



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

West Berks District Council Fostering Services

**Avonbank House
West Street
Newbury
RG14 1BZ**

Lead Inspector
Lucy Martin

Announced Inspection
6th March 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 West Berks District Council Fostering Services

Address Avonbank House
West Street
Newbury
RG14 1BZ

Telephone number 01635 516820

Fax number

Email address

Provider Web address

Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable) West Berkshire Council

Name of registered manager (if applicable)

Type of registration Local Auth Fostering Service

Category(ies) of registration, with number of places

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 8th December 2004

Brief Description of the Service:

West Berkshire Family Placement Team is part of the Children and Families Services provided by West Berkshire Council. The team also undertakes an adoption service, private fostering services, supported accommodation (lodgings) and the identification and oversight of placements with Independent Fostering Providers. Only the fostering service was the scope of this inspection.

The Fostering Service exists to provide high quality locally based substitute family care, on either a short or long term basis; to meet the needs of looked after children and young people who are unable to live with their birth parents. The Fostering Service currently offers:

- Planned and emergency foster care for individual children and sibling groups of all ages, including specialist care for disabled children, across the full range of short and long term placements, and relief care when necessary for established placements.
- Family based day and overnight short break care to support children and young people and their families including specialist care to meet the needs of disabled children.
- Supported accommodation for young people aged 16+ who are looked after.
- Mother and baby placements.

At the time of this inspection (figures from 9 February 2006), there were:

- 65 approved fostering households plus 8 households offering day care only.
- 65 looked after children and young people placed full time with West Berkshire approved foster carers, (includes 2 from other local authorities), plus 3 young people aged 18+

- 6 children receive overnight short breaks care.
- 8 children receive day care only.
- 13 looked after children and young people are placed with family and friends carers who have been approved as foster carers.

SUMMARY

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

This was a routine annual inspection of a fostering service and before the inspection questionnaires were sent to all children over 7 years of age in foster care, to foster carers and the placing social workers. The Manager completed a pre-inspection questionnaire and a self-assessment form and sent the inspector key documentation.

The inspection took place over 5 days and the inspector met individually with:

- The Team Manager and Children's Service Manager
- The two Assistant Team Managers, four Supervising Social Workers and a Family Support Worker.
- Four foster families and the foster children placed in their homes.
- The Publicity and Recruitment Worker.
- The fostering panel chair and observed the panel and the agency decision making process.
- The Chair of the local Foster Carers' Association.
- An HR representative regarding the recruitment procedures and checks.

Samples of case records, staff recruitment records and policies and procedures were looked at. Feedback was given to some members of the team and Senior Managers at the end of the inspection.

What the service does well:

West Berkshire has a strong fostering service that carry out their duties well. There is strong leadership of the team both at Team Manager level and above. Staff spoken with were appreciative of the support given to them by management and each other. There also appear to be good relationships within the team, with members working well together and being allowed to develop interests. There is an enthusiasm regarding the work and a willingness to develop practice.

There are strong relationships with other teams, particularly the children's social work teams and there are good links with education and health. There is effective promotion of education for fostered young people and their health needs are well looked after.

The foster carers receive high levels of support from the fostering service and from the local branch of the Foster Carers' Association. Foster carers know the managers of the fostering service well and feel that they are consulted with to

improve practice. The fostering service has recruited a high number of new carers in the last year.

The Foster Panel is well chaired and was observed to work well. The Foster Panel Chair and adviser meet with the Agency Decision Maker immediately after the Panel to discuss and confirm the recommendations made. This system works well.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection. The creation of a Life Chances (virtual) team of workers from different disciplines (education, education welfare, educational psychology, youth work and health) who all focus on the needs of looked after children, including fostered young people, is an exciting development, which should ensure better outcomes for these young people.

Since the last inspection the Foster Carers' Handbook has been revised in consultation with foster carers and the Fostering Services policies and procedures have been revised. There are a few policies still to be updated but this is a substantial achievement.

Two additional Family Support Workers have been recruited which will increase the support to carers and the supervising social workers.

There has been ongoing development of practice such as reviewing how the Annual Foster Carers' Review is organised and ensuring that there is no slippage of dates.

There have been higher numbers of new foster carers recruited and the number recruited in the last year will be into double figures.

The local branch of the Foster Carers' Association was launched in April 2005. Foster carers feel well supported by this organisation and there are good links with the fostering service managers.

