



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

East Sussex Fostering Service

**St Mary`s House
52 St Leonards Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 3UU**

Lead Inspector
Lindy Latreille

Announced Inspection
4th - 8th December 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

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Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	East Sussex County Council
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Carol Wilkinson
Type of registration	Local Authority Fostering Service

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 21st November 2005

Brief Description of the Service:

Data supplied by the service prior to inspection clarified that as of 31/03/06 299 young people placed with foster carers are the responsibility of East Sussex Fostering Service. The fostering service is responsible for the recruitment, preparation, assessment, supervision and support of foster carers and provides a duty service, via the Placement Referral Team for the placement of Looked After Children (LAC) with foster carers.

The Family Link Scheme has been renamed the Short Break and Fostering Service and provides respite care for 36 young people with learning or physical disabilities; a service managed within the Children's Disability Team. Within this service there are 10 young people who are placed fulltime with foster carers and 4 of those receive a respite service as well.

The Special Placement Scheme and Placement Support provides care for young people who will benefit from specific specialist input to ensure placement stability. Where placements cannot be made within the Fostering Services own resources, Independent Fostering Agencies that have been approved as preferred providers by the fostering service are used.

The fostering service is based in Eastbourne and is part of the integrated services for children. Teresa Lavelle-Hill, one of the Heads of Service for Looked After Children is the agency decision maker with regard to recommendations made by the fostering panel.

The Operations Manager for the Children's Disability Service manages the Practice Manager who administers the Short Break and Fostering Service.

The Fostering Panel is responsible for recommending the approval of all foster carers and changes to their approval status, including those who are part of the Short Break and Fostering Service. The panel chair is the Head of Safeguarding Children in East Sussex.

SUMMARY

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

This was an announced inspection over five days with one Inspector. Interviews were held with the Operations and Registered Manager for the fostering service, Head of Service and Integrated Looked After Children (LAC) services, Assistant Director for East Sussex County Health Trust, practice managers for placement support and children's disability short break and fostering service, chair of the fostering panel and Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, operations managers for independent reviewing officers and LAC, training and development consultant, Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Services clinician, education advisor for LAC, and four supervising social workers. The fostering panel and the weekly children awaiting placement meeting were attended. A day was spent with the disability team where foster carers were invited to meet with the Inspector and twelve attended. Parents of children using the service were also invited during the day; one parent made contact by telephone. Foster carers were invited to Lansdowne Children's Centre to meet the Inspector and five attended. An evening meeting of the East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA) was attended along with five committee members and the operation manager for fostering. Three home visits were made where young people were in placement and one foster carer visited with a young person in a short break placement. Three out of county foster carers were telephoned and four foster carers were not able to accommodate a visit but gave feedback of their involvement with the service. A seasonal event run by the ESFCA was visited during one afternoon at the weekend.

What the service does well:

The service continues to provide a high standard of provision. The service is well structured and managed containing an enthusiastic team who work to support the foster carers and young people placed. Considerable support is invested in the stability of placements and there are individual support groups for young people and encouragement from the service to bid for money from the Youth Capitol Fund for projects they identified as good for all Looked After Children (LAC) and support for young people to attend a consultation event for young people to contribute their thoughts on the Green Paper "Transforming the Lives Of Children and Young People in Care"

Health needs are identified and met through a range of professionals and services and monitored through the reviewing process. Foster carers who provide respite to young people are experienced and competent.

Safety for foster carers and the young people is managed through thorough recruitment, training and supervision.

The stability of placements is testament to the organisation of the fostering service from matching to placement support and foster carers throughout the inspection confirmed their positivity for working in the service.

