



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

### **BGWS Fostering Service**

**Quay House  
2 Wellington Grove  
Stockport  
SK2 6RH**

*Lead Inspector*  
Susan  
Winson

*Announced*  
25 July 2005

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

## Reader Information

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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](http://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](http://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

<b>Name of service</b>	BGWS Fostering Service
<b>Address</b>	Quay House, 2 Wellington Grove, Stockport, SK2 6RH
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161-480-8677
<b>Fax number</b>	0161-474-0860
<b>Email address</b>	-
<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	BGWS Fostering Service
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Mrs P Walton
<b>Type of registration</b>	IFA - Fostering Agency
<b>No. of places registered (if applicable)</b>	-
<b>Category(ies) of registration, with number of places</b>	IFA - Fostering Agency

# **SERVICE INFORMATION**

## **Conditions of registration:**

A manager must be appointed who has the necessary qualifications, skills and experience to manage the fostering agency and be registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

**Date of last inspection**      19 July 2004

## **Brief Description of the Service:**

This fostering agency is part of Boys and Girls Welfare Society (BGWS), a registered charity which provides residential care, education, fostering and adoption services. The fostering services was set up in 1997 to provide foster homes for children who were living in BGWS residential homes but it now takes referrals directly from local authorities. There are presently 30 children living in BGWS foster homes. The service is registered with CSCI and has three separately registered offices in Sheffield, Cheshire and Preston. The responsible individual is Mrs Pat Walton and, at present, there is no registered manager although a manager has been appointed and will commence employment in the near future.

# **SUMMARY**

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

This announced inspection involved two inspectors who spent time in the offices inspecting files and records and interviewing staff, attending part of a training course, observing a panel and meeting with four foster carers in their own homes and with some of the children placed. Completed questionnaires were received from four foster carers and five young people in foster care.

## **What the service does well:**

The fostering service provides high levels of quality support to foster carers to enable them to meet the needs of young people in their care. Foster carers praised the support and stated that, "there is always somebody to get in touch with". Sons and daughters of foster carers are included and are involved from the start of the assessment process.

Young people are appropriately placed with carers and said that they are consulted about their care.

The service can show that young people's needs are met in terms of education, health and safeguarding. The foster carers are committed to helping young people keep in contact with their families and friends. Young people who spoke with the inspectors were positive in their comments about the care they receive.

There is a committed, knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff team who work together to provide positive outcomes for young people and to re-evaluate and improve on the services they offer.

The fostering service is expanding and has clear plans on how the standards will be maintained or improved during this process.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

The fostering service has revised its staffing and will shortly be fully staffed. In addition, new management posts have been created. The administrative team is better organised and systems are efficient.

There has been progress in updating the statement of purpose and some policies and procedures. The foster carer handbook has been revised.

The fostering service has moved to new accommodation which is more suitable and better fitted to its purpose.

### **What they could do better:**

The fostering agency cannot always demonstrate that the care provided by its foster carers is monitored by the manager. The inspectors were satisfied that this had started to be addressed.

The agency is reviewing its functioning, processes and systems and needs to ensure that all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The agency intends to consult with foster carers, staff and users of the service as part of this work to improve the service.

There is a need for more clarity and protocols for the panel function and role.

More rigorous and robust systems need to be in place to ensure that file audits are carried out regularly and that placing local authorities provide full information about young people to inform matching decisions.

The agency needs to ensure that CRB checks are taken up for all staff as necessary and that foster carers' CRB certificates are checked by the manager.

A training strategy is in draft form and needs to be implemented to increase the range of training for both foster carers and staff and to encourage more foster carers to engage in training to meet the needs of young people in their care.

Areas for development include strategies to identify and manage risk and a review of the assessments of 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](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

## **CONTENTS**

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Standards

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 – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 12**

The fostering service promotes the health and development of children and young people.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Health promotion is covered during the assessment of prospective foster carers but the training for carers is in the development stage. There is a focus on the practical aspects of health care rather than health information and promotion at present. However, in practice, it is clear from foster carers who were visited by the inspectors, and returned questionnaires, that they are providing varied and balanced diets and that the young people know what constitutes healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. One carer is active in discouraging a young person's smoking.

