



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

Foster Care Associates Thames Valley

**Hale Court
Hale Road
Wendover
Bucks
HP22 6NJ**

Lead Inspector
Mr Rob Smith

Announced Inspection

27th November 2006 – 4th December 2006

09:30

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	
Document Purpose	Inspection Report
Author	CSCI
Audience	General Public
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Internet address	www.csci.org.uk

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	Foster Care Associates Thames Valley
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Email address	
Provider Web address	www.thefca.co.uk
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Foster Care Associates Ltd
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Mrs Sara Chambers-Ross
Type of registration	Fostering Agencies

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 20th March 2006

Brief Description of the Service:

Foster Care Associates Thames Valley (FCATV) is registered as an independent fostering agency. It is part of Foster Care Associates, a national organisation providing family placements and a broad range of associated services to local authorities across the country.

FCATV operates from Wendover, with offices in Reading and Bletchley, which provide locally based support services. The tasks undertaken by the offices do not, at the present time, require these to be registered as separate branches.

Services provided by FCATV include the recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers, placement support via supervising social workers, training, educational liaison, therapeutic and resource worker services.

The agency traditionally offers placements to more complex and challenging young people, providing an in-house package of integrated foster care, educational and therapeutic support. However the agency now aims to offer a flexible range of placement support options suited to the specific needs Of individual children including a more basic foundation placement package.

Statistics provided by the agency indicated that as of March 31st 2006 the branch had 68 carer households approved providing a potential 153 placements.

Fees ranged from £300 per week for foundation placements to an average £356 for standard placements. Parent and child placements attracted a higher potential maximum fee of £712 per week as did specifically requested solo placements or those requiring very high levels of support.

SUMMARY

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

This was an announced inspection conducted over a period of three days with one additional later visit provide verbal feedback. The inspection comprised the following main activities:

- consideration of pre-inspection dataset and self-assessment information submitted by the branch manager;
- consideration of questionnaires completed by carers (36 received), children (26 received) and placing authorities (14 received);
- interviews with branch manager and a selection of senior central management staff;
- visits to and interviews with carers and placed young people in four carer households;
- visits to the branch headquarters and two area offices;
- interviews with a range of social work staff in the two area offices;
- scrutiny of a sample of staff, carer and children's files and central administrative records.

Please note this inspection only covered key standards as identified by CSCI.

What the service does well:

The overall finding of this inspection is that the agency continues to provide a high quality service to carers and young people. This judgement was supported primarily by the overwhelmingly positive nature of the feedback received in questionnaires from young people, carers and placing authorities and substantiated by the evidence obtained during the fieldwork undertaken during the inspection.

The agency does well in many areas of practice but the following were worthy of particular note:

- there was excellent support for young people's educational achievement;
- rigorous attention was paid to ensuring the safety of children in placement and responding to emerging concerns;
- good attention was paid to recognising and meeting the diverse needs of young people

- there was a good structure of support for carers;
- the branch was well managed by head office and local office senior staff

What has improved since the last inspection?

The previous inspections report have not identified any areas of significant concern and the relatively minor requirements made following the last inspection had been met by the time of this visit. The agency had also made improvements in the following areas.

The agency had confirmed the post of recruitment manager/panel advisor and there had been a resultant improvement in the consistency of carer assessments and effectiveness of panel organisation and management.

The branch manager had successfully completed an NVQ in management since the last inspection.

What they could do better:

This inspection did not identify any areas of particular concern warranting the making of requirements. Some minor areas of improvement were suggested as follows

Carer and child files would benefit from more consistent auditing to ensure consistent compliance with the expectations of the standards.

Systems and responsibility for final 'signing off' of staff recruitment processes as complete and satisfactory would benefit from clarification.

Arrangements for respite care breaks for carers needed further attention to ensure they minimised the disruption caused to young people in placement.

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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Being Healthy

The intended outcome for this Standard is:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at the outcome for Standard:

12

Quality in this outcome area is good.

The fostering service supported carers appropriately in working to ensure the health of young people was promoted consistently.

This judgement was made using the available evidence including a visit to this service

EVIDENCE:

Feedback from young people in their questionnaires confirmed their carers were consistently proactive in encouraging them to stay healthy, exercise and maintain a healthy diet. This was also reflected in discussions with carers during visits.

Scrutiny of child and carer files showed consistent evidence of attention paid to getting children registered with local health services and to ensuring regular check-ups took place. A system of health passports was in place to help ensure relevant health information travelled with young people through their childhood and placement changes.

