

Hackney Family Backup

Inspection report for independent fostering agency

Unique reference number	SC033789
Inspection date	28 February 2008
Inspector	Jill Marriott
Type of Inspection	Key

Address	Hackney Family Back up Ltd 18-22 Ashwin Street LONDON E8 3DL
Telephone number	0207 275 0088
Email	Sheila@hfbu.org.uk
Registered person	Hackney Family Backup Limited
Registered manager	
Responsible individual	Sheila Ramdular
Date of last inspection	3 July 2006

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: 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

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

Hackney Family Backup Limited is a voluntary sector independent fostering agency. The agency provides overnight respite care, a sitting service and a family support volunteer service. The agency also provides a range of training for parents and carers of children with disabilities. All of the projects managed by this agency are developed to support local children with disabilities and their families. The main function of the agency is the recruitment, training and support of respite foster carers. The agency is based in a diverse area of Hackney close to shops, local facilities and a range of transport networks.

Summary

This was an announced lighter touch inspection which focussed on the key national minimum standards. The inspection found that the agency continues to provide a range of good services and support for children, carers and parents. All of the surveys returned to Ofsted by parents and carers as part of this inspection were positive and complimentary about the services they receive.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The inspection of this agency shows that the registered person has taken appropriate steps to improve the quality of the services provided to children and carers. The organisation is following the correct procedure with regard to the manager's registration with Ofsted. Only one of the 11 requirements made at the last inspection remains unmet. The registered person was asked to improve the Children's Guide to service. A new guide is now in place and is written in a way which gives opportunities for more children and young people to understand the services offered and why they are provided. The section of the guide related to making complaints is clear it explains the complaints process giving names and phone numbers for relevant people who can be contacted. Improvements required with regard to children's files have been completed and each child now has their own separate file, which ensures individually tailored services are provided. An anti-bullying policy has been produced and related training is available for staff and carers. Carers are aware of the policy and the need to protect children from being bullied. Children are further protected by the new guidance and action taken to improve the procedure in relation to visitors to carers while they are looking after children. There is a training plan in place and range of mandatory and useful training is available. There is a system in place to monitor the training needs of carers and alerts the managers to dates when refresher training such as first aid and child protection is due. During the inspection carers, parents and some children said that they are invited regularly to events, outings and group activities. The registered person was asked to ensure that all panel members have an appropriate criminal records bureau disclosure this standard remains unmet. The foster panel was not observed during this visit. However panel procedures were seen and minutes of previous meetings show that the panel business is conducted appropriately with access to educational and medical expertise available.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The agency has policies and procedures in place to ensure they are aware of their roles and responsibilities with regard to the health of the children and young people placed with them. Policies and procedures are included in the carers pack given to each carer during the approval process. The agency ensures that all carers are given a clear easily understandable health profile for each child prior to the placement being made and copies of these are on each child's file. Carers receive training with regard to invasive medical procedures, first aid, health and safety and general healthy living. The appropriate information is kept on file including, medical checks, which are carried out as part of the looked after children review process. Information regarding medication is reviewed regularly and the agency inspects the first aid kits in carers homes to ensure they include the relevant equipment. The agency works in partnership with parents, carers, general practitioners, physiotherapists, dieticians, schools and other health professionals involved with the children. The planning process to link children with carers is carefully put together for each individual child. This is to ensure that the carer is fully aware of any health issues prior to the start of the placement. Once a placement link is developed the health of the child placed is monitored through the carers supervision and the six monthly looked after children review process. Records related to health are updated as necessary and at least six monthly. Parents are aware of the need to inform the agency and the link carer of any changes related to the child's health, medication and diet. Files contain in-depth profiles of children's health needs and an emergency medical consent form signed by each parent. Surveys returned to Ofsted by parents, carers and professionals are very positive about the information available related to the health of young people receiving respite care. Carers are well informed and understand the needs of the children they are linked with. The fostering service ensures that all carers receive written guidance related to the dietary needs of children and are aware of the importance of choice regarding food and drink.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The agencies has policies and procedures in place to ensure that all required checks such as references and Criminal Records Bureau disclosures (CRB) are carried out prior to staff and carers being offered employment with the organisation. Throughout the inspection process the responsible person and the manager were able to demonstrate their skills and ability to run the agency. Foster carers attend health and safety training and are given related information in the carers pack following their approval to foster. Carers homes are checked by the agency to ensure they are suitable and safe for the young people being cared for. The homes visited during the inspection were homely, warm and comfortable. All children placed for overnight respite care have their own bedrooms available to them. Most files contain up to date information regarding annual health and safety checks carried out in carers homes. Some actions required as a result of health and safety checks have not been followed up. Unannounced visits to carers are carried out each year and more regularly if necessary. All children placed with the agency are matched appropriately with foster carers. Where a trans-racial or trans-cultural placement is made the agency and the child's parents are involved in offering advice and support to the carer. Placements are fully planned prior to overnight stays being offered to ensure the child is happy and their needs can be fully met. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure the safe care and protection of children looked after. Policies are included in the foster carers pack and carers are aware of the procedures in place to protect children. All staff and carers are given training related to safe care and additional training is available with regard to bullying, managing difficult behaviour, missing from care and health and safety. The agencies training programme also includes diversity training and first aid. Carers are aware of the corporal