It is evident from discussions and from records that foster carers are committed to ensuring that young people's medical needs are met and some spend considerable time attending appointments and liaising with consultants.

All carers receive first aid training and have access to a BGWS nurse for consultation. The agency is involved in a local group formed under the government's teenage pregnancy initiative and intends to provide policies and training for carers.

All carers have the agency's medication policy and there is information in the foster carer's handbook. Systems for the collation of information about foster carers' administration of medication (both prescription and non-prescription) have yet to be put into place to allow the manager to monitor medication practice.

The staff outlined difficulties in obtaining full health information from placing social workers and this is reflected in the lack of information on files. It is clear that the supervising social workers have made efforts to gain this information, including written requests. The health outcomes for young people could be compromised by the lack of written health records which are regularly updated and which go with the child when they move on.

## 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 – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 3, 6, 8, 9, 15 & 30**

The staff of the fostering service have the skills and experience to ensure foster carers promote and safeguard the welfare of children in their care. The fostering service does not have robust systems to ensure that all the people who work in or for the service are suitable to work with children. The fostering panels are well organised and are child focused.

### **EVIDENCE:**

There was no registered manager in place at the time of this inspection. A principal manager has been appointed who has appropriate qualifications and experience. The responsible individual, the manager (Support Services) and the manager (Training and Recruitment) were jointly managing the agency in the interim period. Staff were satisfied with the arrangements in place and said that senior staff and managers were accessible.

Staff personnel records were inspected and an immediate requirement issued in respect of CRB's which were not in place. CRB checks on foster carers are received and held at BGWS's central office and there is no system for the assessing social worker or the manager to see or check these. There are tracking systems in place to ensure that foster carer references and checks are renewed on a regular basis but no similar system for staff of the agency.

The agency is clearly child focused and the ability of carers to meet the needs of a young person is the prime consideration in matching. Matching decisions are made on sound principles and knowledge. Matching meetings are held where possible to ensure that full information is shared. The lack of full information from placing authorities sometimes hampers this process, despite the agency's efforts to gain information at an early stage.

Foster Placement Agreements inspected indicated a need for more child specific information to outline the expectations of the placing authority and define which decisions can be made by the carers and which need to be referred to the placing authority. It also needs to include additional support which is put into place by the agency to compensate for any gaps in the match between foster carer and young person.

Planned placements allow for introductory visits to the foster home and, where age-appropriate, allows for the young person to be consulted. Examples were given of good practice in introducing young people to their foster carers and in moving young people on.

The agency has systems in place to ensure that young people are protected in foster placements. Safe caring principles and practice permeate the assessments, training and reviews of carers. Carers are well informed about child protection issues and have their individual family caring policy which include clear boundaries and supervision levels. Young people who the inspectors spoke with stated that they felt safe in foster care. Incidents of a child protection nature have been handled appropriately by the agency.

The agency continues to work to improve its practice in safeguarding children. Risk assessment and effective risk management have been incorporated into procedures and the placement agreements, as have new procedures on unauthorised absences. Both have been identified through the agency's quality assurance systems as needing further review and this is planned.

Comprehensive health and safety assessments are compiled by supervising social workers and held on foster carers' files. Unannounced visits are not yet taking place annually.

Foster carers, children and their families have access to BGWS's complaints system. Complaints are recorded and have been handled effectively. The young people's leaflets contain information about complaints and bullying.

The agency makes clear to foster carers its expectations in regard to behaviour management measures through the assessments, training and written guidance. This includes prohibited sanctions. It was evident through discussions and from records that supervising social workers and foster carers work together to provide effective behaviour management strategies geared to individual young people. Young people said that the consequences of their behaviour is reasonable and one stated that punishments are "perfectly fair".

The agency's panel is properly constituted but has been only just quorate recently which has affected the balance of BGWS and independent members. It was clear to the inspector who attended the panel and met with the chairperson that they are well organised and that decisions are made following effective discussions. The chairperson was not interviewed for the post, has no contract or job description. The quality assurance function of panel has yet to be developed.