Support around mental and emotional health for both young people and carers was provided by the service's therapists, based in each of the two offices. This support was offered, if judged necessary, in the form of direct work with young people but increasingly via support and consultation with carers to enable them to provide the right input for young people's needs.

The ability of carers to meet the health care needs of children was addressed as part of the matching process for placements and evidenced on matching checklists seen. Carers were provided with a range of relevant training covering, for example first aid, drug and alcohol abuse and health and safety in

the home. Staff confirmed that more specialist training and advice for children with complex health needs was provided via liaison with local health services. Guidance on health and developmental matters was provided in the carer handbook.

The service had provided specific help and support for carers and young people around sexual health since the last inspection. FCA was also in the process of developing more stringent expectations around the safer management of smoking in carer households, in line with BAAF initiatives. A number of carers spoken with would welcome this as they felt the sometimes minimal expectations of placing social workers sometimes left them frustrated in their attempts to discourage their placed children from smoking.

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 & 30.

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

The persons carrying on and managing the service were suitable to do so, helping to ensure the service quality remained high.

There were appropriate systems in place to ensure that foster carer households were physically safe places for young people to live.

Good attention was paid to matching to make sure, as far as possible, placements were capable of consistently meeting children's needs.

The service's policies, procedures and documented actions indicated good attention was paid to ensuring children in placement were not subject to abuse and that concerns were explored fully and promptly.

Recruitment processes for staff and carers ensured that only appropriate people were engaged to work for the agency.

The fostering panel exercised its responsibilities diligently to help ensure the overall appropriateness and safety of fostering households.

These judgements were made using the available evidence, including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

The persons running the agency nationally, and managing the service locally, had, through the process of CSCI registration and subsequent inspections, been judged to be fit and appropriate people to run a fostering agency. No changes to local management had taken place since the last inspection and no concerns about managerial competence had arisen in that time. The branch manager had successfully completed an NVQ in management since the last inspection.

Good processes were in place for ensuring carer households were physically safe and appropriate environments for young people to live in. Health and safety checks were undertaken as part of initial approval and at subsequent household reviews. Evidence of both were seen on carers' files, as were copies of unannounced visits by agency staff to carers, which offered further opportunities to check the physical state of the homes seen, as well as the quality of care being offered.

Good attention was paid as part of normal placement processes to providing carers suitably matched to children's needs. Although the agency was increasingly employing quite wide approval terms for carers, discussion with staff and carers confirmed the specific matching of individual children was done in a well-considered way with carers not being expected to take on any initial situations beyond their scope or capabilities. Matching checklists were seen to be in place on files with evidence of steps taken to address significant placement matching shortfalls. Where placements were planned staff indicated opportunities for visits and introductions were offered. The placements manager did however indicate that many placement requests were either emergency or very short-notice and did not afford such opportunities to carers and young people.

Files also indicated that placing local authorities for existing children in placement were appropriately consulted where further placements were judged to have potential significant impact.

Carers and young people did however raise a number of concerns about the processes for planning and matching respite break placements with other carers. Due to the pressures on availability of longer-term placements, respite availability was understandably difficult to predict and plan for confidently. As a result it was evident some respite arrangements were very last minute and understandably unsettling for both carers and young people; the latter sometimes having had little or no opportunity to meet their respite carers beforehand. The inspector felt the agency was doing as much as it could, in pressured circumstances, to meet its respite break commitments to carers in a considered and child-centred way but would strongly support the development

of specifically recruited respite support carers for individual family or child situation where this is feasible. This option was being pursued by one established carer household, to ensure good continuity and minimal disruption to children in placement. The agency was also developing a resource of peripatetic carers who would be able to provide respite care in the primary carer's house. Although this will not always be feasible, it is a pertinent initiative that seeks to minimise the disruption sometimes associated with respite arrangements.

Carer feedback on the quality of information provided at the point of placement planning was that it was variable, with an obvious potential impact on the success of matching. They recognised that this was rarely due to FCA, who they felt worked hard to maximise the information provided by local authorities. Scrutiny of children's files confirmed that indeed key Looked After Children (LAC) documentation was often very delayed in receipt by the agency or incomplete. This is an area in which the agency will need to continue to have high expectations of its placing authorities.

The service had extensive written policy procedures and guidance for staff and carers on child protection matters and relevant training was also provided for both groups. Safe caring guidelines were seen to be in place for each carer household and due care was taken when placing children with identified risky behaviours to update and amend such guidelines if necessary. Risk assessments for bedroom sharing were routinely undertaken.