The ESFCA works with the service but always retaining their independence and through significant fund raising have funded holidays and events for foster

children and birth children and photographic evidence showed the enjoyment given and received.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The requirements and recommendations of the last report have been actioned. There has been reorganisation at a strategic level to rationalise the LAC provision, to better maximise skills and enhance the communication between the service and the locality social workers. The new focus for LAC is expected to consider the services available for LAC young people so that the investment will promote healthy lifestyles, educational achievement and emotional stability. Foster carers provide a profile of themselves with photographs and current information so that the young person to be placed can see a little about the family that they may be matched with in the early stages of discussion. A healthy care audit action plan led to a training day in June 2006 for representatives from fostering and key agencies who identified unmet need especially the difficulties of access to dental care and Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), and the management of consent needs clarification for foster carers. The service has addressed recruitment through high profile campaigns and media advertising; especially for black and minority ethnic foster carers. The LAC user group successfully bid for money to start an allotment project and a summer trip to London. The service is supporting foster carers to apply for special guardianship orders with a no detriment financial settlement. Stronger and more cohesive liaison is in place between the service and the Youth Offending Team to actively engage with young people in fostering to reduce offending. The independent ESFCA has been successful in bidding for funds and now is able to offer foster carers an independent advisor in times of allegations. Acknowledging the needs of black and minority ethnic young people is moving ahead with a targeted recruitment and training strategy set up to meet objectives by the end of 2006. Educational outcomes have showed improvement following greater focus by foster carers and the service and resources from Training and Education Support Team (TEST); young people met were pleased with their rewards for effort.

What they could do better:

All incidents listed in Schedule 8 should be notified to the Commission for Social Care Inspection. Foster carers should be trained to use body maps and trace unexplained injuries on them. Foster carers need to be clear as to the limitations of consent regarding the young people in their care. Foster carers need to be clear in their practice with regard to the management of HIV/AIDS. All foster carers should have a clear understanding of the storage, administration and recording of medication. The new framework for capturing and recording the success of matching is recorded. Foster carers need to be provided with a recent photograph of the young people in their care at placement. Risk assessments need to identify the strategies to reduce the risk not just identify it. That supervision notes are given to all foster 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 of this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Health needs are identified and met by a range of health professionals and the observational skills of the foster carers.

EVIDENCE:

Foster carers spoke of knowing the health needs of the young people placed and the appropriate services that they would attend. All young people were registered with General Practitioner and dentists. One Independent Reviewing Officer confirmed that the situation was improving as regards access to dentistry and the young people were being supported to attend. Most young people have a health record that moves with them and if this is missing Health Visitors provide new ones. Foster carers spoke of attending necessary health appointments with the young people. 100% of fulltime young people with the Short Break and Fostering Service, ten in all, have received their annual medical. 89% of the mainstream young people had received their annual health check; one of a number of top performing authorities.

There are 3 LAC nurses employed across the county with plans to expand the service, and the Health Authority has employed a LAC Paediatrician to enhance the work in this area

Referrals to Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are accepted when the young person is in a stable placement and 41 young people are receiving a service. The CAMHS clinician spoke of realising the gap in the service for young people prior to sustaining a stable placement, but that training is in progress to skill-up the foster carers and provide them with managing strategies to meet the needs of the young people. 20 other young people receive a therapeutic service. Foster carers sampled spoke of good provision, once the referral has been taken up, and improvements for the young people placed.

There is a eclectic programme of training to support health needs, and foster carers in the Short Break and Fostering Service are given 1:1 teaching by specialist nurses, if required, to meet the young people needs. Some foster carers did say they had a clear understanding of prevention of infection with regards to HIV/AIDS, mostly where they are employed in education or health, but some foster carers were uncertain. Training in first aid is available to all foster carers, many have a qualification from their employment; it is essential that all of them have followed basic first aid instruction.

Foster carers felt confident in their abilities to provide balanced and healthy meals together with a stimulating lifestyle. Further support for this provision will be through the health care audit, as required by the Healthy Care Standards and carried out in conjunction with consultation from The National Children's Bureau representative. An action plan from October 2006 has been formulated for the next year to address the holistic health of the foster children through the integrated LAC service, health and education informed by the views of young people and their foster carers.

Foster carers spoke of the provision of equipment by the service, frequently engaging the occupational therapists for their view. Some homes visited had overhead tracking, widened doors for wheelchair access and appropriate bathing facilities.

