



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

TACT (The Adolescent and Children`s Trust)

**27 Station Road
Kettering
Northants
NN15 7HH**

Lead Inspector
Sharon Treadwell

Announced Inspection
Week Commencing Monday, 24th October 09:00

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	TACT (The Adolescent and Children`s Trust)
Address	27 Station Road Kettering Northants NN15 7HH
Telephone number	01536 411410
Fax number	01536 524021
Email address	
Provider Web address	www.tactfostercare.org.uk
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Adolescent and Children`s Trust (The)
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Mrs Sonia Anne Bolland
Type of registration	Fostering Agencies
No. of places registered (if applicable)	0
Category(ies) of registration, with number of places	

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 17th January 2005

Brief Description of the Service:

The Adolescent and Children's Trust (known as TACT) is a Charitable Independent Fostering Agency, the largest fostering charity in the country and a Company Limited by Guarantee. The agency is managed by a Board of Trustees with day to day management being undertaken by a Senior Management Team lead by the Chief Executive, Kevin Williams, who operates as the Agency Decision Maker.

Three Regional Managers are responsible for eight area-based offices: East Midlands, Birmingham, North West, Wales, Bristol, London, East London and Kent.

The East Midlands office, located in Kettering, Northamptonshire was the subject of this inspection. The Regional Manager with responsibility for the East Midlands, Birmingham and North West offices is Sonia Bolland. The East Midlands office has two Area Managers: Barbara Taylor manages the Fens Team, which has 33 carer households and 38 children in placement whilst Belinda Clark manages the Shires Team, which has 21 carer households and 33 children in placement.

The agency employs a number of social work, administrative and support staff in the East Midlands office and has appropriate access to specialist resource staff.

TACT provides a range of fostering placements: Short Term, Long Term, Emergency, Bridging and Mother and Baby.

SUMMARY

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

This Announced inspection was undertaken by two inspectors over four days and took 105 hours in total including pre-inspection visits, panel attendance, questionnaire analysis and inspection planning.

For the purposes of this inspection four carers and the children placed with them were tracked through the inspection of case files, home visits and discussions with supervising Social Workers. Additional case files and Form F assessments were examined during the inspection. Both Area Team Managers were spoken with and written requests inviting comments were sent to the agency's, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Education Advisor as well as to the Directors of Social Services and Area Child Protection Committees of a number of Local Authorities, which place children through TACT.

The only written submission received was from the Education Advisor and his comments are included within this report.

Questionnaires were returned by 21 carers, 28 children and 43 placing social workers, and these have been referred to within the body of this report.

Prior to this inspection the Regional Manager completed a Pre-inspection questionnaire and a Manager Self Assessment and submitted these to the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

The TACT Fostering Panel was attended on October 17th 2005 and an interview was conducted with the Panel Chair.

The above information has provided the major component of inspection evidence. Policies and procedures, the agency's Statement of Purpose, the Carer's Handbook and other documentation have been fully inspected during previous inspections and were consulted only for clarification purposes on this occasion.

What the service does well:

There is good evidence that the agency's policies and practices are closely monitored and updated in line with legislative developments.

The fostering team place a high priority on appropriately matching young people to foster placements.

A high level of individual support is provided to foster carers and this is backed up by good training opportunities and the incorporation within the carer

payment structure of incentives linked to training, commitment and performance is commended.

The agency maintains good individual records for children and carers and planned changes in carer recording systems were viewed as a very positive development, particularly with regard to children's health and education.

The agency consults extremely well with children and young people. A range of initiatives have been used and all evidence commendable links with the five outcomes for children as outlined in Every Child Matters.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The two inspectors undertaking this inspection have not previously inspected this fostering service.

TACT has developed a joint handbook/manual for foster carers and supervising social work staff. The inspectors consider this to be a positive development in enhancing awareness of each other's respective roles and responsibilities.

The agency has redrafted both the Foster Carer Agreement and the Foster Placement Agreement. The new documents are comprehensive in their coverage.