Ongoing contact with the service since the last inspection confirmed that emerging child protection allegations were promptly alerted to the relevant external agencies and prompt action taken to safeguard children pending outcomes of investigations. Lower level concerns about carer standards were also promptly addressed as evidenced by contact with the agency over particular situations since the last inspection.

The agency had detailed complaints processes in place for carers, young people and other parties. Records of complaints were seen. These indicated these had been dealt with appropriately by the agency. Data supplied by the agency indicated that two formal complaints had been received to year ending 31/03/06 one of which made by a carer was partially substantiated.

Staff recruitment processes were generally sound with appropriate checks and vetting taking place as evidenced by the sample of new staff files seen during this inspection. The inspector did however note that two staff had actually started work before all aspects of FCA recruitment documentation had been completed. These were relatively minor aspects but indicated the need for a more effective 'sign-off' of the recruitment process by local managers rather than wholly relying on central personnel procedures. A recommendation has been made to address this issue. Systems were in place for regular renewal of CRB checks for staff. Recruitment and assessment processes for carers were

rigorous covering all expected checks and vetting consistently. The fostering panel was not observed on this occasion. However scrutiny of recent panel minutes and discussions with the panel chair and the panel advisor confirmed that it was operating consistently and in line with regulatory expectations. A new panel chair had been appointed with relevant experience and skills and the panel minutes appeared to indicate a more tightly focused and managed use of panel time and discussion than was noted at the last inspection. Panel membership was in line with the expectations of the standards and minutes indicated good attention to ensuring quoracy. Panel scrutiny was an effective additional safeguard in respect of both initial assessments and the ongoing quality of placement via initial care household reviews.

Not all household reviews came to panel but the agency had an effective system of off management line responsibility for these reviews in the person of the reviewing officer, to add a greater element of independent scrutiny and safeguarding of carer quality and placement safety.

The panel advisor, who also covered responsibilities for carer recruitment and assessment, confirmed that expectations of assessments coming to panel had become more rigorous so that any assessments with incomplete information were simply not now presented until all areas were satisfactorily addressed.

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.

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

The service paid consistent attention to ensuring the diverse needs of young people were identified and met appropriately.

The service ensured that there was an excellent level of advice and support for carers to ensure placed young people were able to achieve educationally.

These judgements were made using the available evidence including a visit to this service

(NB Key Standard 31 was not applicable to this service)

EVIDENCE:

As part of the placement and matching process the service sought to meet diversity needs as far as possible, as evidenced in matching documentation seen on files. Although the majority of carers were from a white British background, reflecting the demography of much of the area covered by this branch, the service had been successful in recruiting a number of carers from more diverse racial ethnic and cultural backgrounds to offer a range of matching choices in these areas to placing authorities. The service's staff complement also reflected a diverse range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Diversity training and associated written guidance was provided for both carers and staff and particular events such as the recent black history week were

initiated by the service to ensure diverse backgrounds and cultures were openly celebrated and supported.

The service did provide carers for a number of children with both physical and learning disabilities. Again where required specialist training input, support and guidance was provided for the carers concerned covering both direct care and issues like provision of satisfactory special education.

The service worked hard to support children in full time educational placements and the figures provided for year ending 31/03/06 indicated that 68 were at that time in that position. Carers were unanimous in their praise of educational support provided by the service in this area. The branch education liaison officer (ELO) was seen as an invaluable support and source of advice by carers on all educational matters. The ELO also maintained excellent oversight, monitoring and celebration of children's educational needs and achievements and management of their individual education plans alongside placing authorities and education authorities. The ELO was also ensuring additional support was available for carers and their children in education via access to the Learn Premium online resource and development of out of hours school learning schemes. Young people themselves in questionnaires were very clear that they received good support and encouragement from their carers and from the service to achieve educationally.

The service did not offer alternative full time educational support for young people out of school either permanently or temporarily but sessional support by resource workers and occasional educational input at the service offices was available in areas set aside for educational support. Expansion of these support services was part of development plans for the future.

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 & 11.

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

The service helped ensure carers provided good support for contact arrangements to enable continuity of family relationships for placed young people.

The service ensured there were various ways in which young people could contribute their views about their care and the general running of the service

These judgements was made using the available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

Feedback from carers and young people in questionnaires and interviews was that, where deemed to be in the child's best interest, good support and encouragement was in place for maintenance of contact and family relationships. Contact and partnership working with birth families was included as part of carer preparatory training. Carers spoken with appeared to understand the importance of this part of their role.

