

# London Borough of Hounslow Private Fostering Arrangements

Inspection report for private fostering arrangements

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<b>Inspector</b>	Muhammed Harunur Rashid
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	

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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 Hounslow holds statutory power and responsibilities in relation to private fostering arrangements within the borough. The placement service's duty is as the first point of contact and to handle all initial enquires. The fostering team then carries out assessments and all relevant checks of the private foster carers. Following successful completion of the assessments and checks the fostering team manager allocates a social worker, who has knowledge and expertise in private fostering, to each privately fostered child and foster carer.

### **Summary**

At this full inspection all key standards were inspected. The outcomes not examined including 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 Hounslow. This is a good service. Good systems have been developed to promote the service and keep children and young people safe. A number of different methods have been introduced to raise awareness of private fostering with members of public and with relevant professionals. The numbers of notified arrangements are good and plans are in place for further publicity with wide distribution of information.

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 Hounslow 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 London Borough of Hounslow promotes awareness of private fostering arrangements throughout the borough. The local authority has produced information brochures/leaflets for private foster carers and professionals who are likely to come into contact with privately fostered children and private foster carers. Road shows, seminars and inform sessions take place regularly at various local venues, such as, schools and faith groups. Articles and advertisements are printed in the local magazine and newspapers distributed to every home in the borough and on the Hounslow council website. The private fostering awareness campaign in Hounslow has provided valuable information to the local community. The London Borough of Hounslow has received 24 private fostering arrangements referrals. Social workers of Fostering Team, Children in Needs Team and relevant professionals have attended training on private fostering. Awareness of private fostering is incorporated into the induction programme for family Placement staff. Additional understanding and knowledge is gained through staff attending workshops, seminars, team meetings and one to one supervision. The local authority has two dedicated social workers who take lead on private fostering. Staff experienced in carrying out private fostering assessments ensure that the initial assessments are carried out on all notifications to determine

whether they meet the private fostering criteria and suitability of the home environment, the suitability of the carers and issues related to the child's health and education. The overall assessments ascertain the child's view of the placement and the physical, emotional needs and issues related to culture, language, race, religion and gender. Financial arrangements are taken into account and advice is given with regard to benefits where needed. The local authority undertakes enhanced Criminal Record Bureau disclosures for all adults living in the home. The full report of the child's circumstances is signed off by the fostering team manager prior to presentation at the fostering panel. The final decision with regard to whether the arrangement is approved or not is made by the Assistant Director of Children's Services. The local authority provides advice and support to the parents of children who are privately fostered within their area. Social workers discuss contact issues during supervisory support visits. Each arrangement is allocated a social worker who is responsible for visiting children. Where appropriate social workers are accompanied by interpreters when visiting. Details of advocacy services are given to children. Private foster carers spoken to inform the Inspector that they are satisfied with the support and advice given by the local authority. Private foster carers' files included 'safer caring' booklets. Social workers informed the Inspector that they discuss various issues with private foster carers, such as safer caring principles and practices during supervisory support visits. Evidence shows that all private foster carers have not attended formal training on private fostering although this was offered to them. The Registered Manager assured the Inspector that they will continue to encourage and support private foster carers to attend various training on 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 Hounslow has appropriate written private fostering policy documents in place which include 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. The local authority has developed a children and young person's friendly brochure providing information about advice and support that is available to privately fostered children. The local authority consult directly with children during statutory visits and their views are incorporated into the care plan for the child. There is a good system in place to monitor and review the service available to children and foster carers where private fostering arrangements have been identified. The system includes full details of the process used to assess the arrangements, support and advice available following assessments. The London Borough of Hounslow has identified a Registered Manager for private fostering services who closely works with multi agency teams to ensure that there is an overview with regards to the management, awareness raising and safeguarding requirements for private fostering cases. The local authority has allocated two dedicated social workers who take lead on private fostering notifications, assessments and supporting children and private foster carers. The local authority ensures that

records are kept for all private fostering arrangements and these are notified to the Department for Children Schools and Families. The local authority reports to the Local Safeguarding Children Board on how it satisfies itself that the welfare of privately fostered children in its area is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted, including how it co-operates with other agencies concerned.

## 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):

- continue to encourage and support private foster carers to attend various training in order to develop their knowledge and skills in private fostering (NMS 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.**