



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

Asphaleia Ltd

**22 Liverpool Gardens
Worthing
West Sussex
BN11 1TA**

Lead Inspector
Ms V Khan

Key Announced Inspection
11th October 2006 2:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Fostering Services*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

Every Child Matters, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life. Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above

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SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of service	Asphaleia Ltd
Address	22 Liverpool Gardens Worthing West Sussex BN11 1TA
Telephone number	01903 522966
Fax number	01903 236624
Email address	contactus@asphaleia.co.uk
Provider Web address	
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Asphaleia Ltd
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Miss Carol Anne Lusher
Type of registration	Fostering Agencies

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration: None

Date of last inspection 18th July 2005

Brief Description of the Service:

Asphaleia Ltd has been registered as an independent fostering agency since August 2004.

The agency has approved one foster carer, but no children have been placed to date. Asphaleia Ltd intends to specialise in placing separated asylum seeking children and young people with foster carers in the South East of England, initially in West Sussex.

The fee charged to placing authorities will be £645 per week and the fostering allowance paid to carers will average at £350 per week.

SUMMARY

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

This is the second inspection of Asphaleia Ltd since registering with the Commission For Social Care Inspection in 2004.

Prior to the key inspection a review was made of the contact between the agency and the Commission for Social Care Inspection. This included reading any correspondence that was submitted by the agency.

As preparation for the inspection, a pre-inspection planning meeting was held with the registered manager. An annual quality assurance assessment and data collection sheets were completed by the agency. These documents provided the registered manager with an opportunity to tell us about the quality of the service and how outcomes for the people who use the service were being met.

The inspection focused on sampling the agency's policies and procedures, examining the one approved carer's file and reading the recruitment records. The inspector met with the responsible individual as the registered manager was on leave. Telephone contact was made with the one approved foster carer and a letter was sent seeking the views of the Local Children's Safeguarding Board. As the agency is very small with one carer and no children placed, some of the key national minimum standards were unable to be fully assessed at this inspection.

What the service does well:

People who have expertise in working with unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people lead the agency.

Minutes of the one panel meeting that has been held to date evidenced that members were thorough in their questioning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

One foster carer has been approved and is awaiting a first placement.

The agency has obtained confirmation that the independent assessor who completed the fostering assessment is registered with the General Social Care Council.

What they could do better:

The time taken by the agency to start the assessment on the one approved carer was excessive and this needs to be shortened for any prospective carers.

The agency needs to ensure that any training needs identified in the carer's fostering assessment are met. The carer's transport needs to be checked as being safe. A foster care agreement needs to be produced for the foster carer in line with Schedule 5.

The manager should consider undertaking management training.

The up-to-date version of the BAAF Form F should be used when undertaking the assessment of prospective carers.

Review all staff and panel recruitment records and complete any outstanding checks.

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

An overall quality rating for this outcome area has not been provided, due to no children and young people placed. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The agency is aware of the need to promote the health and development of all children and young people.

EVIDENCE:

This key standard was unable to be fully assessed on this occasion, due to there being no children in placement.

The agency is aware of the need for young people to be able to access appropriate health services.

Policies and procedures are in place on contagious/infectious diseases, HIV and AIDS and health and safety.

The agency is well aware that asylum seeking young people are likely to have special requirements regarding food, reaction to the UK weather, nutritional knowledge, sleep and general well-being.

The agency intends to enable carers to attend basic first aid training and HIV awareness as mandatory training courses.

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 adequate. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Standard 8 was unable to be fully assessed, due to there being no children in placement. The agency is aware of the need to undertake the matching process with care and attention.

The fostering service is aware of the need to protect each child from all forms of abuse.

The people carrying on and managing the service have the required knowledge and skills.

The foster panel is effective and rigorous in its questioning.

Care must be taken regarding completing thorough recruitment checks. These lapses could impact upon the safeguarding of the welfare of children and young people.

EVIDENCE:

Relevant checks were completed on the responsible individual as part of the agency's registration in August 2004. Checks were completed on the

registered manager as part of her registration with the Commission in January 2005.

