



**Making Social Care
Better for People**

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

**City of Sunderland Services for Looked After
Children - Fost**

**Penshaw House
Station Road
Penshaw
Houghton le Spring
DH4 7LB**

Lead Inspector
Trevor Jarvis

Announced Inspection
24th November 2005 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	City of Sunderland Services for Looked After Children - Fost
Address	Penshaw House Station Road Penshaw Houghton le Spring DH4 7LB
Telephone number	0191 382 3108
Fax number	0191 382 3165
Email address	
Provider Web address	
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Council of City of Sunderland
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Steve Towers
Type of registration	Local Auth Fostering Service
No. of places registered (if applicable)	0
Category(ies) of registration, with number of places	

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 14th February 2005

Brief Description of the Service:

The Fostering Service is part of the City of Sunderland Social Services for Looked After Children, which comprises the city of Sunderland on the River Wear, the large new town of Washington and a number of former coal mining areas of Houghton-le-Spring and Hetton-le-Hole, providing foster care for children and young people who cannot live with their parents. The fostering service is located in Penshaw House, Penshaw, Houghton-le-Spring.

The aim of the fostering service is to recruit a range of foster carers to provide placements for children of different ages, abilities, backgrounds and assessed needs. The fostering service prepare, assess, train, supervise and support a range of carers to look after children and young people in family placement setting.

There are currently 283 foster children (126 girls and 157 boys) placed by the service. The service has a number of fostering options, these include mainstream foster carers, short break carers, relative and friend carers, permanent foster carers and a fee paid foster care worker scheme to provide family placements for young people who would otherwise be placed in a children's home.

SUMMARY

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

The information and evidence on which this report was based was gathered over a nine day period from 21 November – 9 December 2005 by one inspector and comes largely from:

- Talking individually with children, carers and staff
- Talking with carers at support groups
- Visiting foster carers homes
- Reading children's carer's and staff files
- Reading policies, procedures and records
- Children's questionnaires
- Carers questionnaires
- Children's social workers questionnaires

One of the main reasons behind the success of Sunderland Fostering in helping the local authority achieve its placement aims is the rigorous assessment, training and support of foster carers and to make sure that children are safe and well looked after whilst living away from home. Some examples of the things children said included, "getting looked after by a lovely foster carer", "get looked after, feel safe, cuddles when you want them", "make lots of new friends, have lots of new hobbies, staying as close as possible to my birth family".

Foster carers and staff are carefully chosen and are loyal, hard working and child focused. Furthermore, they are encouraged to provide considerable mutual support. Checks are made to make sure that they are suitable and able to work safely with children. The support provided to carers by their fostering support workers and the training offered to foster carers is excellent and assists them to help children with the variety of challenges that they may present. The children's own social workers confirmed that carers, 'were looking after children very well indeed', including such comments as "encourages her independent living skills", a nurturing home where carers are very experienced".

What the service does well:

All the children placed with foster carers were described by their social workers as being cared for very well or quite well. Children were also described as being safe in their placements. Specific views and observations of the service and carers were made by placing social workers and included, "foster carers consistently provide a positive and nurturing care.... recognising her strengths and difficulties", another said "they have coped with a considerable amount of acting out behaviour throughout that time", carer has worked well with other

professionals including school staff and child and family unit to help manage difficult behaviour”.

Of the carers themselves, all who responded by questionnaire or interview were “very satisfied with the support they received from the fostering service. A number of carers highlighted the level of support from their fostering link workers and comments included, “ the help and support we get from the fostering service is one of the best things about this fostering service”, “really good support from my fostering officer and her team manager”, “questions are readily answered and advice offered”, fostering and adoption officer gives good support”, when I ring for advice I receive a return call so I can discuss concerns or issues”, “I get lots of visits from my support worker and the child’s social worker”, I think they do a good and a hard job”, I have an excellent support fostering worker”

