

Private Fostering Arrangements Services

Rotherham

Inspection report for private fostering arrangements

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Inspector	Helen Humphreys
Type of Inspection	Key

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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

Rotherham Children and Young People's Services (RCYPS) have private fostering arrangements. This work is led by the Nominated Officer who is a Locality Manager. He and the work is supported by a multi agency group. The service currently has three approved private fostered arrangements in place.

Summary

This was an announced inspection carried out over two days and included inspection of all the National Minimum Standards (NMS). The arrangements for privately fostered children have been in place for some years and have recently been revised. The Nominated Officer is competent to carry out the role and robust procedures, which are known to staff, are in place. The authority has carried out campaigns to raise the profile of private fostering and the publicity material is appropriate and widely circulated. RCYPS use a thorough assessment process which may inhibit carers from coming forward and due to the time they take to complete may not be finished prior to a placement ending. The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosures are not always obtained within appropriate timescales.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This was the first inspection of the 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 authority has an effective notification system in place which is known to staff and other agency professionals. Information is provided in leaflet and poster format and also on the external website. The authority has systems in place to respond to notifications and generally placements which extend beyond 28 days are allocated and responded to in a timely way. There is a system in place to recognise cases which have not been allocated or responded to. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) undertakes an assessment under the Common Assessment Framework and also uses the British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) Form F assessments to undertake a thorough assessment of the potential carers. These are detailed but can take from two to four months to complete. The council initially undertakes a check with the safeguarding board and the police prior to the CRB disclosures being completed. However there has been some delay in these being completed and sent to the CRB, and in all the cases reviewed none of the CRB disclosures had been returned. The council also complete Looked After Children paperwork including care plans to provide information to the carer which is also kept on file. Young people in placement are reviewed using the statutory review process and on some occasions inaccurate language has been used regarding the status of the children placed. The carers and young people are provided with good support through regular visits, use of Section 17 (Children Act) money and access to other services. All young people are making good progress in their placements and in some situations their lives have improved

since moving into the private fostering arrangements. Parents also have access to information and are kept informed of progress and decisions. There is good practice planned in respect of contact arrangements for at least one young person.

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.

Rotherham have an appropriate Private Fostering Statement which meets the NMS and sets out clearly the duties of the authority and how they intend to carry these out. The statement has recently been revised. The authority has an effective monitoring system in place which is used by the Nominated Officer. The files for the carers and young people are detailed and thorough, well ordered and audited. An annual report is prepared and shared with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Arrangements are in place to approve or disqualify carers. Arrangements are in place for the recording of all notifications.

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):

- ensure that CRB processes are carried out in a timely way (NMS 7.2)
- ensure that the assessment arrangements in place do not inhibit a carer from notifying the authority of private fostering arrangements and are carried out and completed within appropriate timescales. (NMS 3.4)

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.