



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

Fostering Solutions

**The Old Chapel
60A Huddersfield Road
Elland
Halifax
HX5 9AA**

Lead Inspector
Jacqui Malcolm

Key Announced Inspection
21st August 2006 10:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Fostering Services*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

Every Child Matters, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life. Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above

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SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of service	Fostering Solutions
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Telephone number	01422 310316
Fax number	
Email address	mel.taylor@fosteringsolutions.com
Provider Web address	
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Fostering Solutions
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Ms Merryl Taylor
Type of registration	Fostering Agency

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 4th July 2005

Brief Description of the Service:

Fostering Solutions is an independent fostering service that aims to provide high quality foster placements for children and young people who are unable to live within their birth families. This branch office is part of a larger organisation that also has offices in the northeast, the northwest and the midlands. The service as a whole works to give safe, secure and caring environments by placing children and young people with foster carers who are able to understand a child's needs and have the ability to work with a wide range of professionals. The service recruits a range of foster carers who undergo a rigorous assessment process and who, once approved receive training and the guidance and support of a designated qualified social worker.

SUMMARY

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

This visit was planned and took place over 5 days and verbal feedback was given to the manager and the managing director of the service at the end of the visit on 26th August 2006. After the visit, written responses to questionnaires were received from 24 foster carer households, 16 local authority social workers and 7 young people over the age of 8 years placed with foster carers and the last one was received on 15th October 2006. The inspector visited four foster care households and spoke to foster carers and the children/young people living with them.

The case files of foster carers and children/young people were examined, together with a number of other records. Discussions were held with the registered manager, supervising social workers and administrative staff. The inspector attended a foster panel meeting and spoke to the independent panel chair. In addition, time was spent preparing for the inspection.

The registered manager made a range of documents, including policies and procedures available for inspection.

In February 2006 the shares of Fostering Solutions transferred to Acorn Care and Education Limited. This group specialises in the education and care of Looked After Children with behavioural and emotional difficulties and those with specialist health needs.

The standard weekly fee for the care of a child/young person starts from £771.40 up to £1645.63 depending on the type of placement.

If you want to get a full picture of what this service is like, you might like to read the last report as well. You can get this from the address at the front page.

What the service does well:

What some the young people said:

Young people said they enjoyed a healthy lifestyle

- **"I have a balanced diet and lots of fruit, vegetables, fibre, info on health and trips to the doc if needed"**

Young people said that foster carers helped them with their education

- **"I get help sometimes but not as much at school"**

Young people said they felt consulted by their foster carers

- **“tells me what is happening. She tells me to tell my social worker what I want to happen to me and where I want to live”**
- **“People tell me and they ask me what I want to do”**

Young people said that they enjoy the activities that they want to do

- **“activities I like are arranged for me. I am included in some daily household decisions, buy music I like”**
- **“asks me what I like to do and helps me do it”**

Young people said they feel listened to

- **“They listen to me because they have to know what I want”**
- **“He has collected things from my parents house and listened to what I had to say”; “They take me places that I have never been before”**

Young people said they know how to complain and said all said they are not being bullied.

What some of the foster carers said:

Foster carers said they were well supported by the fostering service

- **“Supply a great support network, keep us informed on new legislation and liaise with local authority to sort out any issues or concerns”**
- **“Excellent support and advice and together with relevant training courses”**
- **“We have a lot of support from Fostering Solutions, sometimes it is nice to talk about things through, we can get loads of moral support”**
- **“Provides support and regular monthly supervision for me/ensures that the local authority has provided me with the necessary paperwork and is active ”**
- **“Very supportive. We have our own support worker who maintains weekly contact and offers any support and advice we need. They attend care meetings with us. They have loaned us equipment”**
- **“Give us as much help and information and advice needed to care for the children”**

What some of the young peoples social workers said:

Placing social workers felt that they received a good service from the fostering service

- **“I have received a clear consistent service from Fostering Solutions since my involvement began”**
- **“Provide good standard of care for children”**
- **“Being there to offer support to the child and carers when needed and proactive in their response”**
- **“Regular reviews and updates. Give support to foster carers on a regular basis. This ensures that the child’s needs are identified and measures are put in place to ensure the child’s needs are met”**
- **“Provide quality carers, ongoing training and support”**
- **“Provide good and all round support for young people”**

What the inspector saw:

- The team is well managed by someone who has a sound childcare background and experience and she continues to look for new ways to improve the fostering service so that foster carers are supported to make sure that young people are safe.
- There is a steady and friendly staff team who are qualified and experienced and they do their jobs well.
- The recruitment, assessment, checks and selection of foster carers is thorough and carer’s skill based assessments are particularly detailed. There is a well-organised panel that makes that information that comes to them about foster carers who want to, or already care for children and young people are properly considered.
- The team is good at making sure that young people are asked about their experiences of being fostered and they are given information about what to do if they are not happy about their care and other questions that they may have about being fostered.
- The team continues to makes a good effort to have positive contacts with the children/young people’s social workers.