What they could do better:

The agency must undertake Criminal Records Bureau checks in respect of all persons 'working for the purpose of a Fostering Service'.

The agency must ensure that it fully complies with legal requirements relating to the granting of an exemption to the usual fostering limit of three children.

Every foster home should have a written Safe Care Policy and this should include a fire escape plan.

Currently the panel membership is not fully in accordance with Regulation 24 since it does not include a person who is or within the previous two years has been, a foster carer for another fostering service provider.

The agency should better clarify to its carers the support systems, which are available if a child is excluded from education.

The agency's Statement of Purpose should clarify the types of foster placement provided.

Please contact the provider for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csi.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Being Healthy

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

Children's individual health needs are appropriately addressed by carers. The imminent launch of new carer recording requirements will provide each child with an individual written health record.

EVIDENCE:

Standard 12 inspected.

The Health Care section of the 'Foster Carer and Supervising Social Worker Standards and Practice Guidance' manual provides appropriate general advice to carers on meeting the health needs of children in placement but this guidance currently makes no reference to either storage or administration of medication. The agency has introduced a health information sheet, completed at the commencement of a placement, which provides basic individual health information.

The carers visited during this inspection were noted to demonstrate a good awareness of the health needs of children in placement but currently the recording of medical appointments and medical treatment prescribed forms an integral part of the carer's daily log record for each child. The carers visited retained no records of medication administration except for the date prescribed and dosage on the day of issue, in the daily log record.

The agency has recognised its own failings in this area prior to this inspection and has developed commendable systems for improving health recording. A new recording format is to be presented to carers subsequent to this inspection, which will ensure that a full written health record is retained on each child and which is updated throughout placement. The new recording system requires carers to retain full records of medication administration. The

agency has been assessed as exceeding this standard on the grounds of the development of such a comprehensive system.

Children referred in their questionnaires to being prompted by carers to eat healthily, take exercise and keep clean: 'D makes me eat properly and takes me to the doctor', 'having baths every day and eating fruit and veg helps me look nice', 'I play football, walk to school and go on bike rides'.

Health related training is provided to carers, including 'Alcohol and Drugs Awareness' and 'Children's Health'.

The inspector particularly noted the invaluable contribution of the Health Representative on the panel in pointing out potential health considerations relating to the installation of equipment in a foster home in relation to a child with epilepsy.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- Any persons carrying on or managing the service are suitable. (NMS 3)
- The fostering service provides suitable foster carers.(NMS 6)
- The service matches children to carers appropriately.(NMS 8)
- The fostering service protects each child or young person from abuse and neglect.(NMS 9)
- The people who work in or for the fostering service are suitable to work with children and young people.(NMS 15)
- Fostering panels are organised efficiently and effectively.(NMS 30)

The Commission considers Standards 3, 6, 8, 9, and 15 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

The Fostering Service is able to evidence that children are carefully matched to placements and that children's safety is prioritised but some supportive documentation is needed.

EVIDENCE:

Standards 3, 6, 8, 9, 15 & 30 inspected.

The Management Team have appropriate qualifications and a wide range of relevant child-care and fostering experience. Although the Regional Manager's responsibilities for three areas regularly take her off site both Area Team Managers are Kettering based and staff spoken to during the inspection valued their leadership.

The agency provides strong guidelines on matching detailing the requirement for Looked After Children paperwork to be obtained and for the Risk Assessment/Matching form to be completed prior to placement. All the files tracked contained evidence of this.

The Risk Assessment pro-forma should clearly state which carers the child is being matched if it is to provide a comprehensive matching tool.

All of the Social work staff spoken to during this inspection and many of the carers in their questionnaire responses detailed matching as the agency's strongest point.

It is the very positive comments made by staff, children and carers combined with the evidence of good matching noted in relation to carers and children tracked, which have prompted inspectors to award a standard exceeded in relation to matching.