Sunderland Fostering give their foster carers lots of support and try to ensure that the children they place with them also receive the support they need. Staff who are always available for carers to talk to regularly visits carers. The service chooses its staff and foster carers carefully to make sure that they are safe to work with children. Carers are given initial training and excellent opportunities for further training so that they can understand the needs of the children living in foster care. Children are supported well by their carers with their education, contact with family and friends, health and activities. Staff working at Sunderland Fostering have a lot of experience and childcare qualifications and know a lot about keeping children safe and protected. The service has lots of helpful information, which can be easily understood by children. The majority of children responding by questionnaire or interviewed during the inspection could identify no “worst things” about the service. Although one youngster said, “can’t see my friends as much because my foster placement is to far away”, another child remarked, “being split up from my mam”, and another said, “keep moving around”. Examples of children’s views of the best things included, “ getting looked after properly”, “make a lot of new friends, have lots of new hobbies”, “everything”, “ I have been cared for better than I did before”, “they feel like my real parents”.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The arrangements to monitor and review how foster carers have worked with the children placed with them have been improved. These arrangements are ensuring that these reviews occur once each year and review staff are working hard on the backlog. The internal systems of quality control ensure that that

the service remains under the scrutiny of the approval panel, that annual reviews are detailed and thorough.

The written guide to the service, provided for the benefit of the children using it, has been further improved to help younger children to understand it better. Part of the fostering service has moved to a new building on existing site to provide expanded services.

The fostering service has been successful in recruiting more carers and expanding its short break service for children with disabilities.

The service is trying to improve placement choice for children by working with organisations and projects that encourage people from different ethnic backgrounds to become foster carers.

Implementation of new computer system and deletion of manual based financial monitoring work being undertaken to try and establish payments in line with Fostering Network.

What they could do better:

The service should continue to work closely with placing social workers to ensure that all the written information to match children with carers is obtained.

Social workers placing children with the service should visit the children regularly and ask them and the opinion of foster carers about the care they receive.

The service should continue to work to recruit more carers from a range of ethnic communities and backgrounds.

Develop devolved budget for equipment for short break 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.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Enjoying and Achieving

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Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Statutory Requirements Identified During the Inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- 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 – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

12

Foster carers accept their role as advocates for children in ensuring their health needs are met and in promoting good health practices.

EVIDENCE:

The Fostering Service builds its health practice upon Health Guidance and Information for Looked After Children and Young People issued by Sunderland Teaching NHS Primary Care Trust. This enables foster carers in practice to give accurate and informed advice to young people they are caring for about health issues.

Foster carers described how they provided children with a nutritious, balanced and varied diet and their likes and dislikes were sought. This often meant trying to change established eating habits and tastes.

Examples were given by foster carers and discussions with link fostering and adoption officers confirmed the circumstances of some children who have had little guidance on personal hygiene who needed sensitive and practical help in establishing practices to maintain a good standard of personal hygiene.

An examination of foster carers and children's files confirmed that appropriate health information is maintained and children's health needs are promoted. Fostering link workers make regular checks of carers' records and any issues relating to children's health, accidents and incidents are recorded by the service. Additional training in health hygiene and first aid are including in the shortly to be published annual programme of training offered to carers. There was evidence of carers working to ensure that children cared for are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians and attend all necessary appointments. There was also good evidence that carers when asked by placing social workers contribute directly to statutory reviews of children's care needs and

provide accurate and useful information on how their immediate health needs are being met.

Children receive annual health assessments and information about children's health is available to carers and children in placement. The fostering service through the link fostering and adoption officer undertakes monitoring of children's health any accidents involving foster children are notified to the Commission for Social Care Inspection. Most carers have undertaken first aid training.

Foster carers are also trained and supported to enable them to have the confidence in personal discussions with young people as well as knowing about the availability of more specialist advice and information where necessary.

Children in placement who were interviewed or responded by questionnaire confirmed that their carers gave good support and advice to ensure that their health needs were met. Responses commented positively on this aspect of their care, with examples given of help with eating a good selection of healthy food (fruit and vegetables every day), plenty of regular exercise.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes 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, and 15 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

3, 6, 8, 9 and 15

Staff and carers have a good understanding of child protection procedures, receive good support and training and actively seek to make safe, caring and secure placements where children are protected from abuse, neglect and discrimination.

Procedures for the recruitment, selection and vetting of staff and carers remain thorough.

The fostering service has a satisfactory complaints system. Complaints are handled appropriately and the outcomes used to improve the service.

EVIDENCE:

The service has efficient systems to recruit staff and carers who have the qualities and experience necessary to work directly and safely with children. An examination of staff and carer files showed that the service takes up all of the necessary safeguarding checks including enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) disclosures. As with previous inspections, those carers interviewed or responding by questionnaire were very positive regarding the skills and knowledge of staff and how these were used to support carers in their work with children and young people.