The practical arrangements for contact tended be largely managed by placing authorities, and where face to face contact took place this was typically outside of carer households. Carers and young people did express some frustration with the inconsistency of some local authorities arrangements with late or unexplained cancellations however this was beyond the control of the fostering agency and carers were advised in liaison with their supervising staff to make appropriate use of local authority complaints procedures over such matters.

Young people in questionnaires indicated they felt fully consulted about the day-to-day arrangements for their care in foster households. On a more formal level they were consulted at the point of household reviews and of course were consulted as part of their own LAC reviews. Scrutiny of a number of child and carer files confirmed these feedback and consultation forms were consistently filled in by children of an age to understand them. The branch manager indicated that development of placement endings evaluations by young people was planned to add a further element of placement quality assessment.

FCA also had a well-established structure for agency-wide consultation on the overall running and development of the service via children's consultation groups and national conferences. Staff indicated that 5-6 children each year from the region attended the national forums. Interestingly carers did not rate FCA highly on this aspect of consulting with children over service improvement, which may reflect the continuing absence of a local level consultation group for young people. While recognising the difficult geography of the Thames Valley branch area in drawing groups of children together, the service should continue to explore the viability of getting such a group underway to especially focus on issues relating to this region. Certainly the inspector experienced some very considered and articulate feedback from some young people during the course of the inspection on matters such as respite planning and support for carers.

Information for young people available in a variety of formats for different age made clear the agency's commitment to recognising children's rights in the broad sense and to hearing their views about how they were looked after. Clear and accessible complaints/comments processes were in place for young people and feedback in children's questionnaires indicated they were confident about whom to approach if they had any worries.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

- The fostering service prepares young people for adulthood.(NMS 14)
- The fostering service pays carers an allowance and agreed expenses as specified.(NMS 29)

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

29

Quality in this outcome area is good.

Carers received an appropriate level of allowance that was administered well to ensure they had satisfactory financial resources to care for young people.

This judgement was made using the available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

The standard relating to preparing young people for adulthood was not fully inspected on this occasion however discussion with service staff indicated a good commitment to improving the quality and range of services for older young people.

The service provided carers with a good level of allowances and payments that was subject to ongoing review to ensure its adequacy and competitiveness with other providers. Carers did not raise any concerns about the adequacy of financial support and confirmed that payment systems worked smoothly.

Management

The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

- There is a clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and the fostering service ensures that they meet those aims and objectives.(NMS 1)
- The fostering service is managed by those with the appropriate skills and experience. (NMS 2)
- The fostering service is monitored and controlled as specified. (NMS 4)
- The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.(NMS 5)
- Staff are organised and managed effectively.(NMS 16)
- The fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff.(NMS 17)
- The fostering service is a fair and competent employer.(NMS 18)
- There is a good quality training programme. (NMS 19)
- All staff are properly accountable and supported.(NMS 20)
- The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.(NMS 21)
- Foster carers are provided with supervision and support.(NMS 22)
- Foster carers are appropriately trained.(NMS 23)
- Case records for children are comprehensive.(NMS 24)
- The administrative records are maintained as required.(NMS 25)
- The premises used as offices by the fostering service are suitable for the purpose.(NMS 26)
- The fostering service is financially viable. (NMS 27)
- The fostering service has robust financial processes. (NMS 28)
- Local Authority fostering services recognise the contribution made by family and friends as carers.(NMS 32)

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

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

1, 16, 17, 21, 24 & 25.

Quality in this outcome area is good.

The agency had up to date and relevant information about its services to inform all those who might be interested.

Staffing levels and competency were good ensuring a good quality of support for carers.

The overall quality of support for carers was good ensuring they were usually well supported in their work with young people.

Case records for young people were well maintained ensuring good continuity of the oversight of their needs and development.

Other relevant records were generally well maintained to enable the effective running and monitoring of the service.

This judgement was made using the available evidence including a visit to this service.

NB Key standard 32 was not applicable.

EVIDENCE:

The service had a revised and up to date statement of purpose combining a local service profile, alongside more general FCA documentation. Apart from one minor omission on the staffing structure this was an accurate representation of services provided, covering all areas required by the regulations and standards. An excellent range of information was available for young people about the service their rights and expectations and who to contact if they had concerns. This was available in different formats and for different age ranges.

There were clear and appropriate management structures in place covering the management of the various aspects of the local service in the branch office and the two operational offices. Operational management of therapist support had temporarily been given to each of the local office managers, which from their perspective had enabled a better integrated and co-ordinated usage of these valuable inputs to children and carers. Since the last inspection the post of recruitment manager (incorporating the role of panel adviser) had been confirmed on a long-term basis. This now provided a more consistent management and overview of the assessment of carers, typically carried out by independent assessors, and the operation of the panel.