In consultation with the foster carers there was an area of confusion around consent for medical treatment or other issues concerning the young people. In discussion with the operations manager this had been identified as a difficulty for foster carers and the matter is under discussion to agree a way forward that would be supportive to foster carers.

Body maps are used within the Short Break and Fostering Service to note unexplained marks or bruises. It would be good practice for all foster carers to have access to and use these so that trends and themes can be identified if present.

None of the home visits were to mainstream foster carers who managed medication. All felt that they would be instructed should a placement be made when medication was necessary. It would be good practice that all foster carers have a basic idea of audit, administration, recording and disposal of medication.

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 of this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The fostering service keeps the young people in their care safe through a range of policies, training and the supervision of foster carers.

EVIDENCE:

The fostering service is well structured and managed by an experienced operations manager who actively invests in her professional development and is supervised by senior managers.

The five homes visited met the needs of the young people placed. All were relaxed and happy places where young people could unwind and where age-appropriate toys and activities were available. Foster carers spoke of rigorous assessment borne out by the data figures from mainstream of 452 applications and 57 applications Short Break and Fostering Service from prospective foster carers and 357 applications withdrawn, discontinued or rejected from mainstream and 54 from Short Break and Fostering Service. Most young people had a single bedroom only sibling groups shared. Health and safety checks are carried out on each household at initial assessment and updated there after. In discussion with the operation manager the template for annual

reviews will be changed to evidence the updating of the health and safety checks.

Matching is addressed at the weekly Children Awaiting Placement (CAP) meeting attended during the inspection. Information was sought and considerable consideration given to meet the needs of the young people and the skills of the foster carer. Operations managers across the service agree priorities and matches made at a fortnightly planning meeting. Placements do consider the holistic needs of all young people and the service are aware that they need to recruit more black and minority ethnic foster carers and to this end are in the process of doing so through targeted recruitment. Where black and minority ethnic needs cannot be truly matched, it was observed during the inspection that the service puts in appropriate workers to support the placement and the young person's ethnicity and also supports life story work. The mainstream fostering service does try to have a period of visiting prior to placement but in the homes visited, foster carers reported that frequently placements are emergencies. A framework to capture and record the success of matching has been devised and benefit would be attached to an evaluation of this process.

Training for foster carers in the prevention and understanding of abuse is mandatory in skills to foster and foundation core training; the latter to be completed over two years. Safe caring guidelines are developed during the initial training and pertinent to each household. It was not possible to evidence that all safe caring guidelines were considered at every annual review or revised as necessary. Although allegations against foster carers were evidenced at the inspection, some resulting in the de-registering of foster carers, and also child protection and safeguarding concerns, none had been notified to the Commission for Social Care Inspection. A discussion with the head of service agreed that a meeting would be arranged to discuss this with the Commission for Social Care Inspection so that a comprehensive approach would be agreed for the future. A good practice procedure would be to have a chronology kept in hard copy to ensure that all incidents are logged to include the involvement of the complaints officer and audited by the operations manager for the service. Foster carers consulted during the inspection felt able to support and advise any young person who was experiencing bullying in school or in the community. There is a procedure for young people who go missing but it was not possible to evidence that all foster carers have a current photograph of the child placed so that they could inform the police if necessary. Young people cared for in the disability team have access to Family Intensive Support Services (FISS) to advise foster carers on safe guidance for young people with little awareness of danger.

All staff in the fostering service have a professional qualification or are in the process of obtaining one. Recruitment was reviewed by the Commission for Social Care Inspection on 01/12/2006 at and found to be of a good standard. Thirty-one foster carers have a qualification at National Vocational Qualification

level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, twelve are working towards such a qualification, thirty foster carers have another relevant qualification and two are working towards such a qualification. All foster carers and staff have a current Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure. In discussion with the service it was agreed that an application needs to be sent in good time, as these checks are taking longer to process at present. All assessments are carried out in mainstream fostering by qualified social workers and in the Short Break and Fostering Service where assessments are actioned by unqualified staff this is co-worked with a social worker who holds accountability for the work.