The Fostering Service keeps a separate record of complaints from and about the Fostering Service. This also applies to copies of all child protection allegations and investigations about foster carers and fostered children. This information is given to the Inspector at the Commission. The service or the local authority is carrying out four investigations into complaints made about carers two of which are ongoing.

Each carer's home visited as part of the inspection presented a pleasant homely environment, made safe from identifiable hazards. Risk assessments are completed by the service during the home study as part of the initial assessment of new carers and are now should be subsequently updated at each annual review. An on-going recruitment programme aimed at increasing both the number of carers and improving placement choice is continuing.

A number of carers commented on the arrangements in place to 'match' children successfully with carers, expressing concerns. Carers stated that they sometimes felt under any pressure to accept children when they might have doubts that they could care for them successfully. Carers speculated that the matching process sometimes was short-circuited because of the lack of carers and that not enough attention was taken to ensure that any placements of existing children are not jeopardised. However another carer described how introductory visits had taken place with children and how this had helped both them and the children to get to know each other better.

Discussion with other carers showed that limited information was sometimes provided to them, particularly in emergency situations, which had implications for matching. In each of these situations there was evidence that issues around shortage of information were being raised by foster carers and fostering and adoption workers with the social workers placing the child.

Managers confirmed the role played by the fostering panel in monitoring and reviewing the success of placements.

All carers receive training and are provide with written guidance about child protection procedures. The service provides good quality child protection and safe caring practices training to its carers. Staff and carers during interview demonstrated a good understanding of child protection procedures and symptoms of abuse. Discussion with foster carers confirmed that they are aware of acceptable and no-permissible forms of sanctions. Children who completed questionnaires considered the disciplinary measures used in their foster homes to be fair. The agency has an excellent training pack for preventing and managing challenging behaviour.

Social workers and managers employed by the service are experienced and qualified practitioners ensuring that children's care plans are both understood and promoted by foster carers. Notifications and allegations previously

received by the Commission relating to child protection concerns have demonstrated that the service reacts promptly and effectively when any such concerns arise. Foster carers inform their link fostering and adoption officer when one of these events occurs. Written guidance is available to carers, and training covering health and safety, identification of abuse, drug and alcohol awareness, sexual exploitation and managing difficult behaviour, which aims to help carers to recognise, assess and respond to situations of challenging behaviour effectively and confidently. All of the carers contacted during this inspection had accessed this training. The Sunderland Fostering Service has a policy on bullying and this is explained to carers.

All of the children who were interviewed or who had completed questionnaires indicated that they 'Felt Safe' in their particular foster placements.

Although the service itself works effectively to protect children and young people from harm, the responses from children, foster carers pointed to a lack of contact for a significant number of them with their placing social worker. With each of these examples there was evidence of carers and the service reacting appropriately and highlighting these concerns to social work managers for their action.

Those placing social workers responding by questionnaire were satisfied about the qualities of carers in both protecting children and dealing with any behavioural difficulties. One stated that, 'all the children fostered have learning disabilities and the carer has learned strategies from training and education colleagues that defuse situations hence behaviours do not become a huge issue'.

All of the children responding by questionnaire or interviewed were clear with regard to what sanctions were allowed, gave examples of how or why they were used by their carers and had no issues with them.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes 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 – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

7 and 13

Sunderland Fostering Service through its foster carers works to provide placements, which value diversity and promote equality.

Children placed with the service's carers are provided with good support, which actively promotes educational achievement.

EVIDENCE:

Staff and carers interviewed demonstrated an understanding of diversity, equality and anti-discriminatory practice. Carers receive training in this respect as part of their pre-approval training and written guidance is provided to them by the service. Additional training opportunities are also provided to carers through the well-organised training programme. The service is forging ahead working with the Sahara Project an initiative to promote the recruitment of carers from a broader range of ethnic minorities and backgrounds.

Many positive examples of the specific support and additional services provided to children with a disability, supporting them to maximise their potential and lead as full a life as possible, were evident. Examples of good multi-disciplinary support and joint working were evident through one home visit to a committed and enthusiastic carer(s) providing short break care for children with special needs. The service is continuing to develop its short break services for disabled children.