What has improved since the last inspection?

- Since the last visit to the fostering service, foster carers who are looking after children/young people with disabilities are having suitable training.
- Information about the payments that foster carers receive is clearer and is updated in the foster carers handbook. This, however, continues to be an area for development in the service.

What they could do better:

What some of the foster carers said:

- **“offer more placements and opportunities to look after children”**
- **“More information before placement. I know this is not always possible but sometimes its very poor when more information is available but not passed on from local social services”**
- **“Our biggest problem in the past was being offered placements and then no feedback as to the results. However, this has now been rectified”**
- **“Ensures that carers have adequate holiday ...each year so that they can provide the level of care and commitment needed to be a foster carer (at the moment only 2 weeks holiday per year)”**

What some of the young peoples social workers said:

- **“I have had little day to day reports from the fostering service”**
- **“Offer more support to carers or young person in times of crisis, i.e. fast response support or respite solution for demanding young people who are excluded”**
- **“Train their white carers to develop a better understanding of the needs of children from minority ethnic communities”**
- **“Training re: needs of minority ethnic children placed with white carers”**
- **“More prompt communication, particularly when issues arise”**
- **“Offer in depth child protection training to carers”**

Please contact the provider for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by

contacting your local CSCI office.

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Being Healthy

The intended outcome for this Standard is:

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

The Commission considers Standard 12 the key standard to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at the outcome for Standard:

12

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been reached using all the evidence available including a visit to the service.

The health and developmental needs of children/young people who are fostered are well met by the fostering service. Foster carers and workers make sure that children/young people have good access to health care, respond to accidents and promote a healthy lifestyle.

EVIDENCE:

The foster carer agreement and foster carer handbook makes it clear that foster carers promote the health needs of children/young people. Foster carers said that they support children/young people with medical appointments and report accidents and incidents to the service, following this up in the monthly reports and evidence was noted in the files seen and was discussed further with a foster carer and young person during a visit.

A number of carers had attended first aid training and carers are also offered training in administering medication and there was information about sexual health matters. The fostering service has partnerships with key other agencies and professionals to further develop health care planning for children/young people placed with them. In addition, information relating to specialist services was noted and there was enough background health information for foster carers to understand and respond to the needs of the children/young people.

Discussions with foster carers and information received from them showed that they understand their responsibilities with regard to making sure that the children/young people are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle and are in touch with the medical services they need. In their responses to

questionnaires, the majority of young people said that they “always” got support to stay healthy and eat a balanced diet. One social worker said in the questionnaire “...foster carers provide an excellent level of care for...he has complex health needs and carer ensures these needs are met”.

The fostering service has a policy that foster carers who smoke cannot accommodate children under the age of 2 or children/young people who suffer from breathing relating illnesses and they encourage foster carers promote healthy living leisure activities for young people to be involved in.

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)

The Commission considers Standards 3, 6, 8, 9, 15 and 30 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following Standard(s):

3, 6, 8, 9, 15 and 30

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been reached using all the evidence available including a visit to the service.

The thorough recruitment policy makes sure that the managers, staff and carers are safe and suitable to work with children and young people. Staff are suitably qualified.

Foster carers provide a good standard of accommodation and care for children and young people placed with them.

The fostering service has suitable systems to protect children and young people from abuse and neglect.

The fostering service follows a thorough process for matching children and young people with carers, which has contributed to stability of placements and good life chances for children and young people.

The fostering service panel is efficiently organised and functions in a fair and democratic manner.

EVIDENCE:

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced to manage the fostering service. She shows a sound knowledge about safeguarding and protecting children/young people and has a child-focussed approach to practice. The recruitment procedures in place are robust and make sure that staff are properly recruited. The manager reported that since the last site visit, the recruitment process has improved, for example, new questions are asked at interview, any gaps in application forms are accounted for and the agency has introduced checks for applicants from abroad. One of the newest staff files was seen and contained a completed application form, proof of identification, written references, including follow up reference telephone calls, evidence of relevant qualifications and Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) clearance. Discussions with the newest staff member indicated that they were satisfied with the recruitment and induction process. Members of the fostering panel are also required to complete appropriate checks.

