

London Borough of Havering Private Fostering Arrangements Service

Inspection report for private fostering arrangements

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| Inspector | Jackie Graves |
| 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

Private Fostering is dealt with by the Family Placement Service within the London Borough of Havering Fostering Team. The designated person is the senior manager of the Family Placement Service. A dedicated private fostering social worker has been appointed, who works within the fostering team, taking responsibility for private fostering notifications, advice and support.

Summary

This is the first inspection against the National Minimum Standards of the London Borough of Havering's private fostering arrangements. Private fostering arrangements are to be inspected over a three year period. It must be acknowledged that this inspection took place within the second year of this period, so Havering will have had less time to progress compared to those local authorities due an inspection in year three. Havering has arrangements in place to promote awareness of private fostering and notification requirements. Despite various publicity campaigns, no private fostering arrangements have been referred to the authority. All key National Minimum Standards were assessed but it was not possible to speak to parents, carers or children involved in private fostering. There are no standards under the outcome groups for Being Healthy, Enjoying and Achieving, Making A Positive Contribution or Achieving Economic Well-being, so these have not been inspected.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This section is not applicable as this is the first inspection of Havering's private fostering arrangements.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

There are no standards under this outcome area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Action has been taken to raise awareness about private fostering within the community, through the use of leaflets, posters and in written information from the council to all households. Briefings have been held for other professionals in social care, education and health, with presentations given to the Safeguarding Board and Carers Panel. However, these efforts have not resulted in any notifications of private fostering being made. Havering has identified the need to review the effectiveness of its awareness raising campaign. There are systems in place to make sure privately fostered children are safe, such as to check that all adults in the household are suitable to privately foster, to ensure that panel oversees all notifications and to report annually to the local safeguarding board on outcomes for privately fostered children. Arrangements have been made for privately fostered children to be allocated their own social worker, who will visit them regularly to safeguard their welfare and ascertain their views on the arrangements. There are plans for the private fostering social worker to work closely with children's social workers to achieve the best outcomes for privately fostered children. Young

people would have access to the Children's Rights Officer. Havering plans to support private foster carers through training and professional development. Written information has been prepared so that prospective private foster carers will have details about the help, support and training which is available to them. There are also plans to offer support, information and advice to the parents of privately fostered children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

There are no standards under this outcome area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

There are no standards under this outcome area.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

There are no standards under this outcome area.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Arrangements have been made for the Senior Manager of the Family Placement Service to be the named person with responsibility for the management of private fostering. The service benefits from an experienced, designated social worker who would offer support and advice to carers and parents of privately fostered children. Those staff involved in private fostering, extend their knowledge and understanding by attending conferences and special interest groups. Policies and procedures on private fostering arrangements have been developed. These set out Havering's duties and functions in relation to private fostering and contain most, but not all, recommended information. Systems are in place to ensure any notifications, assessments or reviews of private fostering would be brought to the Carer's Panel, and for senior management to sign-off decisions about the overall suitability of any placements.

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 |
|----------|--------|----------|
|----------|--------|----------|

Recommendations

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

- review the effectiveness of the awareness campaign in ensuring that all sections of the community and professionals are aware of the need to notify the authority of any private fostering arrangements (NMS 2)

- ensure all necessary details are included in the policy and procedure for private fostering, including: the name of the person within the local authority with expertise in private fostering; the manager responsible for signing off decisions about arrangements; how relevant staff will be trained; and information and support available to privately fostered children (NMS 1)

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.