The support to foster carers has increased and carers are paid an additional monthly child-sitting allowance to enable them to have an evening out. Agency staff are used for his service if necessary.

What they could do better:

There was not always evidence that careful matching of the young person to the foster carer had taken place. The Fostering Service uses a comprehensive written foster placement agreement, but it does not contain specific reference to elements of matching which were taken into consideration in agreeing the placement. In addition, the placement agreement should identify areas where foster carers need additional support to compensate for any gaps in the match between the child and carer. The team does have a matching grid which is a tool that can be used more frequently and this would provide more evidence of the matching process.

It was found that there was not consistent practice in the completion of safer care agreements and it is recommended that their use and completion be clarified. If agreements are updated then the previous agreement should be kept on the foster carer's file. It was not found that each carer had an agreement completed on approval, then an agreement relating to each placement. In addition, the agreements should be cleared with the child's social worker and explained clearly and appropriately to the child. At present, this is not being done.

It is recommended that the staff undertaking the health and safety checks receive training in this area.

There is a good range of training available to foster carers but where two adults are approved in one household as joint carers, both carers should complete all training. The annual Foster Carer Review should ensure that both carers do attend training. In addition, it should be possible to see all the training courses attended by carers over the years contained in one record.

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:

The standard inspected was 12

The foster carers actively support the health and development of the children with good support from the fostering service.

EVIDENCE:

Both foster carers and foster children showed an excellent awareness of what was required to stay fit and healthy. The young people said that they were provided with 'healthy food and drink', they were encouraged to stay fit and active and foster carers 'give medicine if unwell'. Foster carers spoken with were clear about the health needs of the young people in placement and were involved in taking the children to both routine medical appointments and to more specialist health care professionals if needed. The foster placement agreement contains comprehensive information regarding the health needs of the young person and procedures regarding the consent to medical treatment.

There is a designated Looked After Children's nurse and she ensures that foster carers are provided with written health records and information in relation to each placement. Foster carers are expected to keep this information up to date and to make sure that this record moves with the child. The use of individual health record books for all placements has recently been introduced as has the requirement for foster carers to record all medication administered. These are good examples of the active promotion of health issues by the Fostering Service.

The Foster Carers handbook has a section on 'medical matters' and there have been a good number of training courses undertaken in the past year by foster carers concerning health issues. These include first aid, sexual health and sexuality, basic drug awareness, health and looked after children, dealing with depression and epilepsy and rectal diazepam administration.

West Berkshire operates a scheme whereby foster carers, their children and foster children get free entrance to the Council's leisure centres. This indicates a good commitment to the health needs of the young people.

A recent development has been the creation of a Life Chances (virtual) team which consists of three teachers, an Educational psychologist, a designated nurse, a youth worker, an early intervention worker and an Educational Welfare Officer. They provide advice and support to children and young people Looked After, carers, and colleagues across a range of health, social care and education settings. This is commendable and should ensure that each Looked After child is monitored in terms of health and education.

Overall, there was much evidence to indicate good practice and that this standard is exceeded.

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):

The standards inspected were 3, 6, 8, 9, 15 and 30

Overall, the fostering service has effective systems in place to ensure that children and young people placed are kept safe. There is a need to ensure that there is better evidence of the matching of young people to foster carers.

EVIDENCE:

It was a requirement at the last inspection that the Manager must ensure that all required information and checks are carried out in respect of all members of staff working for the fostering service. This requirement has been met.

Six personnel files were seen, including the Team Manager's. The information in the files was divided into sections and was easy to find. There was a checklist in the front of each file indicating when recruitment checks had been carried out and it was evident that robust recruitment procedures are in place. All the files had a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) check undertaken within the last three years and two written references, including a reference from the person's most recent employer. Telephone enquiries are routinely made and documented, confirming the written references. Full employment histories were on file and evidence of qualifications. The majority of files contained recent photographs and the Manager undertook to obtain those few remaining. One file did not have proof of qualification but overall, the files were well maintained and in good order.

Since the last inspection, the Fostering Team Manager has become an authorised signatory for CRB checks which will ensure close monitoring of checks and their renewal.

West Berkshire Council has written recruitment and selection procedures which are followed for appointing staff. All staff working in the Fostering Service have been interviewed as part of the selection process. All social work staff involved in the assessment and approval of carers are appropriately qualified. Where unqualified workers are carrying out social work functions they do so under the close supervision of an experienced and appropriately qualified member of staff who is accountable for their work.