It is evident that Sunderland fostering service gives a high priority to meeting the educational needs of the children in placements. The fostering service

makes clear within its Statement of Purpose, foster carer's handbook and placement agreements, their expectations of the foster carers in relation to their educational responsibilities.

Speaking with carers it was clear that they established clear expectations about regular school attendance and responded promptly when a child started to refuse to attend.

Carers described their experiences of liaising with schools and teachers and other education services on behalf of the children placed with them. They encourage and take an interest in homework and extra-curricular activities. The establishment of the loan schemes for books including popular fiction such as Harry Potter and more recently musical instruments is proving to be quite a success. This initiative has prompted one carer to offer his experience as a musician to other carers and children.

Several children confirmed in their questionnaires that foster carers helped them with homework, for example, "lots of help, advice with my homework, gets checked and I get help if I need it, I get encouraged to go to after school clubs that I like". Children interviewed said that they received support from their carers in respect of doing homework and school attendance.

The service is also involved in an initiative with University of Sunderland for year 10-12 young people (two currently in foster care) to give them an insight into real University life, in an attempt to broaden their horizons and raise expectations.

The managers of the service was able to confirm that most of the school age children currently placed are receiving a regular education and benefit from personal education plans. Supporting link workers monitor the educational needs of each child through their regular visits and annual review reports.

Respite is also provided to support carers working with children, particularly those who display challenging behaviour. A number of carers interviewed confirmed that they used respite and valued the benefits of this.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes 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 – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

10 and 11

The Fostering Service makes sure that consideration is given to each child\or young person in foster care to maintain and develop family contacts or links and friendships as set out in her/his care plan and/or foster placement agreements and can provide supervision of contact when required.

The arrangements put in place to seek children's views about their lives and the care they receive are effective.

EVIDENCE:

Contact arrangements for children are recorded and include any restrictions placed on them. The carers interviewed were aware of contact arrangements for the children in their care: a number of whom were involved in facilitating and/or supervising contact. Children interviewed were also aware of the contact arrangements and of any restrictions placed on their contact with relatives and friends. Those carers responding by questionnaire and interviewed recognised the value of contact for the children they were caring for, this varies in frequency and carers work very hard to support this and work with the family if this is required of them but some described concerns they held regarding frequency with some having contact as much as five times a week. Carers sometimes felt marginalised by placing social workers and unable to discuss their concerns where they occurred.

The Fostering Service provides children with information in an accessible and age appropriate format through its children's Guide, which is revised annually and distributed to all children place with carers.

The level of consultation between children and the local authority is satisfactory and most children considered that they were able to contribute towards decisions regarding their care and future. All of the children contacted commented favourably on their fostering experience. In questionnaires children confirmed that they were often asked for opinions and ideas for example, 'every thing about my life', 'my bedtime was changed because I thought I was going to bed too soon', another said, 'I'm asked about where I want to go and do'.

All carers contacted confirmed that they had regular contact with their link fostering and adoption worker and were very positive regarding the quality of this support.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes 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 – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

14 and 29

Foster carers in conjunction with the Leaving Care Team support and nurture young people to promote independence and find and maintain appropriate post 16-educational/employment placements, which will aid their personal and social development as they prepare to leave care.

The service makes appropriate and prompt payments in accordance with its policies and procedures.

EVIDENCE:

The sample of placements taken included young people who were in transition to adulthood and foster carers described how they had been very proactive in negotiating with the education service to secure an educational placement for a young person to remain in a school setting until he was nineteen to allow more intensive support to develop a sense of independence. This was an excellent example of a flexible placement becoming long term with a young person entering the next stage of his life with support and guidance from people he trusts and know him well. Training on these issues is to be included in next years training programme.

During discussions with foster carers and fostering and adoption officers it was confirmed that carers receive prompt payments of allowances on most occasions, however, frequent difficulties are encountered with payments such as clothing allowances that are approved by the locality teams. Carers said this was a longstanding problem and described how they were made to feel as if they were begging when applying for payments. The manager of the service has been made aware of this difficulty and there are plans for the Fostering Service to take responsibility for such payments in the hope that this will speed up the administration of payments. The manager is currently examining ways

of paying carers realistic rates in line with guidelines produced by Fostering Network.

Management

The intended outcomes 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 – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

1, 2, 4, 5, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 32
The service, which is well managed, provides effective support to its carers through the provision of a well staffed, stable, experienced and competent staff team.