punishment policy and understand that corporal punishment is not acceptable under any circumstances. Panel papers contain appropriate information about the panel business. The panel is organised so that good quality decisions can be reached. The panel reflect diverse backgrounds and experiences. Access to educational and medical expertise is available. Panel members are subject to statutory checks and references however CRB disclosures are not in place for all members of the panel.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The agency has an equal opportunities policy and procedure in place. The staff team have the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience to work with children from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The agency offers training to understand the different backgrounds of parents and carers they work with. Foster carers are aware of their responsibility to ensure children are empowered and supported to build on their self confidence, and that their needs in terms of ethnicity, culture and religion are met in placement. Children placed by this agency are placed for respite care only so education remains the responsibility of the parents. However carers do undertake the home work task if a child comes to them straight from school. They also write in the home school book about the child's activities during their stay. Carers said they are interested in the child's education and attend school meetings if required. Hackney Family Backup Ltd provides respite, volunteer and sitting services only. All carers interviewed during the inspection process are aware of their responsibilities with regard to the children in their care. They understand that the parent remains the main carer at all times.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All of the young people using the service live at home with their families. There are no issues regarding contact. The agency keeps a record showing contact with parents, carers and relevant professionals through out the time each child is receiving a service. The children's consultation process has been developed and the service has an appropriate Children's Guide to service available. Supervising social workers have a good insight into the ways that children communicate and work with them in a way which gains as much information regarding their view of placement as is possible. Some children can be consulted generally about their care through discussion and surveys, other children have more complex communication systems. In some cases consultation is done purely by observation. Staff at the agency are quite clear that all children can give their views, it is more a matter of working with the child the family and people who know them well to get their opinions heard.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Carers offer young people the opportunity to maintain and learn age and ability appropriate independence skills. Some carers talked about children laying the table and others talked about mixing and baking cakes. Independence skills are monitored through the child care review process. The agency ensures that each carer is aware of the allowances and expenses paid to them. Information is also available in the carers pack given during the assessment and approval process.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The agency has an up to date Statement of Purpose and a Children's Guide to service, which meet the required standard. The director of the service is registered as the responsible individual and is qualified and experienced for the post held. The director and deputy director manage the day to day running of the service. The management team provide good leadership to the staff team. They are approachable and responsive, while maintaining professional boundaries and exercising proper management responsibilities. There are clear policies and procedures in place related to recruitment and selection. All members of staff and carers have the relevant checks such as CRB disclosures and references in place prior to the offer of a permanent post. CRB disclosures are renewed three yearly as required by regulation. Staff and managers are able to identify their own support and development needs and these are discussed and negotiated through the supervision and appraisal system in place. Staff receive regular training, supervision and yearly appraisals. Most files contain records of up to date supervision sessions. However, these supervision sessions are not always recorded. The agency has all required policies and procedures in place and members of staff and carers are encouraged to attend training related to recent legislation and to keep up to date with policy and practice developments. Carers are complimentary about the support they receive from the agency and in particular from their supervising social workers. There is a planned approach to ensuring that they are appropriately supported and this includes identifying their diversity needs. Carers reported that children are placed with them in a planned way and the children's needs regarding disability, health, education, ethnicity, gender, religion, language and culture are discussed and planned with them prior to placement. There are accurate and up to date records for children that contain all relevant information and information required by regulation. Children's files include records of consultation with them. Parents and where relevant children understand that the agency has an access to files policy. They are aware that they can see their records if they wish. The agency has comprehensive records in relation to the running of the service. Separate records are kept for foster carers, children and members of staff. There are also separate records of complaints, incidents and allegations. All records are indexed and information is easily accessible and stored securely in locked filing cabinets.