The inspector visited the homes of four foster carers. All were seen to be warm, comfortable, well maintained and suitable for the children who were living there. All foster homes have an annual health and safety check to ensure that a good standard of cleanliness, hygiene and safety is maintained. This is usually undertaken by a Family Support Worker and includes a check on the sleeping arrangements. The health and safety checklist used is comprehensive and includes sections on general safety, specific areas of accommodation, pets, vehicles and insurance. Any recommendations made are followed up by supervising social workers as part of carers' routine supervision sessions. A database is maintained to track and monitor that health and safety checks are completed annually, and that any recommendations are followed up. Written risk assessments are also completed in relation to each placement. The Fostering Service has a Health and Safety policy which is included in the Foster Carers' handbook.

The areas covered in the annual Health and Safety checks have increased substantially in the last few years. In light of this it is recommended that the Family Support Workers undertaking the Health and Safety checks attend training in this area.

The Fostering Service states that appropriate matching of children with foster carers according to the child's assessed needs is a high priority. Overall, there was little evidence seen of the matching process. Some foster carers spoken with were not always certain that appropriate matching of the child's needs had always taken place prior to placement. The Fostering Service uses a comprehensive written foster placement agreement, but it does not contain specific reference to elements of matching which were taken into consideration in agreeing the placement. In addition, the placement agreement should identify areas where foster carers need additional support to compensate for any gaps in the match between the child and carer. The team does have a matching grid which is a tool that can be used more frequently and this would provide more evidence of the matching process. It is a requirement that there is evidence of the matching process in foster carers' files. It was agreed that as there would be difficulty in amending the Foster Placement Agreement at this

time that it would be acceptable if the Foster Placement Agreement contained reference to the document where the matching information could be found.

All potential foster carers attend preparation training that includes caring for children who may have been abused, safer caring, behaviour management and on recognising possible signs of abuse. Post approval, there are a variety of child protection courses available to foster carers. In the last year, foster carers have attended multi-agency child protection training, domestic violence and child protection training and introduction to child protection training. Fostering Service policies and procedures are in place regarding child protection, safer caring, behaviour management and the use of physical punishment, bullying and unauthorised absences from the foster home. These policies are included in the Foster Carer's handbook. Management systems are in place to monitor information on allegations of abuse made about children placed with foster carers and instances of bullying.

Safer care agreements are made with a household and are reviewed and updated with each placement. It was found that there was not consistent practice in the completion of safer care agreements and it is recommended that their use and completion is clarified. If agreements are updated then the previous agreement should be kept on the foster carer's file. It was not found that each carer had an agreement completed on approval, then an agreement relating to each placement. In addition, the agreements should be cleared with the child's social worker and explained clearly and appropriately to the child. At present, this is not being done.

The Fostering Panel handbook contains panel policies and procedures including decision making when all members of the panel are not in agreement. The panel has an independent Chair and panel membership provides expertise in educational psychology, child health, disabled children and there are two foster carers from other agencies. Appropriate checks, including CRBs are completed before panel members can start and were seen on this inspection.

The panel was observed as part of this inspection and was considered to be well chaired. There was appropriate formality and yet applicants who attended were made to feel as welcome as possible and were helped to understand the process and were encouraged to ask questions. The panel asked appropriate and insightful questions and worked well. A particularly strong feature of this panel is the fact that the panel chair and adviser meet with the Agency Decision Maker immediately after the panel to confirm the recommendations made. This ensures that full discussions are able to take place which is positive.

It was a requirement at the last inspection that the fostering panel has considered a review undertaken since 1/4/02 for all carers. This has been done.

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):

The standards inspected were 7, 13 and 31

The fostering service ensures that diversity is valued and that education is very well promoted. There are low numbers of disabled children in foster placements.

EVIDENCE:

Issues relating to diversity and equal opportunities are addressed with foster carers. All fostering staff attend training on valuing diversity and all foster carers can attend this training. One carer has attended training covering this specific area in the last year. There was much evidence from talking to foster carers during this inspection that issues relating to enhancing children's self-confidence and self-esteem are discussed with the supervising social worker and are encouraged. The Foster Carers handbook includes information on equal opportunity matters.