The files tracked provided good evidence of annual Health and Safety checks completed immediately prior to the carer's annual review. Currently the only consideration given to the potential risk of fire is the inclusion within the Health and Safety check of confirmation that smoke detectors are fitted and the agency should ensure that each foster home has a fire escape plan, which is known to all children in placement.

Carers visited and agency staff demonstrated good awareness of the importance of safe caring practices. Carers are provided with initial Safe Care training and regular updates. One carer visited told the inspector 'You can't do the course too often, you learn more every time'. The panel minutes examined during the inspection evidenced good panel awareness of the need for carers to refresh their Safe Care training with appropriate recommendations being made for the training to be repeated.

Only one of the files tracked contained a written Safe Care Policy, although the agency was able to evidence that it had written to carers in August 2004 enclosing a pro-forma for completion. The agency should now ensure that a written policy is completed in respect of every foster home. Once completed the Safe Care Policy should be placed on file and should be reviewed and updated in relation to each new placement made.

Children spoke of feeling safe and secure in their placements: 'I know I'm safe and need not worry about being abused', 'I have a family who look after and love me', 'There's no violence here, at last I feel safe'.

Policy and procedural guidance (as stated in the 'Foster Carer and Supervising Social Worker Standards and Practice' manual) relating to exemptions to the usual fostering limit is not legally correct.

The TACT panel is currently granting exemptions to its own foster carers with Local Authority approval. The Children Act 1989 clearly details that 'A person may exceed the usual fostering limit if he is exempted from it by the local authority within whose area he lives' (CA 1989 Schedule 7 (4(1))).

This practice has not been questioned at previous inspections.

The agency must now ensure that legal requirements are fully complied with in relation to any existing and future placements, which involve a carer exceeding the usual fostering limit (three children).

Policy and procedural guidance currently evidences confusion between exemptions and variation to approval status and this must be clarified.

Three personnel files were examined during the inspection. These were found to be in good order. One of the files pertaining to a member of administrative staff, appointed within the last year, was noted to record Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance as not applicable. This represents a failure to comply with Regulation 20 in relation to information required under Schedule 1. The inspector held discussions regarding this with a member of the TACT Senior Management Team and with the Regional Manager and the Area Team Managers, all of whom stated that they disagreed with this practice but had been advised by the Criminal Records Bureau that checks were not required on staff not having direct contact with children.

A requirement for CRB checks to be undertaken in respect of all persons 'working for the purpose of a Fostering Service' has been identified within this report and any correspondence received by TACT from the Criminal Records Bureau detailing otherwise must be copied to the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

A Fostering Panel was observed on October 17th and the Panel Chair was interviewed. Panel written guidelines are comprehensive and encourage consistency of constitution and operation across all TACT Fostering Panels. The inspector particularly commends the inclusion on the front cover of the minutes of the previous panel (when they are returned for ratification) of confirmation of the Agency Decision Maker's decisions regarding the panel recommendations from that meeting.

Currently the panel membership does not include a person who is or within the previous two years has been, a foster carer for another fostering service provider. One panel member is an adoptive parent.

The Management Team spoke of difficulties in recruiting a foster carer to this role but is reminded within this inspection of the need to make attempts to recruit since currently the panel constitution is not in accordance with Regulation 24.

Following observation of the panel the Panel Chair was reminded of the requirement to ensure that where a member of the Fostering Agency staff, who is also a panel member, is actively involved in presenting a case to the panel, that person must step down from the panel for its consideration of that case.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- The fostering service values diversity.(NMS 7)
- The fostering service promotes educational achievement.(NMS 13)
- When foster care is provided as a short-term break for a child, the arrangements recognise that the parents remain the main carers for the child.(NMS 31)

The Commission considers Standards 7, 13, and 31 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

The Fostering Service supports its carers well in their active encouragement of children to achieve their full potential

EVIDENCE:

Standards 7 & 13 inspected.

The files tracked during this inspection provided good evidence of carers supporting, encouraging and enabling children and young people to make effective progress both educationally and socially and to develop self confidence.