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, The Fostering Services Regulations 2005 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
6	ensure that all information regarding health and safety checks of carers homes is up to date with evidence recorded on the foster carers file. NMS 6 Regulation 11(a) Regulation 27 Schedule 3(5)	30 April 2008
15	ensure that each panel member has an up to date Criminal Records Bureau disclosure on file. NMS 15 Regulation 20(3) schedule 1(2)	30 April 2008

Recommendations

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

- record all staff supervisions and place a copy of the record on the supervision file. (NMS 16)

Annex

Annex A

National Minimum Standards for independent fostering agency

Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- the fostering service promotes the health and development of children (NMS 12)

Ofsted considers 12 the key standard to be inspected.

Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- any persons carrying on or managing the service are suitable (NMS 3)
- the fostering service provides suitable foster carers (NMS 6)
- the service matches children to carers appropriately (NMS 8)
- the fostering service protects each child or young person from abuse and neglect (NMS 9)
- the people who work in or for the fostering service are suitable to work with children and young people (NMS 15)
- fostering panels are organised efficiently and effectively (NMS 30)

Ofsted considers 3, 6, 8, 9, 15 and 30 the key standards to be inspected.

Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- the fostering service values diversity (NMS 7)
- the fostering service promotes educational achievement (NMS 13)
- when foster care is provided as a short-term break for a child, the arrangements recognise that the parents remain the main carers for the child (NMS 31)

Ofsted considers 7, 13 and 31 the key standards to be inspected.

Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- the fostering service promotes contact arrangements for the child or young person (NMS 10)
- the fostering service promotes consultation (NMS 11)

Ofsted considers 10 and 11 the key standards to be inspected.

Achieving economic well-being

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- the fostering service prepares young people for adulthood (NMS 14)
- the fostering service pays carers an allowance and agreed expenses as specified (NMS 29)

Ofsted considers none of the above to be key standards to be inspected.

Organisation

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- there is a clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and the fostering service ensures that they meet those aims and objectives (NMS 1)
- the fostering service is managed by those with the appropriate skills and experience (NMS 2)
- the fostering service is monitored and controlled as specified (NMS 4)

Annex A

- the fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently (NMS 5)
- staff are organised and managed effectively (NMS 16)
- the fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff (NMS 17)
- the fostering service is a fair and competent employer (NMS 18)
- there is a good quality training programme (NMS 19)
- all staff are properly accountable and supported (NMS 20)
- the fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers (NMS 21)
- foster carers are provided with supervision and support (NMS 22)
- foster carers are appropriately trained (NMS 23)
- case records for children are comprehensive (NMS 24)
- the administrative records are maintained as required (NMS 25)
- The premises used as offices by the fostering service are suitable for the purpose (NMS 26)
- the fostering service is financially viable (NMS 27)
- the fostering service has robust financial processes (NMS 28)
- local authority fostering services recognise the contribution made by family and friends as carers (NMS 32)

Ofsted considers 1, 16, 17, 21, 24, 25 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.