

# Kirklees MC Family Placement Services (Private Fostering Arrangements)

Inspection report for private fostering arrangements

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC072478
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 November 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	David Martin
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

---

<b>Address</b>	Kirklees Metropolitan Council Community Care Services 13a Westfield Road MIRFIELD West Yorkshire WF14 9PW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 483707
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Kirklees Council
<b>Registered manager</b>	Janet Matley
<b>Responsible individual</b>	
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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](http://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**

<b>Outstanding:</b>	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
<b>Good:</b>	this aspect of the provision is strong
<b>Satisfactory:</b>	this aspect of the provision is sound
<b>Inadequate:</b>	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## **Service information**

### **Brief description of the service**

Kirklees Metropolitan Council is responsible for identifying and monitoring private fostering arrangements. It also has a duty to publicise information about private fostering both with partner agencies and the general public.

### **Summary**

This report follows the first announced inspection of private fostering arrangements in Kirklees. The inspection was carried out to assess how well the council fulfils its duties and responsibilities in relation to National Minimum Standards under the outcomes for safeguarding and management. At the time of the inspection, the council was aware of five privately fostered children. The council made some initial attempts in 2005 to promote awareness of private fostering but has made little progress since. There is a lack of leadership and an absence of any up to date publicity material. The council carried out an audit of private fostering arrangements in July 2008 which identified a number of shortfalls. It subsequently developed an action plan which will be implemented without further delay. There are concerns that existing private fostering arrangements are not given priority. Young people are not safeguarded by the current arrangements.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

This is the first inspection of the private fostering arrangements in Kirklees.

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

The provision is not judged.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is inadequate.

The council has produced limited publicity material for partner agencies or the public to promote notifications of private fostering arrangements. It has recognised that its leaflet for parents and carers needs to be reviewed. Its own audit of private fostering notes a number of shortfalls in the way in which existing private fostering is monitored. This includes a lack of evidence that Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks have been carried out for carers and their families, no formal contact agreements, no discussion about the duration of placements and limited records relating to monitoring visits to young people. Carers are not provided with any training opportunities. Existing private fostering arrangements are often monitored through the duty system and such cases are typically given low allocation priority. Young people are not safeguarded by the current arrangements.

### **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 inadequate.

The council has produced a private fostering statement of purpose which is broadly in line with requirements. However, it has not been reviewed since 2005 and parts of it are out of date. The internal systems for monitoring the council's response to its duties and functions in relation to private fostering are limited. There is currently no mechanism for recording the rates and nature of referrals or the numbers of existing private fostering arrangements. Routine checks on disqualification of carers are not carried out and there is no evidence to indicate that the imposition of prohibitions or requirements on carers has been considered. On the day of inspection, the safeguarding board met to consider its first report in connection with the private fostering arrangements in Kirklees. As a result of this meeting, private fostering will be a standing agenda item and a communications sub group will be given a lead role. This is an improvement on current practice. The council has recognised the fact that there has been an absence of leadership in promoting private fostering. In order to improve the situation a deputy fieldwork team manager with lead responsibility for private fostering has been appointed and will take up the post in January 2009. Case records for privately fostered young people are not sufficiently detailed to provide an account of the work that is being carried out with young people, parents or carers. In relation to equality and diversity, the council has yet to make efforts to reach minority groups within the community. The council has also identified a shortfall in connection with the after care arrangements for young people with a disability. The promotion of equality and diversity is inadequate. Young people do not benefit from the current management and monitoring of the private fostering 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, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
3	provide evidence that CRB checks have been undertaken for all adults in a carer's household (Regulation 7)	31 December 2008
3	draw up formal contact agreements and ascertain the likely duration of placements (Regulation 7)	31 December 2008
7	maintain detailed case records in connection with privately fostered young people (Regulation 7)	31 December 2008
1	review the statement (Regulation 12)	31 December 2008
7	implement a system for recording the rates and nature of referrals and the numbers of existing private fostering arrangements (Regulation 12)	31 December 2008

---

3	checks on disqualification of carers and consider whether the imposition of prohibitions or requirements on carers is appropriate (Regulation 7).	31 December 2008
---	---	------------------

## Recommendations

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

- promote awareness of the notification requirements and ensure that partner agencies understand their role (NMS 2)
- provide carers with training opportunities (NMS 4)
- allocate cases where there are private fostering arrangements as a priority (NMS 5).