

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

Wellcare Fostering Services Ltd

**Suite 11, Sterling House,
144-146 Cranbrook Road,
Ilford,
Essex IG1 4LZ**

Lead Inspector
Julie
Legg

Announced Inspection
12th September - 13th October 2005

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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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	Wellcare Fostering Services Ltd
Address	Suite 11, Sterling House, 144-146 Cranbrook Road, Ilford, Essex IG1 4LZ
Telephone number	0208 709 6733
Fax number	0208 709 6734
Email address	
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Wellcare Fostering Services Ltd
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Mrs Sheba Tabani-Shaikh
Type of registration	IFA Fostering Agencies
No. of places registered (if applicable)	
Category(ies) of registration, with number of places	IFA Fostering Agency

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

None

Date of last inspection This is the agency's first inspection.

Brief Description of the Service:

Wellcare Fostering Services Limited is a fostering agency operating from an office based at Ilford in the London Borough of Redbridge. The agency has been operational since October 2004. The agency provides long term and short term fostering, including sibling groups for children between 0-18 years of age. The service aims to meet the identified needs of children and young people placed with them and to fully support foster carers within that task. Wellcare Fostering places a strong emphasis on support, training and supervision of their foster carers, with the aim of providing a high and consistent standard of care to the young people and children placed in their care.

SUMMARY

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

This inspection was undertaken over a period from 12th September to 13th October 2005. This was to enable the inspector to observe the fostering panel, visit foster carers in their own home and the premises of the agency. Only two young people were placed at the time of the inspection. The inspector also spoke to a young person who had just been placed with the foster carers and did not wish to get into detailed discussion. Comments made about the care and support provided by the agency were very positive. During the inspection all of the standards were met in full and therefore the agency has no requirements to meet.

What the service does well:

The agency's management and staff are highly skilled and qualified. The agency is very committed to ensure that the experience and diversity of their foster carers are able to meet the needs of children and young people in terms of their race, culture and ethnicity.

What has improved since the last inspection?

This is the agency's first inspection and therefore it is not possible to comment on improvements.

What they could do better:

The children/young person's guide could be more user friendly and produced in different formats to provide information that is age/ability appropriate.

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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Scoring of Standards

Statutory Requirements Identified During the Inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

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

Every child and young person receives the appropriate care to ensure their health and developmental needs are met.

EVIDENCE:

Through discussion with staff and foster carers and inspection of policies and procedures, there was evidence to demonstrate that the agency provides foster care services which help each child/young person to receive health care which meets their needs for physical, emotional and social development. Also children/young people are enabled to make informed choices about their health needs.

The inspector spoke to foster carers who were clear about their responsibilities in registering a child/young person with a GP and dentist and taking them to any health appointments. Foster carers had received information regarding the young person's health care prior to them moving into their home and there was evidence of a written health record. Foster carers confirmed that they had received training in health and hygiene issues, first aid and drug/alcohol awareness. There was evidence that foster carers were ensuring that the young person was still able to access their social activities from the area in which they lived.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

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

The acting manager is suitably qualified to manage a fostering service.
The foster carers undergo stringent vetting, assessment and training to ensure their suitability for providing a home for vulnerable children/young people.
The agency ensures that children/young people's ethnic, race and cultural and other identified assessed needs are appropriately met.
The children/young people are able to live in an environment which protects them from abuse and neglect.
The agency employs staff who are suitable to work with children/ young people.
Fostering panels are organised efficiently and effectively.

EVIDENCE:

An inspection of relevant staff files was undertaken and the inspector was able to evidence that the requirements set out in Schedule 1 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 were being complied with.
From discussion with the staff and foster carers and inspection of files, there was evidence to confirm that only the most suitable foster carers are accepted. Wellcare has an informative foster carers' guide which takes each prospective candidate through the process and from information gathered approximately only 10% of all applicants complete the selection process to become foster carers. They are recruited in line with the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) Guidance and the Competency Framework in the assessment of qualities, competencies and aptitudes. The fostering service recruitment

strategy aims and succeeds in recruiting a range of carers to meet the needs of children/young people for whom it aims to provide a service.

The agency currently have two young people placed with foster carers.

Through discussion with staff, the foster carers and inspection of files, the inspector was able to track the process of placing the young person. From receiving the referral through to the placement there is a very thorough process that takes place before a placement is considered. The Agency ensures that a comprehensive assessment, a detailed care plan and other relevant information is received from the placing authority. This information is then discussed with the placing authority, prior to the identification of the foster carers. Therefore the match is achieved by information sharing and the involvement of relevant professionals and appropriate individuals including the young person, their family and potential foster carers. A period of introduction took place for the young person to visit the foster carers prior to them moving in.

There was evidence through training programmes and foster carers' training profiles that all of the foster carers have received training in the recognition of abuse, how to respond to signs or indicators of abuse and caring for a child/young person who has been abused. The training aims to develop foster carers awareness and understanding of all issues relating to the protection of children/young people. The foster carers' handbook and the children/young person's protection policy both contain clear information and guidance on good practice. There are other policies and procedures which also protect children/young people including reporting a child missing and an anti bullying policy.

The inspector examined documents, files, policies and procedures and interviewed staff. There was clear evidence to demonstrate that the people who work in or for the fostering service are suitable to work with children/young people. All of the records examined were maintained to a good standard. There are clear written recruitment and selection procedures for appointing staff, which ensures the fostering service operates a robust recruitment procedure. All of the social work staff involved in the assessment of foster carers are qualified social workers.