At the last inspection, it was noted that one panel member did not have a CRB check undertaken as part of her recruitment. It was not possible to evidence that this had been obtained at this inspection, although the responsible individual confirmed that it was in place. At the 2005 inspection it was also found that references were not in place for two panel members and the agency had only taken verbal references on another panel member. On this occasion, two panel members had references, but they had not been telephoned for verification and the agency had only one reference in place for another panel member. Recruitment records were in place for the independent assessor, but the references had not been telephoned for verification.

The fostering service is fully aware of the need of foster carers to provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation. The one approved carer has been provided with written guidelines on health and safety responsibilities and a health and safety check has been undertaken on the carer's home. There was no evidence of the agency checking that the carer's transport was safe. It is recommended that the agency ensures any transport provided is checked during the assessment stage and at annual reviews.

Due to there being no children in placement, standard 8 was unable to be fully assessed. The agency recognises that the ethnicity of some young people may not be able to be matched to carers. It is the agency's intention that carer's will be supported to meet the cultural and religious needs of the young people placed with them.

Carers are provided with written information on caring for children who have been abused and how to protect them from any type of abuse. This is also discussed during preparation training and will be further explored in post-approval training courses. A written procedure is in place for use if a foster child is missing from home. The behaviour management policy clearly states that no form of corporal punishment is acceptable.

One panel meeting was held in April 2006, when a prospective carer and her independent assessor attended. It was not possible to observe this panel, but the detailed minutes were read during the inspection and evidenced robust and thorough questioning. Independent members attending this panel meeting were the Chair, a foster carer who works for another agency and a qualified teacher. All panel members attended Fostering Network panel training in December 2005. The agency is aware that the panel would benefit from having a member experienced in child health and a previously looked after person. The panel administrator is due to attend a BAAF training course in November 2006, which is particularly relevant to her role.

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, 31

An overall quality rating for this outcome area has not been provided, due to there being no children in placement. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The agency is aware of the need to ensure that children are provided with services which value diversity, promote equality and promote educational achievement.

The agency does not plan to develop short-term breaks for children.

EVIDENCE:

These key standards were unable to be fully assessed at this inspection, as no children were in placement.

The agency is aware that children need to be provided with appropriate services, which will meet their diverse needs. All training covers the need for carers to respect and preserve each child's ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic background. The agency has added on a module to the preparation training, which examines the specific needs of asylum seeking young people and an overview of the immigration process. Documents provide information about the practices of various cultural and ethnic groups and are available to all staff and carers.

Senior staff at the agency have experience of working with young people seeking asylum in the UK. Staff work in accordance with the equal opportunities policy, which states that 'all service users are treated equally and with respect according to individual needs and abilities'.

Education is seen as a high priority by the service, with Asphaleia having its own educational programme, which addresses the educational needs of asylum seeking young people and supports integration into mainstream education. It is the aim of the agency that all fostered young people will be able to access this specialised programme. In addition, carers will be provided with training by qualified education staff so as to be able to support the individualised educational needs of the children in their care.

Carers will be expected to promote the integration of fostered young people into the local community. This will include accessing faith communities, sports and leisure facilities and the development of friendships.

Short-term breaks is an area the service does not intend to specialise in.

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

An overall quality rating for this outcome area has not been provided, due to no children being placed. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The agency is aware of the need to promote contact arrangements and of the importance of consultation.

EVIDENCE:

These key standards were unable to be fully assessed at this inspection.

Staff and the carer spoken to were fully aware that contact for children is extremely important. They were knowledgeable that many asylum seeking young people are unlikely to be able to have contact with their families and of the need to be vigilant about contact with unknown adults, in order to consider possible child trafficking.

Carers will be encouraged to promote good decision-making skills in young people by seeking their views and wishes. The agency is aware of the need for carers to develop specialised listening skills in order to work effectively with young people who have English as a second language. Access to interpreters will be provided, in order that young people may make their views clear.