Carers are required to complete a pro-forma prior to their annual review evidencing their involvement in children's schooling. The format additionally addresses children's attainment and behaviour in school and the completion of both Personal Education Plans and, where appropriate, Statements of Special Educational Need.

A letter was received from the TACT Education Advisor, who is also a member of the Fostering Panel, detailing his role as Education Consultant to both carers and Supervising Social Workers and as a trainer offering a course on 'Education Concerns'. He describes TACT as 'a thoroughly professional and supportive organisation', which 'cares deeply about the children it fosters'.

Some carers, in their questionnaires, expressed concerns regarding support offered by TACT when children are excluded from school: 'There is not enough

support when a child is excluded and with the carer 24/7, which can lead to great strain'. Whilst the Management Team stressed that support would be provided to carers in this situation and that an additional payment was made to carers in these circumstances, the education section in the 'Foster Carer and Supervising Social Worker Standards and Practice' manual does not cover this situation. The agency is recommended to include some detail in its carer manual of the support systems, which could potentially be accessed in the event of exclusion of a child from school. Such detail should include the circumstances under which the Education Advisor might become involved and how and by whom this would be undertaken.

Children's cultural, religious and specific learning requirements are fully addressed within the Risk Assessment/matching pro-forma and within the Placement Agreement.

The carers tracked evidenced good awareness of young people's specific cultural and religious needs. One carer demonstrated good use of toiletries specific to young people's skin type whilst another told the inspector that he had recently started taking a young person to church each week following a specific request, even though the young person's history evidenced no previous religious practice.

One carer visited was working well as an advocate for two young people with learning disabilities and had registered a complaint against a medical practitioner relating to inappropriate dealing with presenting disabilities.

In their questionnaire responses one young person spoke of support from carers with the asylum seeking process and all spoke positively of help received with homework.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- The fostering service promotes contact arrangements for the child or young person. (NMS 10)
- The fostering service promotes consultation.(NMS 11)

The Commission considers Standards 10 and 11 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

TACT has developed commendable systems for consultation with children and young people and can demonstrate that children's views are taken forward and acted upon.

EVIDENCE:

Standards 10 & 11 inspected.

Policy and procedural guidance clearly detail the expectation upon carers in relation to facilitating approved contact arrangements for children and young people in placement and the Foster Placement Agreement clarifies contact requirements and restrictions.

The carers tracked during this inspection were noted to be commendably proactive in supporting and facilitating contact. One carer had supported a young person to re-establish contact with a parent, which had lapsed many years ago. Another carer had helped children to re-organise how contact was arranged in a way that better met their needs. All of the carers visited clearly listened to the requirements of the children in placement in respect of contact arrangements. One young person told the inspector 'If I don't want to go and the others do, they go and I stay home'.

One carer stated in her questionnaire that she had accompanied a child to Albania for contact with family.

The agency compiles annual Child Performance Indicator statistics based on information from questionnaires sent to children in placement. The statistics reflect the agency's positive performance against the required outcomes

identified within Every Child Matters. Placement stability figures are especially good.

In June 2004 TACT commissioned an independent agency, 'Snakes and Ladders' to carry out a series of regional consultation groups with young people and subsequently in July 2005 a fun day/consultation event was held in Birmingham supported by TACT staff and management and attended by 20 young people.

The report of this Participation Day evidences TACT management taking up individual issues for some of the young people but the report additionally includes detail of areas of practice, which the agency will look more closely at. One of the conclusions of Snakes and Ladders was: 'TACT has clearly developed some very good practice within its workforce and carers, which makes young people feel supported, wanted and cared for. It seems to be an organisation that is open and responsive and wants to listen to the views and experiences of young people'.

TACT has established a 'Children's Champions Group', which is a representative group of young people from all TACT Area Offices who regularly participate in consultation with Senior Management.

Pro-forma recording sheets are completed, prior to foster carers' reviews, by both young people in placement and carers own children. Both provide a very 'child-friendly' format.