The inspector observed a fostering panel and interviewed the panel chair. The fostering panel has clear written policies and procedures which are implemented and this ensures that the fostering panel functions appropriately. The panel chair ensured that there was the required quorum for the panel to function. The panel members have expertise in education, child protection and health, one of the panel members is an experienced foster carer and another is a young person who has been in care. Due consideration was given to the Form F assessment, which were of a high standard and each case presented evoked appropriate discussion on relevant issues. The prospective foster parents and the assessing social worker attended the panel together, this allowed the panel to seek points of clarification from both parties and it also gave the prospective foster carers an opportunity to ask questions. The panel also has a role in providing a quality assurance function in relation to the

assessment process. The inspector was able to evidence this function through observation of the panel and discussion with the chair of the panel.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 7,13,31

The fostering service ensures that children/young people are provided with foster care services which value diversity and promote equality.

The children/young people's educational needs are met and they are encouraged to meet their full potential.

The fostering service recognises that the parent remains the main carer when children/young people are receiving short-term foster care.

EVIDENCE:

There was evidence to demonstrate that the fostering service ensures that children/young people are provided with foster carers which value diversity and promote equality. This principal is reinforced through the service's policies and procedures, the foster carers' handbook, regular supervision and training. The inspector had discussions with staff and foster carers, attended the fostering panel and examined documentation including the recruitment and selection procedure of foster carers. The fostering service places great importance in ensuring that the children/ young people's ethnicity, religion and cultural needs are respected and matched with appropriate foster carers, this was evident from the young people that are currently placed. The fostering service currently has approved foster carers from a number of ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds

Through discussion with staff and foster carers, examination of files, it was evident that the educational needs of the children/young people are given a high priority by the fostering service and the foster carers. In one particular case the fostering service were working closely with the placing local authority to ensure that the young person's educational needs were being met. Foster

carers were seen to present an environment in which education and learning would be promoted. Foster carers stated that they would encourage and assist the young person with their homework and would expect to be in regular contact with the school to monitor their transition and their progress. There is a standing item on the supervising social worker's (SSW) visiting form, which prompts SSW to discuss educational progress.

The inspector discussed with fostering service staff and foster carers, issues regarding short- term breaks. All were aware and recognised that the parent remains the main carer, both were able to give the inspector examples of where they had ensured that the parents were involved with day to day decisions.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 10,11

Each child/young person is encouraged and assisted to maintain family contact and friendships as set out in their care plan.

The fostering service ensures that children/young people's opinions and those of families and significant others are sought over issues that effect their daily lives.

EVIDENCE:

Through inspection of files and discussion with staff and foster carers, it was evident that the young people in foster care were able to maintain and develop their family contacts, friendships and social activities. This was in accordance with their care plan and foster placement agreement. There is evidence of clear procedures setting out how appropriate contact arrangements are to be established, maintained, monitored and reviewed. The inspector was able to evidence that foster carers record the outcome of contact visits. Financial and practical support is also offered to foster carers to ensure that contact is maintained and there was evidence that the fostering service is sharing with the foster carers access visits to family and social activities.

Through discussion with staff and foster carers and examining case files there was evidence to demonstrate that foster carers are encouraged to seek out the young person's opinion and understand the importance of listening to their views. The fostering service policies and procedures demonstrate that they ensure that children/young people's opinions and those of the families and significant others are sought over all issues that are likely to affect their daily lives and their future. There is a standing item on the supervising social worker (SSW) visit form that acts as a prompt for SSW's to promote consultation with children/young people on all matters affecting them, including day to day matters. From discussion with the young person it was evident that they knew

how to raise concerns or complaints. The children's guide contains information on how to complain but the format of the guide could be more user friendly and produced in different formats to provide information that is age/ability appropriate.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 29

Foster carers receive an allowance and agreed expenses as specified.

EVIDENCE:

Through discussion with staff and the foster carers and inspection of records, there is evidence that foster carers receive the appropriate remuneration. Each foster carer has a written contract which details of when and how fostering allowances will be paid. The inspector spoke to foster carers who confirmed that they had received regular payments.

Management

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 17,21,24

The fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff.

The foster service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting foster carers.

The fostering service ensures that up to date comprehensive case records are maintained for each child/young person in foster care.

EVIDENCE:

The fostering service has an adequate number of experienced and qualified staff. There are robust recruitment procedures and their statement of purpose states 'the company is managed by a team of experienced and qualified professionals who provide a high quality service to children and young people in care'. This was evidenced from inspecting staff files and talking to the staff. There is a clearly set out process for the assessment process of foster carers and this is further supported by the comprehensive Form F assessments. Foster carers are recruited in line with the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) Guidance and the Competency framework in the assessment of qualities, competencies and aptitudes. The fostering services recruitment strategy aims and succeeds in recruiting a range of foster carers to meet the needs of the children/young people for whom it aims to provide a service. Through discussion with staff and foster carers and from viewing policies and procedures and foster carers files, it was evident that the fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting foster carers. In discussion with foster carers it was evident that they felt supported by the agency, staff were responsive and they felt they were listened to. Foster carers are encouraged to attend monthly support groups. Carers viewed these groups as an important part of their support network. The role of the supervising social worker is clear to the foster carers, and that they are reviewed annually. Reports are then prepared and presented to the fostering panel. From discussion with staff and through inspecting case records and policies and procedures, there was evidence to demonstrate that the fostering service maintains comprehensive and well organised records. There is a policy on case recording which establishes the purpose, format and contents of files. Relevant information is available to the child/ young person and those involved in their care. Through discussion with the foster carers it was evident that the agency ensures that foster carers are aware of confidentiality.

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	3
9	3
15	3
30	3

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

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

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

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	3
22	X
23	X
24	3
25	X
26	X
27	X
28	X

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.				

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.	11	The children's guide could be more user friendly and produced in different formats to provide information that is age/ability appropriate.

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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