Two designated social workers from the court and protection team deal with private fostering arrangements. A family placement worker links this team and the fostering team. Separate records are kept for each privately fostered child and carer and records comment on the welfare of the child and whether the placement is satisfactory. Areas of concern are highlighted. The format for recording visits has been changed recently to ensure that social workers provide evidence that they have seen the child alone and ascertained their wishes and feelings.

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
3	ensure that action is taken on all matters referred to in Schedule 3 on receipt of a notification about a child being fostered privately (Regulations 7 and 8).	30 August 2008

Recommendations

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

- continue to work to ensure that private fostering arrangements are identified at early stages (NMS 2)

- ensure that children and young people are provided with relevant information including access to advocacy services (NMS 4)
- continue with planned improvements to maintaining and monitoring accurate and comprehensive case records (NMS 7)
- amend policies and procedures to include all the necessary information (NMS 1)
- ensure that assessment of carers is carried out in line with the local authority's policies and procedures (NMS 3).

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.