The children of foster carers are encouraged to participate in the 'Young People who foster' group.

The files tracked during this inspection and the carers spoken to indicated a good level of consultation with young people by placing authorities. Young people in placement are regularly spoken to by the TACT Supervising Social Worker and these sessions are recorded.

A monthly newsletter is circulated by East Midlands TACT to all carers and children and this includes details of children's birthdays and recognition of their achievements as well as details of any forthcoming events.

The inspectors took part in a bowling activity during the inspection for staff, carers, carers' children and children in foster care. The event was well facilitated and well attended and young people had a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

The agency currently provides only one version of the Children's Guide and discussions were held with the Management Team during the inspection about the benefits of developing more age appropriate formats.

The guide provides young people with good contact information for a range of Children's Advocacy Services, including the TACT Children's Officer. Carers visited during the inspection however had no awareness of young people's rights to approach their own local authority Children's Rights Officer and had no contact details. The agency is recommended to ensure that carers are fully aware of the role of the placing local authority Children's Rights Officer and of contact details in relation to young people in their care.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

The Commission considers Standards 29 the key standard to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

The Fostering Agency is developing good systems to prepare young people for independent living.

Carer allowances are clearly detailed and include an excellent incentive scheme.

EVIDENCE:

Standards 14 & 29 inspected.

The agency has recently produced an Independent Living Skills pack, which provides young people with good information about their rights as Looked After children when they leave care. The pack includes sections for the retention of contact numbers, certificates of achievement, recipes etc. The folder tracks and requires the recording, by the carer and young person, of the progressive acquisition of practical skills in a range of areas. The folder is attractively presented and is in the process of being issued to carers and young people aged 14 plus.

The training list supplied covering September 2005 to April 2006 does not currently include any training on preparing young people for independence and, particularly in light of the launch of the new folders, the agency should consider incorporating a training session.

One of the carers visited was providing placement to two young people with learning disabilities, both of whom are approaching eighteen. Some difficulties had been encountered with the placing authority in terms of pathway planning

and continuation of support. These had been dealt with well by the carer who spoke highly of the support from her Supervising Social worker.

The handbook provides clear detail in respect of foster carer allowances and carers are additionally provided with full detail regarding taxation liabilities and guidance notes on the breakdown of the fostering allowance in respect of looking after a foster child.

Carers spoke of timely payments. The agency is particularly commended for its operation of a range of incentive schemes within its payment system, which reward commitment, performance and training. Additional payments are also made in respect of situations requiring differential commitment, for example where a young person is excluded from school.

Management

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

The Fostering Service has a Management and Staff Team who evidence a commitment to positive outcomes for children and young people and to supporting carers well.

EVIDENCE:

Standards 17, 21 & 24 inspected.

Although the agency's Statement of Purpose was not fully inspected on this occasion the inspector would note it to be a comprehensive document with good clarity regarding both organisational, regional and area structure. The Statement of Purpose does not however clearly specify the types of fostering placements provided and it is recommended that on the occasion of its next review that this be incorporated.

Carer recruitment processes are clear and detailed and the Form F assessments examined during this inspection were completed to a high standard.

The staff team is a strong, professional team and all staff spoken to said that supervision and appraisal systems were closely adhered to by the management team. Staff receive training in the completion of Form F assessments-some have undertaken the training provided by BAAF whilst others have done internal training with a member of TACT staff.

The agency has had some staffing difficulties during the last six months. Social Work staff departures for a variety of reasons and problems with recruitment have meant that some carers have had a number of changes to their Supervising Social Worker. The carers spoken to have adapted well to this and generally said they received a high level of support 'whoever provides it'. The agency still has two Supervising Social Worker vacancies, one support worker vacancy and a half time administrative staff vacancy which it is attempting to fill.

Carer support was strongly identified by carers in their questionnaires and during visits as a real strength of this agency: 'Utterly helpful, there for everything, we work so well as a team'; 'They are a mine of information, approachable, caring and child centred. I'm proud to be part of TACT'.