The panel is chaired by an experienced social worker who also leads on safeguarding and quality assurance within the Children's Service. The composition of the panel meets the regulatory requirements with advisors for childcare, health, education, black and minority ethnic, disability and some-one who has been a looked after as a child. The operations manager for fostering is the panel advisor and scrutinises the reports submitted. Consequently the standard remains high. All first annual reviews and standards of care concerns come to panel. The panel makes recommendations to the fostering service decision maker, one of the heads of service for LAC young people. Developments for the future include a contract for panel members, which will inform an annual one to one meeting for their appraisal. The most recent whole panel training was to look at the responsibilities for the new panel members and consider kinship care and special guardianship applications and meeting the needs of black and minority ethnic placements with foster carers who are predominately white. Observation of the panel at the inspection confirmed appropriate questioning with panel members using their expertise and included exploring the opinions of birth children.

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):

7,13 and 31.

Quality of this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Provision for the young people is individual and foster carers are supported to engage with them meaningfully in activities and education to good effect.

EVIDENCE:

Foster carers consulted during the inspection confirmed that the training to address black and minority ethnic (BME) provision provided by the service was informative. All felt that they could approach their supervising social worker for further information if necessary. Where transracial placements are made the service has provided a black worker to support the young person and complete life story work with them. Resources are available to compliment ethnicity, but not all foster carers visited were aware of this. The service held a recruitment strategy meeting across fostering and adoption to which a director and a colleague, from Celebrating Cultural Diversity Network, were invited. A working party has been set up to focus on the development of a learning event for BME foster carers and those with BME young people placed. East Sussex are working in partnership with SOMPRITI, a local organisation working to empower BME people in the community in the Eastbourne and Wealden district. One young person visited during the inspection was quick to share his black history book with the Inspector and resourcing multi-cultural books and games were discussed with his foster carer.

Educational results are steadily improving. There is a strong expectation that the young people will attend for education and when excluded the Training and Education Support Team (TEST) provides appropriate activities and education with Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) qualifications. The manager of the TEST team is the advisor for education and also sits on the monthly fostering panel. Young people thought to be on the verge of exclusion are involved in activities in a residential setting to build self-esteem confidence and social skills. The results of achievements continue to significantly improve on last year's results with 32 LAC young people of whom 97% were successful at A*-G in one subject, 91% 5 or more A*-G and 56% achieved one or more A*-C. Standard Attainment Tests (SATS) at key stage 1,2 and 3 were also significantly improved. Following the results an action plan was drawn up to sustain the improvements by devising a high quality Personal Educational Plan (PEP) alongside the young person, provide training to new foster carers in ways to support education and expand the use of tutors and individual support for disaffected or under achievers. Foster carers visited felt that schools had a better understanding of LAC young people and exclusion was not so quickly reached as in the past. Foster carers spoke of the increased support to them about education and the new initiative to use Welfare Call a commissioned service that monitors attendance in school and informs the Educational Welfare Officer who liaises with foster carers. Young people visited had no unresolved issues with their schooling and confirmed that they had the help they needed and foster carers attended their school meetings with them. One young person was exceptionally pleased to receive a monetary reward when the results were known and said, " I was real surprised - it was great". The placement support team promotes stability in the placement and promotes confidence and self esteem through planned activities and attendance for therapy to support the development of improved behaviour. Risk assessments seen during the inspection showed the understood risk but not the strategies to manage the risk.