# 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 – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 7, 13 & 31**

The fostering service values diversity and promotes educational achievement and enjoyment.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Valuing diversity and promoting equality runs through the policies, procedures and training provided to foster carers and matching decisions address young people's needs in terms of gender, religion, ethnic origin, language, culture and disability. Examples were given of foster carers advocating for a disabled young person's right to inclusion and of others who have worked to find out information in order to focus on identity issues. There is provision for extra financial support to meet young people's needs.

The agency has yet to put in place monitoring systems for educational achievement. However, it is clear from records, discussions and visits to foster homes, that the agency and its foster carers work to encourage and enable young people to attain their potential educationally. Very few young people are not in full-time education and some of them have gained GCSE's and good behaviour awards in school. Examples were given where foster carers have been proactive in setting up effective communication with schools and they routinely attend school events and meetings. PEP's and other education information is not always on young people's files and without this information it is less easy for foster carers to support young people with specific needs.

The agency's support workers have been involved when young people have been excluded from school to provide educational input with work being provided by the school. In addition, examples were given where support workers were involved in planning and in helping young people with their behaviour in school.

Young people were positive in their comments about being supported in school and the range of leisure facilities they enjoy.

It is acknowledged by the agency that further training could enhance foster carers' roles in terms of education and improve outcomes for young people.

The agency does not provide short break services where the parents remain the main carers for young people.

# **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 – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 10 & 11**

Children and young people are enabled and assisted to maintain contact with their families and friends.

The fostering service promotes consultation.

## **EVIDENCE:**

There is a clear commitment throughout the agency to encouraging and enabling young people to maintain and develop family contact and friendships in line with their care plans. Numerous examples given indicate that the rights of young people in regard to contact are upheld. The agency supports foster carers in the practical aspects of contact visits. Minutes of some review meetings note parents' satisfaction with contact arrangements.

It is clear that consultation with young people in foster placements is ongoing in regard to day to day living and involvement in decision making. They are encouraged to voice their views and are listened to. The agency arranges fun days and holidays (which involve both looked after children, the sons and daughters of foster carers and, recently, the sibling of a fostered child) and holds support groups for young people which are well attended. Supervising social workers consult with young people on visits and act on their suggestions where practicable. Young people are encouraged to attend their statutory reviews.



The agency can show that it consults with foster carers on a regular basis and involves and includes them in any planned changes. Foster carers stated that they feel valued by the agency.

# **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 – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 14 & 29**

Young people receive care that helps them to gain skills which prepare them for adulthood and independent living. The policies and procedures ensure that foster carer allowances and payments are made on time.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The agency has identified the need for more carers for adolescents and acknowledges that leaving care and independence issues are an area for development. An independence booklet is available and it is clear that carers are active in helping young people develop life skills, as appropriate to their age and abilities.

The agency provides comprehensive information to foster carers on allowances and payments and there are effective administrative systems in place which ensure that payments are made on time.

# 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 cares 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 standard(s) 1, 4, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26 & 27**

The fostering agency has clear aims and objectives. Interim management arrangements have ensured that services to foster carers and young people have been maintained. Staff and foster carers are well supported and some of their training needs are met. The premises are suitable and administrative support is well organised and efficient.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The agency has a statement of purpose which includes its aims and objectives and the services they provide. This accurately reflects the functioning of the agency. A variety of information leaflets for young people, geared to different ages and levels of understanding, give information about foster care.

The proposed registered manager had not yet taken up her post so it is not possible to assess her abilities to manage the agency at this point. She has made an application for registration with CSCI.

Management systems for the formal monitoring of standards of care have not yet reached the stage where patterns and areas for development or training can be identified. Supervising social workers monitor the practice of foster carers and are clear about their roles in terms of supervision and support.

The recruitment strategies are geared to maintaining a range of carers to meet the needs of children and young people referred by social services departments. Foster care agreements are comprehensive and outline the agency's expectations.