The importance of educational achievement is given a high priority and is closely monitored for all looked after children. There are now three designated teachers who work with looked after children. They work closely with foster carers, placing social workers, supervising social workers and school staff to develop personal education plans for all looked after children, enable them to be maintained within schools and monitor educational progress and achievement. All the four young people visited were in full time education and one young person was receiving extra support with schoolwork and was finding this helpful.

Personal computers are provided for all fostering households where there are looked after children of secondary school age who do not otherwise have access to a computer in the foster home. The Foster Placement agreement clarifies responsibilities in relation to educational issues and in particular expectations in relation to the foster carer's role.

The foster carers were seen to encourage educational attainment and some carers had certificates on display celebrating the foster child's achievements. The creation of the Life Chances (virtual) team (see under Being Healthy section) should fully promote educational achievement.

Overall, there was much evidence to indicate good practice and that this standard is exceeded.

The Fostering Service has a short break specifically for disabled children. In addition to the four short break carers who provide overnight stays other short break placements are made with carers who are also approved for full time placements. None of the four young people tracked as part of this inspection is disabled. There are policies and procedures in place drawn up in 2001 specific to children receiving short breaks and which recognise the importance of birth parents in these situations. There is a shortened version of the Foster Placement agreement form which is completed in conjunction with parents and which recognises the differences of the arrangements, particularly in relation to health and educational needs.

It has been recognised that the policies and procedures specific to short break care need to be reviewed and revised and this work is being done. Sections relating to disabled children and short break care also need to be added to the Foster Carers' Handbook.

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):

The standards inspected were 10 and 11

Contact with family is encouraged whenever possible and arrangements work well. Consultation with the children and young people in foster care takes place on a regular and ongoing basis.

EVIDENCE:

It was a requirement at the last inspection that the Manager ensures that there are clear procedures setting out how appropriate contact arrangements for each child in foster care are to be established, maintained, monitored and reviewed and that attention is paid to supporting contact where the child is outside of the area. This requirement has been met. The recently updated Foster Carers' handbook contains specific guidance for carers and the importance of maintaining contact is emphasised to carers during assessment and supervision. The Foster Placement Agreement contains information regarding contact and any support/supervision that may be necessary. Contact arrangements are considered as part of the placement risk assessment.

The foster carers and young people spoken with on this inspection said that the contact details were well known and that the arrangements generally work well.

Consultation with the young people in foster care takes place on a regular and ongoing basis. New consultation forms have been developed to encourage young people to express their views prior to their foster carer's annual review. A Family Support Worker will offer younger children and those with learning disabilities independent assistance in completing the forms if necessary. There are also opportunities for young people to express their views in the six

monthly Looked After children reviews chaired independently. The Children's Guide to the Fostering Service and the leaflet 'Unhappy – Here's what to do' explains how to raise concerns and complaints. Fostered young people also have access to the independent visitor scheme and the advocacy service. West Berkshire has a youth worker who is involved in organising events during holiday periods and after school activities for Looked After Children.

The young people spoken with felt that they were consulted with and felt able to express their views. Following concerns expressed by one young person, children are now able to attend the Foster Panel for consideration of their long term match with specific foster carers.

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)

The Commission considers Standards 29 the key standard to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

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

The standard inspected was 29.

Foster carers receive clear information regarding the payment of expenses and allowances and it was reported that payments are made accurately and promptly.

EVIDENCE:

All foster carers receive an allowance for each placement at least at the rates recommended by the Fostering Network. The allowance scheme guidance, which is distributed to all carers annually, gives clear information on what is covered by the payment scheme, the circumstances under which additional payments may be made and the authorisation arrangements. Allowances are reviewed annually and increased in line with the recommendations of the Fostering Network. Payments are made promptly on a fortnightly cycle. The payment schemes for supported lodgings placements, short break care and day care are being revised, costed and will then be implemented.

An additional payment is made to carers who have attended a specific amount of training annually. All the foster carers spoken with reported that payments are made accurately and promptly.

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, and 24 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

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

The standards inspected were 16, 17, 21, 23, 24 and 32

The fostering team is well managed and staff members are keen to develop practice. Foster carers receive high levels of support.

EVIDENCE:

The fostering service is well managed with an experienced Team Manager and an accessible senior management team. All the fostering staff spoken with said that they felt well supported both by peer team members and by the management team. There is a clear management structure with clear lines of accountability, levels of delegation and responsibility, and staff are managed and monitored through regular supervision. There is an open workload management system for the allocation and prioritisation of work which all staff can access.