The Short Break and Fostering Service runs mainly to accommodate young people with a disability who live at home but whose families need respite from the complex caring. An experienced practice manager runs the short break team of a senior practitioner, supervising social worker and a case worker. Fourteen foster carers for Short Break and Fostering Service met with the Inspector and were positive in their comments about the service and the support that they received. There was a wide span of experience in the group and all spoke of effective personal support. Some foster carers offered respite to full time foster carers who needed a periodic break from the complexity of their young people. Recruitment has been both alongside mainstream fostering events and also stand-alone. The service has eleven candidates who had progressed through assessment and are following preparation training at present. Much of the interest in the service comes from word of mouth of professionals in the field and some foster carers have the added advantage of having cared for their own child with disabilities and can offer informed empathy to parents in need of support. Parents were invited to meet with the

Inspector but contact was only made by telephone. Comments received involved the long wait for agreement for a service and not receiving a full entitlement of respite. The practice manager confirmed that such concerns would be addressed at the young person's review. The vast majority of placements are planned and all the young people are attending schools. Staff from the service attend the reviews for each young person and data provided confirmed that all the young people have a PEP in place and young people over 15 years have a pathway plan. Specialist LAC nurses cover such issues as medication or special procedures and provide training to foster carers. All the young people have access to Family Intensive Support Services (FISS) who offer specialist advice to families, staff and foster carers on development, speech and language and behaviour management.

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 of this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The young people are encouraged to retain contact with their families and consulted and listened to about their care.

EVIDENCE:

Foster carers visited explained the considerable support that they gave to ensure that contact is maintained where it is deemed to be in the young person's best interest by the placing social workers. Many spoke of the aftermath of contact on the young people and foster carers' family unit when parents failed to attend; this was especially so for the very young child, but that supervising social workers were supportive in supervision. Some foster carers spoke of the difficulty of daily organisation when the contact rota was delayed by the placing social workers. Young people consulted about contact raised no issues.

Within the Short Break and Fostering Service the foster carers have frequent dialogue with the parents of the young people and most use contact books to capture experiences and activities. The young people visited demonstrated an understanding of their short break visits to foster carers and their return home. A training session for foster carers on working with birth families was attended during the inspection and was well delivered by a trainer, experienced and qualified in childcare, and a professionally qualified and experienced foster carer. This session was one of a comprehensive programme and the participants engaged actively with the trainers.

Feedback from parents for foster carers reviews was positive and comments received –“ X seems to thrive on the weekends that he spends with them...and loves going to the beach”.

Young people consulted during the inspection about their foster families were positive. Body language and their verbal interaction confirmed that they were relaxed and happy as they told the Inspector. Young people felt listened to in their foster families and were positive about involvement in the decisions of their lives. The young people attended their reviews but did say that it was difficult to speak up with so many adults in the room. Records kept by the service showed that Independent Reviewing Officers did offer the chair of the review to young people who had the skills to manage. The Independent Reviewing Officer did confirm that if East Sussex young people, placed in independent fostering agencies (IFA), raised issues at their reviews any of his team would take the concerns to the practice managers. Young people's views on foster care for their carers reviews include, "I love swimming and go regularly -I also like meeting people in small groups which X arranges for me and I like Sunday school". Where young people are not verbal placing social workers feedback to the foster carers' reviews, " X is very much part of the family, feels safe and secure and is very well cared for".

The East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA) is an independent organisation but does work with the service and is constantly fund raising. ESFCA has arranged visits to the pantomime for 83 young people and 67 adults, Thorpe Park with 150 young people and foster carers, a Christmas party for over 80 young people and residential trips for 27 LAC young people with staff from the fostering service together with placing social workers and foster carers and for 75 children who foster. These experiences have been a real investment for LAC young people and the families that they live with. One feedback comment included, "because we foster three children my mum and dad would find it difficult to pay for a day out for all seven of us, so having this opportunity to go out as a family whilst also meeting other children who foster has been great".