The staff team are qualified and experienced. Discussion with staff indicated that they are committed to making sure that the needs of children/young people are being met in safe and secure placements. They are also, professional and aware about the legislation, policies and procedures that they are working with. Staff said they are well supported by the agency to keep up to date with information and they are clear about their role in supporting foster carers and they continue to make sure that they see the children/young people during supervisory visits. Foster carers made positive comments about the support they receive from the service and placing social workers also agreed with this view.

Visits were made to a random selection of foster carers and the foster carers clearly understood the purpose of the visits. The carer's homes provided comfortable, clean and furnished accommodation to children/young people and they had their own bedrooms. Young people seen during visits appeared to be comfortable in their environment and young people who responded to questionnaires said they were well cared for and this was in accordance with the social workers responses. There was evidence of toys and child-focussed items suitable for children to be involved in play. Annual health and safety checks form part of the foster carer's assessment and details of the measures taken by the service and foster carer are fully addressed.

Assessments of prospective foster carers continue to be thorough and the files showed that prospective carers attend the initial 'Skills to Foster' training, which forms part of the assessment process and these are competency based. Foster carer applications were seen and all checks and references had been properly followed up. The Form F assessments continue to be informative and are closely examined by the fostering panel. The fostering service's panel system is supported by written policies and procedures. A panel meeting was attended and it was properly constituted and the independent panel chair is

properly qualified, experienced and motivated. All of the panel members understand the needs of children and young people and maintained a sound level of independence. Supervising social workers presented the assessments and carers attended part of the meeting and had their say. Equality and diversity issues were a consideration discussed in this setting. The independent chair, spoken with after the meeting was clear about their role and responsibilities and had the best interest of the child as their focus in the decision making process and there was a clear boundary between themselves and the fostering services nominated decision-maker.

The fostering service has produced a new referral and matching form for the purpose of assessing and matching children/young people with potential foster carers. Foster placement agreements were seen in the files and consideration was given to the matching of children/young people with potential carers. In one file seen where a young person had been trans racially placed, information was included to show how foster carers would meet the child's needs. Discussions with the manager and supervising social workers indicated that careful attention is taken to make sure that children/young people are properly matched with foster carers and it may be the case that foster carers do not get an immediate placement because there is not an appropriate match. They also said that they aim to get as much information from placing social workers when a placement is made. Foster carers commented positively about their experiences of matching, however, some said that they did not always get all of the information needed before a child/young person is placed with them and they felt this was more of a weakness of the local authority than the fostering service and efforts are made by the service to chase information up at the earliest time.

Foster carers have copies of policies and procedures in relation to child protection in their handbook. Prospective foster carers were asked about child protection issues at the panel meeting and appropriate responses were given. Foster carers confirmed they received training in child protection and discussion with foster carers indicated that they are clear about their responsibility to make sure that children/young people are kept safe. One placing social worker responded in their questionnaire that more in depth child protection training should be made available to foster carers. All foster carers are expected to keep a safe caring policy in their households, which is agreed with their supervising social workers and copies were seen in some of the files. Appropriate risk assessments were also seen.

Foster carers confirmed that they are regularly supervised and supported by the supervising social workers and visits are announced and unannounced at least once a year and evidence of this was seen. Foster carers also said that they could contact the fostering service 24 hours a day.

The fostering service continues to make appropriate notifications of any allegation of neglect, abuse and significant events involving a child/young

person placed with a foster carer and takes appropriate action to protect children/young people. The fostering service also has a clear procedure to support the action that carers should take when young people go missing.

There is written information that the fostering service provides to foster carers that states clearly that corporal punishment is not acceptable. None of the young people who responded to questionnaires or were spoken with raised this as a concern. Foster carers have received training in managing challenging behaviour and the fostering service has a clear restraint policy for foster carers to keep to and the manager monitors these records. There is a copy of the physical intervention/restraint report to be completed by foster carers at the time of the incident, which must be returned to the agency within 48hours. At the time of the visit, there was an issue that involved a foster carer who had used restraint on a number of occasions without them receiving the approved training. This was brought to the manager's attention and a detailed discussion ensued, which resulted in the manager taking action.

The fostering service has a clear bullying reporting procedures in place and there is paperwork for foster carers and supervising social workers to complete in the event of a child/young person being bullied. The policy and procedures also details the additional support for foster carers to support a child/young person who is being bullied. None of the young people who responded to questionnaires said that they were being bullied in their placements.

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)

The Commission considers Standards 7, 13, and 31 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

7 and 13

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been reached using all the evidence available including a visit to the service.