One carer representative meets twice yearly with the Senior Management Team and also operates as a member of the interview panel for social work staff.

Both carers' and children's files are retained to a high standard and are regularly audited by the Area Team Managers.

The carer review format is commendable in its coverage. The first review and subsequently every third review is presented to the panel with interim reviews presented to the Area Team Manager of the opposite team (i.e: reviews of Fens carers go to the Team Manager of the Shires Team and vice versa) but ratified by the panel.

Good training opportunities are provided. Some issues were raised by carers around access to training, which is generally held at the TACT office in Kettering. The geographical area covered by the agency is a very large one. The Management Team and staff evidenced a good awareness of carers' difficulties accessing training opportunities and are currently investigating the potential use of alternative venues to address this problem.

Supervising Social Worker visits to carers are regular and well recorded but the agency should ensure clarity and consistency regarding pro-forma recording since some sessions are recorded on pro-forma whilst others are recorded in the running log. The managers spoke of differences between formal and informal visits but the current system creates confusion. It is difficult currently to ascertain the frequency of unannounced visits. One of the files tracked recorded an unannounced visit on a pro-forma, others were recorded within the running log and in some files inspectors could find no record of an unannounced visit.

The inspectors discussed with managers the potential advantage of listing supervisory visits on the front sheet of the carer annual review form to provide an 'at a glance' reference. This list could clearly identify the dates of unannounced visit and confirm that these visits are taking place annually.

Placing Social Workers, in their questionnaire responses spoke very highly of the standard of care provided by TACT carers: 'The care provided in this home is absolutely excellent. She has a wide range of special needs and has made excellent progress. TACT staff give the carers excellent support'; 'The carers always put c's needs first. They provide a pleasant and homely environment and work hard to meet his extensive medical and educational needs and their communication with me is excellent'. Detrimental comments from placing social workers were minimal and were generally about geographical location.

Young people spoke equally highly of standards of care describing the best thing about fostering as: 'being part of a lovely family'; 'having a proper family to look after and love you', 'they treat you like their own', 'just having somebody there', 'my new mum and dad'.

Although standards relating to business planning and financial viability were not inspected on this occasion TACT has supplied the Commission for Social Care Inspection with a Business plan 2005-2007 and a full budget breakdown for the current year.

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	4

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
3	3
6	3
8	4
9	3
15	2
30	2

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

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

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	3
29	4

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

No

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action
1	FS15	20. Schedule 1.	The Registered Persons must ensure that Criminal Records Bureau checks are undertaken in respect of all persons 'working for the purpose of a Fostering Service'.	27/10/05
2	FS8	34. Schedule 7(4(1))	The Registered Persons must ensure that legal requirements are fully complied with in relation to any existing and future placements, which involve a carer exceeding the usual fostering limit (three children). Policy and procedural guidance currently evidences confusion between exemptions and variation to approval status and this must be clarified.	27/10/05

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	FS22	The agency should ensure clarity and consistency regarding pro-forma recording particularly in relation to carer supervision and unannounced visits.
2	FS1	The Statement of Purpose does not clearly specify the types of fostering placements provided and it is recommended that on the occasion of its next review that this be incorporated.
3	FS11	The agency is recommended to ensure that carers are fully aware of the role of the placing local authority Children's Rights Officer and of contact details in relation to young people in their care.
4	FS13	The agency is recommended to include some detail in its carer manual of the support systems, which could potentially be accessed in the event of exclusion of a child from school.
5	FS9	The agency should ensure that a written Safe Care Policy is completed in respect of every foster home. Once completed the Safe Care Policy should be reviewed and updated in relation to each new placement made.
6	FS8	The Risk Assessment pro-forma should clearly state which carers the child is being matched against if it is to provide a comprehensive matching tool.
7	FS6	The Fostering Agency should ensure that each foster home has a written fire escape plan, which is known to all children in placement.

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