There are strong links with other teams, in particular the Assistant Team Managers from the children's social work teams meet with the Assistant Team Managers from the Family Placement team on a regular basis. There is evidence that the staff are organised and managed in a way that delivers a very efficient and effective foster care service and this standard is exceeded.

The staff team is slightly down in numbers at present and some of the assessments, preparation groups and the supervising of placements at some distance have been allocated to independent social workers and staff from other teams. This is not ideal, but is being managed the best way possible given the circumstances. It was felt by management that the full staffing complement was adequate, 7 social work staff, but is currently operational with 4 staff at present. An additional two Family Support Workers have recently been recruited and this has increased the support provided to the supervising social workers.

The fostering service has employed a dedicated full-time Publicity and Recruitment worker since October 2004. This has proved extremely effective in recruiting more carers and the number of new carers approved in the last year will reach double figures. This is a commendable achievement. The focus is now shifting to specifically recruiting carers for hard to place and challenging young people.

The fostering service offers high levels of support to foster carers. All the foster carers spoken with were extremely positive about the support they received, both from their supervising social workers, the rest of the team, and the managers. Foster carers have regular supervision sessions with their supervising social workers that are clearly documented. In addition to the out of hours support provided by the Emergency Duty Team, the managers and staff operate an on call system so that foster carers can contact them. There are good back up arrangements for carers and foster carers are paid an additional monthly child-sitting allowance to enable them to have an evening out. A foster carers' Summer Ball was held last year with many carers being presented with certificates, flowers or small gifts to acknowledge achievements.

The fostering service has promoted the establishment of the West Berkshire Foster Carers' Association. There are regular meetings of foster carers who said that they enjoyed these meetings and found them informative and supportive. There are regular meetings with the Association and senior managers.

All new foster carers are expected to attend a preparation training course and there is a wide range of training available to foster carers, including NVQ3. Training courses are organised at convenient times and locations for carers and provision of alternative childcare to enable carers to attend is financially supported. The annual review for foster carers includes an appraisal of training and plans for the coming year. A specific course was provided for male carers which was well attended although it was found that where two adults are approved as joint carers, it was not always the case that both had successfully attended training. It is a recommendation that this is always followed up and commented on at the annual review. In addition, the list of completed training was not transferred from one file to the next for foster carers, so it was not possible to see a full list of training completed since approval. This made it difficult to track that foster carers had all attended training in key areas such as first aid and child protection. It is recommended that from now on all foster carers files will have all the training attended transferred so a full list of training is easily available.

Samples of case records for children and foster carers were seen. The foster carers' files were clearly presented and the information about a specific child is stored in a separate section and is removed when the placement ends. It was apparent that some file audits had taken place and the Assistant Team Managers are developing an annual audit programme to ensure that every file is audited at least once a year.

Foster carers keep a fostering logbook and the recordings are seen regularly by their supervising social worker and copies passed to the child's social worker. Carers are provided with secure storage facilities and are encouraged to keep photographs and personal items for the children in their care.

A number of foster carers are family and friends of the young people in their care. Assessments and approval processes of family and friends as foster carers are sensitive to the pre-existing relationships and are intended to encourage their consideration as foster carers.

The allowances paid to family and friends foster carers are at least equivalent to the Fostering Network recommended allowances and in certain circumstances are at the same rate as those paid to 'stranger' foster carers. The support, supervision and training needs of family and friends carers are assessed and met in the same way as all other carers but with the additional recognition of the particular needs of family and friends carers.

A support and training group specifically for family and friends carers, both within and outside the Looked After Children system is in place and meeting regularly, and family and friends foster carers are encouraged to attend.

One young person tracked was in a family and friends placement and felt happy and settled in the placement.

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	4

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
3	3
6	3
8	2
9	2
15	3
30	3

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
7	3
13	4
31	3

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	X
2	X
4	X
5	X
16	4
17	4
18	X
19	X
20	X
21	4
22	X
23	3
24	3
25	X
26	X
27	X
28	X
32	3

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
1	FS8	34(3)	There is specific reference to elements of matching in the foster carer's files and shared with the foster carer, and the identification of any gaps and additional support identified to compensate for those gaps. Foster Placement agreements contain reference to where this information is located.	06/06/06

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	FS9	There is consistent practice regarding the use of safer care agreements and they are cleared with the child's social worker and are explained to the child if appropriate.

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