Staffing levels in the two area offices appeared currently satisfactory to meet the needs of the service. The Bletchley office had experienced a significant degree of staff change and a period of shortage since the last inspection due to a variety of factors outside of the control of the agency. The situation had now stabilised with the return of the local manager from maternity leave and the filling of vacant posts however the impact of the staffing difficulties were reflected in feedback from carers supported by this office that their support since the last inspection had been, at times, inconsistent. This office was also aware of the management problems posed by their relatively high number of

part-time staff and future recruitment was now going to be aimed at more full-time posts.

Discussions with existing staff and examination of new staff files indicated they were appropriately experienced and qualified for the roles being undertaken. Staff feedback was of continuing good support and supervision from managers and of good access to ongoing training and qualification opportunities.

The agency continued to mount regular recruitment campaigns to try to ensure a range and choice of carers were on its books to meet the varying needs of surrounding placing authorities. This particular branch was looking at developing carer resources to the north of its patch and a focused project to stimulate interest and recruitments was about to commence under the management of an experienced senior support worker.

Carer assessments and subsequent household reviews on the basis of the sample seen in panel papers were seen to be thorough and covered all areas expected under the standards and regulations. The input of the recruitment manager was seen by staff and the panel chair to have injected a greater degree of consistency and depth into assessments carried out by the independent assessors typically used by the agency for initial carer assessments.

General feedback from staff and carers indicated growing pressure on the demand for educational input and support, particularly for children out of school and the various support services offered by the resource worker team. These will be areas in which the service will need to keep a close eye on the adequacy of staffing levels in the future.

The overall structure of support for carers was very good with various elements including:

- regular supervision (although there had been past inconsistencies with regard to Bletchley based carers)
- good levels of ongoing communication and support from supervising social workers
- foster carer forums
- well-regarded out-of hours support at both national and local level
- good training opportunities
- therapeutic support for carers and young people in placement
- respite breaks

- sessional input from resource staff
- team parenting meetings
- membership of the Fostering Network

As noted earlier some carers were more critical than at previous inspections about inconsistencies in supervising social worker support, which with more stability in staffing arrangements at Bletchley should be rectified. In one or two additional specific situations there had clearly been particular difficulties in the relationship with the agency with carers perceiving a lack of support or recognition of the difficulties being faced. While these were matters for the agency and its carers to resolve through its own complaints processes, these did appear to be exceptions to an overall general level of high satisfaction with individual support expressed by carers in questionnaires and interviews.

The geographical spread of the area covered by the branch did pose logistical problems in terms of easy access to training for more outlying carers however different means of training delivery were being explored to mitigate this problem. A similar issue had arisen with regard to sustaining a range of formal local carer meetings, which had relatively low levels of attendance, with the result that larger formal meetings now held at the main office. For more outlying carers this was obviously not an ideal situation and the agency will need to keep open options for local support where likely attendance levels make it worthwhile.

Case records for young people were generally well maintained and up to date giving a good picture of placements planning, matching and their ongoing progress in placement. Some gaps were noted on files seen at the Bletchley office in respect of LAC documentation and signed placement agreements

Carer files were also generally well-maintained, although again some minor anomalies were noted in files seen at the Bletchley office with regard to ensuing up to date foster care agreements and pre-approval documentation and checks were readily accessible on the current file. A recommendation has been made to address these points on record-keeping.

Other central records such as the register and monitoring records of significant events complaints and child protection concerns were appropriately maintained.

Quality assurance systems were not examined in depth on this occasion but it was good to note the recent extensive national consultation with carers on their perceptions of the quality of service offered by the agency. In discussion with the branch manager it emerged that the formal feedback obtained from placing authorities, outside of that received for individual household reviews,

was limited in part due to difficulty of identifying the relevant link person in placing authorities. In order to build a more comprehensive framework of feedback from key stakeholders the inspector advised exploration of ways in which consistent overall feedback from regular local authority partners might be obtained.

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	4
9	4
15	3
30	4

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

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
10	3
11	4

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

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

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection? No

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

No.	Refer to Standard	Good Practice Recommendations
1.	FS15	That the agency reviews its process for final confirmation of the satisfactory completion of all stages of staff recruitment before they commence work.
2	FS8	That the agency continues to explore ways of improving arrangements for respite breaks for carers.
2.	FS24	That the agency ensures child and carer files are maintained consistently in line with statutory expectations
3.	FS4	That the agency consider ways of obtaining regular formal feedback from primary placing authorities on the quality of services offered

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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