The placement support team has developed two user groups for LAC young people over the last eighteen months, single sex to encourage a safe environment for discussion. Consultation with the young people has seen the acquisition of an allotment and some successful growing projects and learning. "This is the first thing I've ever been proud of" and "I feel safe and secure up hear" are some of the comments from participants. The placement support team also encouraged the young people to make a bid for a static caravan for young people looked after. A bid was submitted, written by one young person and in October 2006 they received confirmation that they were successful. The venture is to support young people working with their sessional worker, or a meeting place or for a holiday break. "We would make it welcoming for a new child to show them it's not all bad being in foster care and leave them pictures of us using the caravan and us on other activities provided by social services". A group of girls were also fortunate with a bid and enjoyed a day in London and a pampering session, "At the end of the day we were all really relaxed and well pampered- it was an excellent day and we are going to look well good for when we go back to school"

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):

As there are no core National Minimum Standards to assess and as no concerns were raised prior to, or during the inspection, no assessment took place.

EVIDENCE:

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):

17,21,24 and 32.

Quality of this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The service is effectively managed in line with the strategic changes of the authority and staff are competent to devolve the service to support foster carers and promote the achievement of LAC.

EVIDENCE:

Staff are qualified social workers and trained to deliver competent service. Staff are supervised and supported to train by the department. All social workers are registered with the General Social Care Council (GSCC). The stability of the service through the retention of staff is a strength. Foster carers spoke of feeling well supported through supervision, though not all received notes from these meetings; all felt training was useful and informative. In the past some training had to be cancelled due to low numbers. The department has now made links with Brighton and Hove and West Sussex to offer places for their foster carers who may live in East Sussex. With this strategy it is hoped that training will no longer be cancelled.

Recruitment remains active and a time when all staff, foster carers and young people are involved as in Airbourne 2006. Successful foster carers are being recruited to the Short Break and Fostering Service and links are being made with black and minority ethnic communities to enable LAC to develop contacts. The service remains resolute to keep standards high and some young people are involved in the selection and training of foster carers. Skills to foster training is delivered by staff rotationally and includes staff from the Short Break and Fostering Service.

Foster carers consulted spoke highly of the support from their supervising social workers through regular supervision; comments included "excellent", "so supportive and always listens", "there's always someone there who will help". Foster carers consulted mostly liked the timing of training but certainly liked the delivery. Some spoke highly of the support groups, meeting in Uckfield, Newhaven, Battle and Eastbourne, where concerns or practice can be informally shared. No concerns about out of hours support were raised during interviews. All foster carers had had their annual review on time and generally all reflected that supervising social workers remained vigilant in all matters of health and safety. Foster carers found it a useful time to "re-group" their thoughts at their own reviews and records seem evidenced that feedback from the young people was always sought, and the operations manager confirmed that when feedback was not present at foster carers' reviews it was chased.

Foster carers' files and the recordings viewed. All were detailed and kept comprehensively. As nearly all records are kept electronically hard copies were printed to support files examined. Records noted unannounced visits made and foster carers confirmed this, some adding that their lives were so busy that they did sometimes forget the visit was due so it was like an unannounced visit.

When young people come into the care of East Sussex all efforts are made to explore if there are family members who could accommodate the child. The service is sensitive to the concerns of these prospective carers and is

supportive to assist them in caring for the child through appropriate investment where necessary, such as extending a home or supporting a move. All foster carers' training and services are available to kinship carers and they are encouraged to attend and take part. Those consulted during the inspection raised no concerns.

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	4
6	4
8	3
9	2
15	4
30	4

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

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
10	4
11	4

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

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

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	FS9	43(1)	That all incidents listed in Schedule 8 are notified to the Commission for Social Care Inspection.	11/12/06

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.	FS12	That body maps are used by foster carers to capture unexplained injuries.
2.	FS12	That all foster carers are given clear information about the consent for the young people in their care.
3.	FS12	That all foster carers are confident about prevention of infection in relation to HIV/AIDS.
4.	FS12	That all foster carers are confident to audit, store administer and record medication.
5.	FS8	That a framework for capturing and recording the success achieved in matching is evaluated.
6.	FS9	That foster carers have a photograph of the young people in their care to support the missing person procedure.

8	FS13	That risk assessment must identify the strategies to reduce the risk not just identify it.
9	FS21	That supervision notes are given to all foster carers.

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