The one approved carer provided evidence that the opinions and views of her daughter had been taken into account by the agency.

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):

EVIDENCE:

These standards were not assessed at this inspection.

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, 2, 5, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 32

Quality in this outcome area is adequate. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Information is available about the aims, objectives and operation of the agency.

The agency intends to provide good levels of supervision for carers.

The people carrying on and managing the service are committed to the further development of the service.

Standard 24 was unable to be assessed, due to no children being in placement.

EVIDENCE:

The Statement of Purpose clearly sets out the aims and objectives of the agency. A children and young people's guide has been produced, which includes a summary of what the service sets out to do. The document provides advice on how to seek external advice and how to complain.

The agency has an experienced and qualified social worker as the registered manager. In 2006 Miss Lusher completed the Graduate Certificate in Practice Assessing Course, but no management qualification is held.

The business strategy was read as part of the inspection and was found to be a well-written document outlining plans for the growth of the service.

The responsible individual assisted the inspector during the inspection, as the registered manager was on leave. One student social worker on placement was spoken with during the inspection.

The responsible individual stated that the agency's policies and procedures are constantly being reviewed and amended. A selection of policies and procedures were read during the inspection. The carer's handbook was not read on this occasion, and will need to be examined at the next inspection.

The agency is small and currently only has the registered manager as a qualified social worker. The staffing complement is satisfactory at the present time.

There is public liability and professional indemnity insurance in place.

The agency used the BAAF Form F assessment report form on the one approved foster carer. The carer contacted the agency in July 2005 and was approved in April 2006. It is recommended that the total time taken for the recruitment of prospective foster carers is reduced. The fostering assessment was completed by an independent assessor and was examined during the inspection. There was no health and safety assessment or checklist and this needs to be completed. There was no foster care agreement on the approved carer's file and this must be produced in line with Schedule 5 and Regulation 28 (5) (b).

It is recommended that the most recent (2005) BAAF Form F template, rather than the 1999 version be used when completing the assessment of prospective carers.

The approved carer has attended preparation training and in addition, an induction into the origins and values of Asphaleia Ltd and HIV awareness have been completed. The agency needs to ensure that training needs identified in the carer's fostering assessment are met prior to any child being placed. The foster carer told the inspector that the agency was welcoming her to the forthcoming staff training day.

Asphaleia Ltd moved to its current premises at 22 Liverpool Gardens, Worthing on 2nd October 2006. It is a town centre office, with spacious, well-equipped space and appropriate security systems in place.

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	X

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

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

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

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

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

Yes

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.	FS15	20 (3)	<p>For the purposes of paragraph (1), a person is not fit to work for the purposes of a fostering service unless-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) he is of integrity and good character;(b) he has the qualifications, skills and experience necessary for the work he is to perform;(c) he is physically and mentally fit for the work he is to perform; and(d) full and satisfactory information is available in relation to him in respect of the following matters- <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) except where paragraph (4) applies, each of the matters specified in paragraphs 1 to 6 of Schedule 1;(ii) where paragraph (4) applies, each of the matters specified in paragraphs 1 and 3 to 7 of Schedule 1.	11/01/07

			(Previous timescale of 18/9/05 not met)	
2.	FS22	28 (5) (b)	<p>If a fostering service provider decides to approve a person as a foster parent it shall-</p> <p>(b) enter into a written agreement with him covering the matters specified in Schedule 5 (in these Regulations referred to as the "foster care agreement").</p>	11/01/07

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	Telephone enquiries need to be made to verify written references.
2.	FS23	Ensure that any carer's training needs identified during the assessment are met prior to any child being placed.
3.	FS2	The registered manager needs to start appropriate management training.
4.	FS17	<p>The 2005 version of the BAAF Form F should be used when assessing carers.</p> <p>Reduce the length of time taken before the assessments of prospective carer's commence.</p>
5.	FS6	Where the foster carer is expected to provide transport, the fostering service ensures this is safe and appropriate. Consider checking car insurance documentation during the assessment stage and as part of the annual reviews.

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