

# Richmond Private Fostering Arrangements Services

Inspection report for private fostering arrangements

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<b>Inspector</b>	Muhammed Harunur Rashid
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	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**

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames holds statutory powers and responsibilities in relation to private fostering arrangements within the borough. The Initial Response Team is the first point of contact and handle all initial enquiries. Notified arrangements identified as private fostering are then transferred to the Family Support Team. The Fostering Team Manager has been identified as the responsible manager for private fostering, and has the responsibility for ensuring that all such arrangements are recorded and that the assessment of the suitability of the carers, and the relevant checks, have been carried out. The Fostering Team Manager has expertise in private fostering and is based in Education and Children Services office at Twickenham.

### **Summary**

At this announced full inspection all key standards were inspected. The outcomes not examined included being healthy, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution and economic wellbeing. This is because there are no key standards under these outcomes. This is the first inspection of the private fostering arrangements made by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. This is a good service. Good systems have been developed to promote the service and keep young people safe. A number of different methods have been introduced to raise awareness of private fostering with the members of public and with relevant professionals. The numbers of notified arrangements are low and plans are in place for further publicity with wider distribution of information. There is a clear assessment and decision making process with regard to the suitability of arrangements in place for children. Records of assessments include details of how children's assessed needs would be met.

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 London Borough of Richmond upon Thames against the National Minimum standards for Private Fostering and associated regulations.

### **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 local authority promotes awareness of the private fostering service available in the borough. In order to raise awareness on private fostering amongst the authority's partner agencies a report was presented to the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). To ensure accountability the LSCB has agreed that private fostering would be a priority for them and this would be a standing item on the staying safe subgroup of the LSCB. Clearly written and easily understandable information leaflets were distributed in the local areas, schools and various faith groups. Advertisements and articles were published in the local press. The local authority advertised about private fostering on the public notice boards, G.P surgeries, Richmond borough website and in the local libraries. The private fostering awareness campaign in Richmond has provided valuable information to the local community but has resulted in few notifications

being received. The local authority is planning a further publicity campaign to heighten awareness about private fostering and its partner agencies remain vigilant in identifying and notifying of any private fostering arrangements they become aware of. All social workers and relevant professionals have attended training and have awareness related to private fostering. Further training is booked for all staff and professionals. There are identified processes in place to deal effectively with situations where a private fostering arrangement has come to the attention of the local authority. Following the identification of private fostering arrangements an assessment is undertaken which includes details of the household, the suitability of the home environment, the suitability of the carers and issues related to the child's health, education, culture and religion. The assessment includes giving consideration to whether or not a child should be a child in need. Where this is the case, appropriate steps are taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child. Financial arrangements are taken into account and advice is given with regards to benefits. The local authority undertakes an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) disclosure for all adults in the household. The full report with recommendations is presented to the private fostering panel. The final decision for the approval or disapproval is made by the assistant director. The full process concludes within 35 days of the original notification. The agency allocates a social worker who is responsible for visiting the child every six weeks. The social worker maintains all records in individual child and private foster carers' files. The records include assessment details, information relating to health and education and comprehensive reports of regular visits to children and carers. The local authority ensures that young people are involved in the assessment and review process. Their views and wishes and those of the people close to them are listened to. Information about advocacy services are given to young people. Training courses are available to all private foster carers; carers are given training information and are encouraged to attend. The local authority is in the process of developing a child friendly leaflet for providing better information about the private fostering.

### **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.

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames has an appropriate written private fostering policy document in place which includes all the necessary information, such as the legal definition of a privately fostered child, the local authority's duties and functions and awareness of the notification requirements. There is a good system in place to monitor, review and develop the service available to children and foster carers where a private fostering arrangement has been notified. The system includes full details of the process used to assess the arrangements and support and advice available following assessment. The fostering team manager has been identified as the responsible manager for private fostering. However, following the departure of the previous manager the agency has employed a new principal manager for Looked After Children and leaving care team. The newly appointed manager is due to take up the responsibility for private fostering and the local authority needs to confirm this in writing to Ofsted. The

agency's policies and procedures include a process for dealing with a situation where unsuitable fostering arrangements have been identified and there is an appeals procedure for use in cases of disagreement. The agency ensures that records are kept of all private fostering arrangements and these are notified as required to the department of Children, Schools and Families. Children's care is monitored and reviewed by social workers who visit every six weeks. They are visited at home, at school and sometimes at alternative agreed venues. Children are seen with carers and alone.

## 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):

- notify Ofsted in writing the name of the manager within the local authority with expertise in private fostering who will be responsible for decisions about the overall suitability of a private fostering arrangement (NMS1)
- develop a child friendly leaflet for providing better information about the private fostering (NMS6).

## 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.**