

London Borough of Haringey Private Fostering Arrangements Service

Inspection report for private fostering arrangements

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Inspector	Karen Malcolm
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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 Haringey Private Fostering Arrangements Service was set up in June 2006, developing public awareness strategies of promoting the service within the borough. The campaign strategy was based on a comprehensive picture of the ethnic, racial, religious and linguistic make up of the boroughs population and the mapping of services provided to children and families by the local authority and partners in the statutory sector plus voluntary and independent providers. Over the past three years this has been an enormous success. As at present the private fostering service team supports approximately 37 children and young people within the community. The team's current make up is a Registered Manager, Senior Team Manager and two social workers.

Summary

This was The London Borough of Haringey Private Fostering Arrangements Service's first inspection. At this full inspection all key standards were inspected. Overall Haringey Private Fostering Arrangement Service is judged to be a good service. Haringey has raised the awareness of the service by ensuring that both professionals and the wider community are aware of private fostering and that these arrangements are to be notified to local authority.

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 London Borough of Haringey Private Fostering Arrangement Service's first inspection.

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 Haringey's Private Fostering Arrangements Service from July 2006 has been raising the awareness of private fostering throughout the borough. From this the service has developed a public communication strategy to increase general awareness of private fostering and encourage those involved to come forward. The original plan was to work systematically through the borough 'ward' by 'ward'. However, the first round of awareness raising was extremely successful and generated referrals from across the authority and not just within the targeted areas. Several notifications were received from other professional bodies, as well as the wider community. Wednesday 23 January 2008 was Private Fostering Awareness Day and Haringey joined the London wide campaign headed by British Association for Fostering and Adoption (BAAF) to protect the 'hidden' children who are living in private fostering arrangements. Further promotion of the service was undertaken borough wide through, briefs with other professionals and leaflets which gave good clear practical examples, scenarios of who is a private foster carer. The leaflets advertised are produced in different languages and sizes; an internet link was displayed on the local council website, as well as having a stand located in different offices throughout the borough. Further promotion days are on the service's agenda. The private fostering service ensures that the notifications process is easy. All notifications received are addressed without delay verified and a visit is made to the carer's

home within seven days. Notifications received in the initial set up of the service were not consistently met within this timescale. However, this gap has now been addressed. Clear recorded evidence is recorded on those files where there has been delayed. The private fostering service provides a free phone number and address which is publicised. The private fostering service sees children and young people privately fostered even if they only live a few days a week with the private foster carer, but the total of the days 28 days or more is usual the point on which a visit is made. A full comprehensive assessment is undertaken at the initial visit which includes a completion of Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks on all adults in the household who are over the age of 16 years. Once it is established that a private fostering arrangement is in place and agreed by all parties, then the social worker becomes the allocated person for the child and the private foster carer. This has been found to be positive as the social worker is aware of the child's circumstances and their wishes and feelings and then is able to support the carer appropriately. Foster carers, children and young people interviewed shared that this has been a good process as the social worker understands and knows each person's needs. Statutory visits are undertaken every six weeks in the first year and every eight weeks thereafter. Safeguarding issues are always considered at the onset of an assessment and continually considered throughout the arrangement by social workers. Advice and support are given with regards to health and education for the child or young person. Advice and support for private foster carers are given at the beginning of the assessment and this continued support is always available to private foster carers outside of the six weekly visits. Private foster carers are offered training and this can be taken up if they so wish. Private foster carers feel very well supported, with the advice given by the social workers. Advice and support for the parents of privately fostered children is also in place, there were leaflets and contact information, but there was no clear evidence of how this is appropriately managed by the service. The Private Fostering Service have clear safeguard measures in place. The Local Safe Guarding Children Board (LSGB) and the Private Fostering Team have developed an effective partnership. Those young people interviewed, expressed that they feel supported by the service and although they have not used the service fully, they have found the social workers easy to talk to. Apart from ensuring children and young people are safeguarded the service also offers other support such as obtaining an interpreter and support with school to aid better communication. Making links with relevant agencies such as the Refugee Council to facilitate additional support to deal with the immigration process when the young person found this overwhelming, accessing therapeutic services, referrals to the Red Cross tracing service when children have expressed concerns about the whereabouts of their parents.

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.

The London Borough of Haringey's Private Fostering Arrangement Service has a clear and concise Statement of Purpose which addresses the local authority's duties and functions under

the Children's Act 1989 and the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and how they operate in relation to privately fostered children. The private fostering team has good links with the Unaccompanied Minors Team (UMT) as those children and young people who are in private foster carer arrangements receive an additional specialist support. Each staff member within the team has a clear understanding of their role and responsibility on how they support the private foster carers, the children and young people in their care. This is clear and transparent. The private fostering team meets regularly to address all current notifications received and assessments undertaken. The service's first year's annual report was produced in 2007 and it clearly shows the progress the service has achieved over the year of being established. Haringey's Private Fostering Arrangements Service structure and process are very clear in terms of responsibilities. All approved private foster carers, children and young people information is held on Framework I (the local council's electronic system). Compliance within timescales and practice requirements are monitored. There is an open referral route back into duty and the management team should any concerns arise. When a notification ends a further assessment of new home circumstances is undertaken to assess the child's needs and any support required. There is a clear process for deregistration of private foster carers.

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):

- explore strategies of how advice and support to the parents of children who are privately fostered within the area are monitored and reviewed by the service. (NMS5)

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.