Staff and foster carers are appropriately supervised, which assists in promoting and safeguarding the best interests of the children and foster carers.

EVIDENCE:

The manager provided a Statement of Purpose revised and updated in October 2005. The agency's policies and procedures and the foster carer's handbook reflect the Statement of Purpose, which gives it a clear focus informed by policy. The Statement is tailored to meet the individual needs of disabled children

The service is held in high regard by its carers. Carers commented positively during the group and individual interviews with the Inspector. The twenty two carers who responded to questionnaires all completed either the 'very satisfied' or 'quite well' section when asked, 'How well do you feel supported by the fostering agency'. One carer wrote, "sometimes have to use her to contact social workers who don't respond to phone calls", another said questions are readily answered and advice offered". Managers confirmed that if a complaint or allegation is made against a carer and they needed support independent of the agency during the investigation this would be funded by Sunderland Fostering.

Discussions with staff showed that the service's social work staff are experienced, well qualified and skilled social work practitioners in working with looked after children. Both service managers for fostering and adoption and Permanency have been awarded CMI Diploma in Management Studies. The managers of the service are approachable and well regarded by staff and carers alike.

The Fostering Service keeps a range of records relating to the functions of the service. The clear requirements to keep records separate, for safe and confidential storage and a policy for who has access to them continues to be satisfactorily maintained.

File audits are undertaken monthly by a group of social work managers and in general files examined during the inspection were good with only minor documentation needing updating. The managers were actively sorting this out. Audit statements such as, "there was good evidence of work with children on file", "progressive plans were good and child focussed" and "able carers who can record and make written contributions when required".

The staff receive supervision every month from an appointed supervisor, this is to allow them to discuss areas within their care practice and to express their training needs. The supervisory staff who carry out these sessions support the staff member during their time at work. The manager uses information gathered to monitor the service against its Statement of Purpose and Schedule 7 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. The policies and procedures used by the service are based firmly on the National Minimum Standards and associated regulations for Fostering Services.

There is an adequate level of clerical and administrative support.

The retention of experienced staff and carers by the service is good. The service maintains detailed information in respect of its carers. The overall recruitment drive to increase the number of carers is continuing. Procedures by which carers are assessed are sound and are regularly reviewed.

As previously highlighted, carers felt that the individual wrap around support provide to them by the service is good. None of the carers had any concerns regarding the out of hours support available to them. For the further benefit of carers the service has established a system to buddy new foster cares with existing carers and the support groups are well appreciated by carers.

Staff said that all foster carers, including the most experienced carers, are expected and encouraged to attend training and support groups. This is being monitored more closely. The service has an established training group, which works to review and further improve the training available to carers. The overall programme in place is comprehensive, with the service positively promoting the attendance of carers. All carers who were contacted as part of the inspection were very complimentary about the training programme in place. The service continues to try and find solutions practical or otherwise to meet existing childcare commitments to enable carers to attend training. The programme provides some joint training opportunities for carers, link fostering and adoption workers and locality social workers. The service enthusiastically supports NVQ training for carers and a cohort of ten carers is currently on the way to achieving NVQ Level 3.

The service has clear arrangements for control and supervision of its financial affairs. It benefits from well-established local authority procedures, which are used to ensure sound financial practice. Accounts are audited.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to assess, encourage and support the care of children and young people by family members and friends

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	X

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

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	3
29	3

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	3
2	3
4	3
5	3
16	3
17	3
18	3
19	3
20	3
21	3
22	3
23	3
24	3
25	3
26	3
27	3
28	3
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	FS21	35	Children placed with the service should be visited regularly by their own social worker and asked for their opinion about the care they receive.	01/03/06

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	FS7	The agency should continue to improve the recruitment of carers from a broader range of ethnic communities.
2	FS8	Ensure that placing social workers provide the service with information needed both to 'match' children successfully and inform carers of children's ongoing care needs.
3	FS16	The service should continue to ensure that all foster carers are reviewed at yearly intervals.
4	FS16	The service should review current arrangements to provide the administrative support provided to the service.
5	FS29	Allowances and fees should be reviewed annually and consideration given to bringing them into line nationally with recommendations made by Fostering Network.
6	FS29	Proposals to transfer certain financial budgets from case

		management to the fostering service are welcomed.
7	FS31	Plans to develop a devolved equipment budget for short break carers to be finalised.

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