The Independent Foster Care Panel Review

Case IPR21

Case Summary

1. Mr and Mrs IPR21 ███████████████████████ started to foster in 1990 they had fostered a number of children in that time.

2. Child ■ was placed with them on 16th October 1999. There were a few issues recorded over the next few years which were dealt with as concerns. The placement, however, ended on 20th January 2004 ████████████████████ ██████████████████████████████

3. During that time girl ■ was placed with Mr and Mrs IPR21 on 7th September 2001 ■

4. In October 2004 Child ■ ██████████ made a number of allegations about the carers saying that they had used derogatory language ███████████

5. Fostering and LAC Team managers had followed this up by discussing the allegations with Mr and Mrs IPR21 on 2nd November 2004. Some of the allegations were accepted, some partially and some denied. The carers made a written submission and the visit was recorded and shared with the carers.

6. Professionals met in December 2004 and decided that a full review of the carers fostering status would be carried out and presented to Panel. The LAC service would also carry out work with Child ■ to consider her wishes, feelings and needs.

7. The outcome of this was that on 22nd August 2005 the Fostering Panel approved the carers registration continue but for Child ■ only with a review in 6 months' time.

8. On 20th February 2006 Panel received an update and it was recorded that Panel were more positive and were pleased to hear that Mrs IPR21 wanted to 'get ■;'s placement right and probably would not want another child' placed.

9. From October 2006 until April 2011 ██████████████████ the registration was continued for child ■ only and no further issues are recorded.

10. Mr and Mrs IPR21 consider that in this time they often felt that NCC wanted to move ■ from their care. They also reported that they did not receive any financial support from the time that ■ went into ████████ college.

11. In May 2011 the registration of the Foster Carers 'ceased' as they were only approved for the named child ■ and she had now reached the age of 18 ████████ ██████████████████████████.

12. Mr and Mrs IPR21 said that they did not receive any notification by letter or telephone call to inform them that their registration ceased as Foster Carers.

13. The NCC chronology record that the carers' support worker from November 2003 to August 2006 was not a qualified Social Worker. Also it is noted that 'child ▉ was allocated to a Social Work assistant from 22nd November 2004 to 30th November 2005 but that the Social Work Manager was actively involved in the case.

14. It is noted also that the carers were incorrectly recorded as being de-registered/forcibly removed in the NCC records but this was corrected on 13th May 2015.

The Findings of the Panel

<u>Was the welfare of the child(ren) paramount in the decisions and actions of NCC?</u>

15. The Panel considers that the welfare of children was paramount in the decisions and actions in this case.

16. ▉ was moved to a different placement when there was evidence that the placement was no longer meeting ▉▉ needs.

17. ██
██
▉▉ ▉'s views were taken into account in the decision for her to remain in placement with them.

<u>Were the Foster Carers treated fairly and justly?</u>

18. The Panel considers that the carers were treated fairly and justly in the way that the issues in respect of child ▉ were addressed and in the way the decision to leave ▉ in placement with them.

19. The Panel, however, considers that they were not treated fairly in the way their fostering career ended. It appears that this just fizzled out without any confirmation that their registration was to end or any discussion with them about whether they wished to continue fostering. Also it appears that they were shown no appreciation whatsoever for the 21 years that they had fostered or the number of children they had fostered.

20. Mrs and Mrs IPR21 are rightly proud of their contribution to fostering and pleased to report that ▉ went to university ███████████████████████ ███████
███████████. They also reported that ████████ previous foster placements have gone to university.

21. Mr and Mrs IPR21 also have said that they did could not really identify whether they had received any payment for ▉ for the time she was in sixth form. If it is the case that they did not then they should be recompensed for that failure.

<u>Were the Council's Policies and procedures followed properly?</u>

22. The Panel have not looked in detail at the procedures in respect of this case as the issues that Mr and Mrs IPR 21 have raised are more general in nature. However, it appears that the right procedures were followed in dealing with the allegations, concerns, placements and the foster carers' registration.

23. There seems to be a vacuum however in the procedure that should have been followed in ending the Foster Carers' registration and this has contributed to the unsatisfactory situation.

<u>Were the decisions and actions taken consistent with good Social Work practice?</u>

24. The Panel consider that the Social Work practice in moving ■ from the placement, leaving ■ in the placement and considering the carers registration was in general appropriate.

25. The Panel consider that the lack of a satisfactory and appreciative conclusion to their fostering career is very poor.

Suggestions for Remedies, Learning Points and Further Actions

<u>Case Remedies</u>

26. The Panel consider that the Director of Children's Services should also ascertain whether these Foster Carers were paid the right allowance from the time ■ went into sixth form and if this was incorrect they should agree an appropriate financial settlement with them.

27. The Panel consider that the Director of Children's Services should thank them for their contribution to Children in Norfolk and to apologise for the unsatisfactory ending to their fostering career.

<u>Learning Points</u>

28. The Director of Children's Services should ensure that there are procedures in place for formally acknowledging when all Foster Carer's fostering career with NCC ends and that these procedures are followed.

■■■■■■

6th July 2016