The fostering service promotes diversity and carers value educational achievement.

EVIDENCE:

There is a policy that promotes diversity and equality opportunities and foster carers confirmed that training covers these issues. The fostering service has set up a 'diverse working party', that meets on a quarterly basis and actively seeks to recruit foster carers that can meet the diverse needs of the children/young people it serves and foster carers looking after children/young people placed trans racially are appropriately supported, which was confirmed by foster carers who are looking after children/young people from a different cultural and racial background to them. The majority of social workers who responded to questionnaires said that the fostering service deals with equality and diversity issues in an "excellent" manner. Foster carers spoken with and who also responded to questionnaires agreed with this view. One carer commented, "Wherever possible, children will be placed with a family of the same race, religion, culture. If a disabled child is placed the fostering service provides advice, therapists needed and provide equipment". A small number of social workers and foster carers said that the training should be developed in the area of equality and diversity, which is an area that the fostering service is looking into.

The manager reported that the fostering service continues to have a high percentage of children/young people in the education system and where young people are not in full-time education, education services are involved to re-integrate children/young people. Foster carers are encouraged to promote the educational achievements of the children/young people they look after and this was found to be the case in practice. All of the young people who responded to questionnaires said that they received the right help to be successful in their education and they were positive about the support they were getting from their foster carers. Typical comments included "Get help sometimes but not as much at school" "Carer arranged college interview application", "Connexions Bradford also gave me advice", "Mr xxx is a good teacher. (carer) helps me with my homework". Placing social workers also commented positively about the support that children/young people receive. Examples of their comments included "... and ...are working really well with school and other agencies"; "...committed carer who is active in promoting education"; "foster carer was very pro-active in the maintenance of education".

Foster carers spoken with and who responded to questionnaires were positive about supporting children/young people with their education and made the following comments: "I set up the school place initially and have dealt directly with the school/LA since"; "We have had the opportunity to attend to educational training courses"; "On monthly visits, education achievements are discussed". "My supervising social worker who is very keen on the young people I have placed accessing good educational support and will prompt and chase phone calls/paperwork etc to ensure that this is available to them"; "Found out about nursery and schools ourselves"; "I arranged appointments at local schools and found a place myself and have driven the child each day".

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)

The Commission considers Standards 10 and 11 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

10 and 11

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been reached using all the evidence available including a visit to the service.

The fostering service promotes contact between children/young people and their families and friends, with good support provided by foster carers. Foster carers and young people are given frequent opportunities to express their views about how the service is run.

EVIDENCE:

The manager reported that the young people's care plans are followed regarding contact and evidence of this was seen in the files sampled. Foster carers spoken with were aware of the contact arrangements and were keen to make sure that the children/young people were properly supported. Foster carers who were visited and who responded to questionnaires described the ways in which they have helped to support children/young people to keep in contact with their parents and other people that they are allowed to see, for example, escorting children/young people to contact sessions and supporting them when they have telephone contact, making sure that the experience of contact for children/young people continues to be a supportive and positive experience. The records of supervisory visits to foster carers show that changes have been made at the request of the children/young people and visits now include a record of the observations made of the children/young people seen in the foster placements. These records are child focussed and supervising social workers spoken with have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities with respect to these visits and placing social workers commented positively about their relationship with the fostering service and the communication that they have with them.

The young people who responded to questionnaires said that they feel they are listened to and are consulted about matters that affect them. The manager also reported a number of different methods used to make sure that the views of children and young people are listened to. Some of the methods include a book for young children, named 'Fred and Sadie' that has been introduced and the children's pack seen at the time of the site visit contains the telephone numbers and the e-mail addresses of the senior management team in addition to other contact numbers, such as 'Child Line'. Young people were invited to attend and contribute to their reviews and there was evidence that some young people do attend. The manager reported that foster carers annual reviews now gather the views of looked after children and the birth children of foster carers. Young people who were spoken with and responded to questionnaires said that they know whom they can talk to if they have any problems and the majority said they know how to complain. Information provided by the fostering service show that children/young are provided with information about the contacts that they can approach if they are not happy with any aspect of their care.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

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)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

29

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been reached using all the evidence available including a visit to the service.

There is a clear written policy on fostering allowances and expenses, which foster carers understand and the majority are satisfied with.

EVIDENCE:

The fostering service has clear financial procedures in place and information about fees paid to foster carers has been updated and is contained in the foster care handbook. All foster carers are paid a fee, depending on the needs and numbers of the child/young person placed with them. The majority of foster carers confirmed that they are paid promptly and raised no concerns about payments, however a small number of foster carers who responded to returned questionnaires said that they would benefit from a retainer between placements and longer holiday entitlements and another foster carer said they did not feel that fosters carers get the financial support for the work that they put in.