The agency has processes for the assessment and review of foster carers which focus on the carers' abilities to meet the needs of children. Competence based assessments are carried out by qualified social workers. The assessment reports are detailed and thorough and are presented to the fostering panel with a recommendation of the range and ages of approval. The agency recognises the need for more analysis of the information in the assessments and there has yet to be an agreement about which family members will be seen during assessments. Referees are interviewed and the reports include information on what the referees know and have seen, rather than what they think. Annual reviews of carers are carried out by a manager from another office. First reviews are presented to panel.

The agency provides a range of training for foster carers, including pre-approval training which includes education and health of looked after children, valuing diversity, contact, behaviour management and working in partnership. Applicants were positive about the training and commented that they valued the input of the foster carer who was involved.

Ongoing training is provided and the agency's expectations are written into foster carer agreements. Training records demonstrate that not all foster carers have engaged in post-approval training and the agency should consider how they encourage carers to develop and extend their skills in meeting the needs of young people. Examples were given where foster carers had accessed specific training to meet the needs of individual young people in their care.

Staff of the agency have training profiles and their training needs are identified. They expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the training offered.

A draft training strategy for foster carers and staff is in place to build on and enhance their development opportunities.

Support to, and supervision of, foster carers is a priority in this agency and is backed up by policies and procedures. Regular supervisory visits are carried out by supervising social workers and reports are written which outline how well the foster carers are meeting the needs of young people. Support workers employed by the agency are valued by carers who praised the levels of support offered to them. Support groups for foster carers are functioning effectively. Out of hours support is provided and foster carers said that they can always access someone for advice.

The staff of the agency expressed satisfaction with the level of support provided to them through supervision, personal development plans and appraisals and staff meetings. BGWS has a well developed system for induction of new staff. Job descriptions, supervision contracts and evidence of regular supervision and appraisal were on files.

Case records are well organised and stored safely.

The agency has moved to new premises since the last inspection, which are fit for purpose. Regular health and safety and fire checks are carried out and documented.

There has been a clarification of roles and areas of responsibility within the administrative team which has improved the efficiency and effectiveness. The team clearly work together co-operatively and understand their role in the agency. Comments about the management of the administrative team were positive.

BGWS's accounts were provided for this inspection and indicate that the fostering agency is financially viable.

# 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

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

<b>STAYING SAFE</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>3</b>	3
<b>6</b>	3
<b>8</b>	2
<b>9</b>	2
<b>15</b>	1
<b>30</b>	2

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

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

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

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

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection? Yes

**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) and schedule 6	The registered person must ensure that foster placement agreements contain specific reference to additional support needed to compensate for any gaps in matching.	1/9/2005
2.	FS8, FS12, FS13	17(1)(3)	The registered person must take all reasonable steps to obtain all the necessary information from placing authorities to ensure that appropriate decisions can be made in matching and to ensure that carers can provide appropriate care to meet the needs of young people placed. (Timescale of 1/12/04 not met).	1/9/05
3.	fs12	42(1) and Schedule 7	The registered person must ensure that medication given to young people in foster care is documented and monitored. (Timescale of 01/12/04 not met).	1/10/2005
4.	FS4	42(1) and Schedule 7	the registered person must ensure that systems are in place to monitor the matters outlined in Schedule 7 of Regulations.	1/10/2005
5.	FS 15	20(1) and 20(3)(d) (1)	The registered person must ensure that CRB checks are taken up as necessary.	Immediate

## 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	The registered person should continue with plans to develop the use of risk assessment and effective risk management planning.
2.	FS15	The registered person should ensure that she has sight of all CRB certificates for foster carers.
3.	FS30	The registered person should ensure that policies and procedures for the panel function are in place which include the process for appointment of the chairperson, the chairperson's contract and job description and the quality assurance role of the panel.
4.	FS19 and FS23	The registered person should continue with plans to develop a training strategy for staff and foster carers and to increase the involvement of carers in post-approval training.
5.	FS9	The registered person should ensure that unannounced visits to foster homes are carried out annually.
6.	FS17	The registered person should develop guidelines for supervising social workers and foster carers in regard to people who will be interviewed during assessments.
7.		



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