

# Newham Private Fostering Arrangements Service

Inspection report for private fostering arrangements

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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 Newham holds statutory powers and responsibilities in relation to private fostering arrangements within the local area. The private fostering provision is located within the Children and Young People Services. The Central Assessment and Intervention Team is the first point of contact and handles all initial enquiries. Notified arrangements identified as private fostering are then transferred to the appropriate children in need team for further assessment. There is a named individual who is responsible for ensuring the service is monitored, reviewed and developed and that children are appropriately supported. Private fostering arrangements in place are assessed to ensure they are meeting the needs of the children and young people. A named social worker is allocated to monitor arrangements and visit children at six weekly intervals. The Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) is informed as required by regulation of all private fostering arrangements made by the local authority.

### **Summary**

This is the first inspection of the private fostering arrangements made by the London Borough of Newham. The key National Minimum Standards were assessed. Very good systems have been developed to promote the service and keep young people safe. A range of methods have been introduced to raise the awareness of the general public and relevant professionals about private fostering arrangements. At the time of this inspection there were 27 notified arrangements recorded. This reflects the success of the awareness campaigns, workshops, road shows and literature available. 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 health, education and day to day needs will be met. The procedure includes details of how to appeal against a decision where the arrangement has not been approved. The Newham Children and Young People's Service takes responsibility for raising awareness about private fostering arrangements and for ensuring there are procedures in place to identify, assess and support all notifications made to the local authority. No requirements or recommendations have been made at this first inspection.

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 Newham Private Fostering Arrangements.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is not judged.

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 private fostering arrangements throughout the borough. Road shows, seminars and information sessions take place regularly at various local venues. Clearly written and easily understandable literature is available for children, carers and parents. Literature can be found in local council offices, libraries, health centres, GP surgeries

and youth and community venues. Articles are printed in the Newham magazine distributed to every home in the borough and on the Newham website. Information is available in a range of community languages. The awareness campaign has been successful and 27 private fostering arrangements have been notified. The promotion campaign is monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure information is reaching relevant people such as local community and faith groups. User friendly forms are in place to assist notification, these include questions about the child's situation. Children's social workers and relevant professionals have attended training and awareness days. There is a procedure in place to deal with private fostering arrangements that has been identified but has not been notified in accordance with regulation. Arrangements are assessed to ensure the needs of young people are being met. The assessment includes details of the household, the suitability of the home environment, the suitability of the carers and issues related to the child's health and education. The overall assessment ascertains the child's view of the placement. It looks closely at physical and emotional needs and issues that may arise related to culture, language, race, religion and gender. Consideration is given to whether or not a child should be classified as 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 regard to benefits where it is needed. The local authority undertakes an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure (CRB) for all adult people in the household and for regular visitors to the carer's home. The full report of the child's circumstances is signed off by the responsible team manager prior to presentation at the Private Fostering Panel. The final decision with regard to whether the arrangement is approved or not is made by the Head of Children's Services. The full process is concluded within 35 days of the original notification. Each arrangement is allocated a social worker who is responsible for visiting the child every six weeks. Visits are made to the child at home, at school and on occasion visits are planned to take place at venues in the community. Records are kept for each placement and these include assessment details, information related to health and education and comprehensive reports of regular visits to children and carers. Where appropriate social workers are accompanied by interpreters when visiting. Carers and children are given telephone contact details of the responsible social work team and for the allocated social worker. Throughout the notification and assessment process the child's need remain paramount. Details of advocacy services are given to young people. Services provided are aimed at ensuring that each child remains at the centre of the assessment. Their views and wishes and those of the people close to them are listened to. Where appropriate children are given details of alternative care options available to them and they are supported to understand and be involved in the process for the approval of the private fostering arrangement. Training is available to all Newham foster carers including private foster carers. For private foster carers training is a new area and the taking up of places on courses is low. Carers are given training information and are encouraged to attend.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is not judged.

The provision is not judged

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is not judged.

The provision is not judged

## Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

The provision is not judged

## Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is an appropriate Statement of Purpose in place, which clearly defines the duties and functions of the local authority with regard to private fostering arrangements. The Statement of Purpose meets the National Minimum Standards. Copies are available on the Newham website. There is a system in place to monitor, review and develop the service available to children and carers where a private fostering arrangement has been notified. The system includes full details of the process used to assess the arrangements and the support and advice available following assessment. Policies and procedures include processes for dealing with a situation where unsuitable arrangements have been identified. In such cases either alternative arrangements are made or actions are required to ensure the wellbeing of the child. There is an appeals procedure for use in cases of disagreement. Details of all private fostering arrangements are kept by the local authority with copies sent to the DCSF as required by regulation. Records include a copy of the original assessment and the relevant details of CRB disclosures for carers and relevant others. There are comprehensive reports on file of visits to children and these include details of education, health and day to day living arrangements. Files are audited regularly to ensure case recording is accurate and appropriate. 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. Child protection concerns are notified and dealt with in the same way as for all children. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure the children's safety and wellbeing is promoted through the investigation process. A review of the private fostering procedures is carried out each year. The review examines and evaluates outcomes for children and details the improvement plans developed for the next 12 months. Newham reports annually to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board on how with other relevant agencies it is able to ensure that the welfare of children in private fostering arrangements is safeguarded and promoted.

## 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):

## 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.**