Management

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)
- 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)

The Commission considers Standards 17, 21, 24 and 32 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

1, 16, 17, 21, 24 and 25

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been reached using all the evidence available including a visit to the service.

The fostering service is effectively managed and has a well-qualified, experienced and competent staff team who are clear about their role and responsibilities and supervising social workers offer good quality supervision and support to foster carers.

Foster Carers are recruited from diverse backgrounds and there are generally good management systems and children's/foster carers records that the service continues to develop and improve.

EVIDENCE:

The statement of purpose was recently reviewed by the fostering service. The information for children and young people provides informative and child friendly information. The statement of purpose reflects some major changes to the management structure and in February 2006 the shares of Fostering Solutions transferred to 'Acorn Care and Education Limited'. Acorn specialises in the education and care of children and young people with social, behavioural and emotional difficulties and those with specialist health needs. Discussions with the manager indicated that these changes have not caused any disruption to the quality of the service provided to children/young people and foster carers.

There is a well qualified, skilled, experienced and transparent management team and there is evidence to show that they continue to be visible and available to children/young people and foster carers as well as staff in the service and they take active steps to make sure that they get direct feedback from children/young people and their families as well as a range of other professionals. The manager continues to be proactive in looking at different ways of improving the fostering service. Supervising social work staff are also appropriately qualified, competent and experienced and bring to the team different experiences from the social care field and present as well motivated and committed. One new member of staff said they had been impressed by the quality of their recruitment and induction into the service and continues to feel well supported. Supervising social workers said that they feel supported, regularly supervised and have a manageable caseload, which allows them to continue to give foster carers the good level of support that they need. There is a clear back-up system to cover managers' absences. Staff demonstrated that they know how and who to contact in specific situations. Foster carers who responded to questionnaires feel that overall, they are given "excellent" support and placing social workers responses showed they were also satisfied with the quality of service provided.

There is a sound awareness and recognition amongst managers and staff of what the service does well and where development is required and this was clearly evidenced throughout the visit. The manager said that although the fostering service has recruited a diverse group of foster carers, they are continuing to recruit foster carers from more diverse groups and the service has a clear strategy to make sure they are carrying out the objectives of the service. There was evidence contained in the returned questionnaires from foster carers and placing social workers to support the positive work of the

service and the manager continues to have a proactive approach to working in partnership with a wide range of other key people to ensure continuous improvement of the service.

The fostering service keeps generally good administrative records and the files are regularly audited and monitored. The administrative staff are knowledgeable about the service and are clear about their role and responsibilities to make sure that information is in order. Foster carers are expected to keep a diary to record the child/young person's progress and these are read by supervising social workers during their visits. Records of the supervisory visits contain a good level of detail about significant events and progress in the foster care families. Some placing social workers who responded to questionnaires confirmed that they received information about children/young people placed by them and some commented that they only receive information if the circumstances have been negative and one commented that they do not receive day to day reports.

The children/young people's files were well organised and gave a clear picture about their progress. However, in one file seen, there was information that was of great significance to the child's wellbeing that had been filed that the manager should have seen beforehand. This matter was brought to the manager's attention and was immediately rectified. There were also some gaps noted that was due to information not supplied by placing social workers and evidence of requests for this information was seen to be made by the fostering service. Foster carers spoken with and those who responded to questionnaires said that they had received copies of 'LAC' documents although these were not always promptly received by some placing social workers. Foster carers said that they were generally aware about the circumstances leading up to the placements and they kept the information securely. Supervising social workers have access to computers and laptops to help them to record information for the purpose of their work.

There is a sound management system in place that can output information and continues to be improved by the fostering service.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services have been met and uses the following scale.

4 Standard Exceeded (Commendable) **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)
2 Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls) **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion
 "N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
3	3
6	3
8	3
9	3
15	3
30	3

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
7	3
13	3
31	N/A

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
10	3
11	3

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	X
29	3

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	3
2	X
4	X
5	X
16	3
17	3
18	X
19	X
20	X
21	3
22	X
23	X
24	3
25	3
26	X
27	X
28	X
32	X

No

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations relate to National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice for the Registered Provider/s to consider carrying out.

No.	Refer to Standard	Good Practice Recommendations
1.	FS24	The agency should continue to work with local authorities to ensure that all placing officers provide comprehensive details about the needs of children they are seeking to place.

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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