



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

### **Rutland County Council Fostering Service**

**Catmose  
Oakham  
Rutland  
LE15 6HP**

*Lead Inspector*  
Trisha Gibbs

*Announced Inspection*  
Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2005      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

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

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

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

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

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

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# SERVICE INFORMATION

<b>Name of service</b>	Rutland County Council Fostering Service
<b>Address</b>	Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01572 722577
<b>Fax number</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	<a href="http://www.rutland.gov.uk">www.rutland.gov.uk</a>
<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	Rutland County Council
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Katie Arnold and Ms Kate Greaves
<b>Type of registration</b>	Local Auth Fostering Service
<b>No. of places registered (if applicable)</b>	0
<b>Category(ies) of registration, with number of places</b>	

# **SERVICE INFORMATION**

## **Conditions of registration:**

**Date of last inspection**        7th February 2005

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

Rutland County Council Fostering Service is based in Oakham.

Two Senior Supervising Social Workers are responsible for the management and development of the fostering service, and also for the recruitment, training, approval and support of carers.

There is a new full time, temporary social worker appointed to develop family support services, and a permanent part time fostering clerk, in addition to some sessional social worker support.

The Head of Inclusion, Children's Services has overall responsibility for the fostering service.

Some functions of the service, including the management of the Fostering Panel are provided by Compass, an independent Children's Service Agency,

At the time of the Inspection, the service supported 12 carers and 14 children in placement. The small group of carers provide a good range of placements.

# **SUMMARY**

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

This Announced Inspection took two Inspectors 30 hours in total.

Since the Fostering Service was inspected earlier this year Inspectors did not attend to observe another Panel, but received sets of the three most recent Panel minutes.

For the purpose of the Inspection two foster carers, and the children placed with them, were tracked through the inspection of case files, and discussions were held with the new temporary social worker, and the Senior Supervising Social Workers (managers).

The Inspectors also met with a group of carers at a carer's home and held full discussions with them.

The above information provided the Inspection evidence for each Standard assessed. Policies and Procedures, the Carer's Handbook, and other documents have been fully inspected on the occasion of previous Inspections and were consulted only for clarification purposes on this occasion.

Questionnaires were returned by 5 carers, 2 children and 1 placing social worker, and these have been referred to within the body of the report.

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

Provides a high level of individualised support to the small group of carers.

Supports and facilitates this group of carers to provide a flexible and responsive fostering service.

Maintains very good carer and children case records.

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

The fostering service has recruited a set of carers to provide placements for older children.

The fostering service now funds and supports a group for carer's children and Looked After Children.

The fostering service has introduced a Looked After Children checklist to ensure that all essential tasks and paperwork are undertaken at time of placement.

A temporary full time social worker has been appointed to strengthen and develop kinship/family support work.

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

The fostering service should support each carer to complete a Fire Plan for their home.

The fostering service should invite a placing social worker to meet with carers to introduce the use of the Clayton Health Passport file.

Fostering Panel minutes should reflect when the Agency Decision Maker has not agreed to previous Panel recommendations.

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

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

## **CONTENTS**

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

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 – The intended outcomes for these Standards are**

Standard 12 Inspected.

The Health needs of children and young people are given very good attention.

## **EVIDENCE:**

- Carers in the support group confirmed to Inspectors that they provided a healthy diet for the children placed with them and they demonstrated a good awareness of Healthy Living practices. They talked about recent health related training they had received, such as sexual health training and paediatric first aid. One child reported in the questionnaires that they ate 'good food' and enjoyed 'lots of exercise.'
- Carers reported that they maintained appropriate records of health appointments, medications, and of minor accidents and illnesses, however they were unclear as to the process of completing the special Health Passport record (known as the Clayton file) provided to them by placing social workers. Inspectors have recommended that this be explained and discussed at a carer support meeting in the near future, since this issue had been raised at the last Inspection.
- A named nurse is available for consultation and advice with regard to Looked After Children.

# 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**

Standards 3,6,8,9, and 15 were Inspected.

The Fostering Service works well to ensure that children and young people are provided with safe placements.

## **EVIDENCE:**

- Carers confirmed that they all have a Safe Care policy covering household rules, and that these are reviewed at the time of new placements. Safe Care policies were seen on carer files. Very good full risk assessments are completed at the start of all new placements. These were also noted on file.
- Both Senior Supervising Social Workers and also the Head of Inclusion review detailed carer Health and Safety checklists, on an annual basis in the carer's home. Health and Safety matters were seen to be routinely discussed in carer supervision. Inspectors have recommended that carers draw up a Fire Plan in respect of their individual homes.
- Related training this year has included Prevention of Accidents in the Home, First Aid, Safeguarding Children and Fostering and Child Protection. Carers spoke about the Fostering and Child Protection training with much enthusiasm and said how very helpful this had been.

- Form F' reports seen on file were comprehensive. Full checks, references and carer competencies were clearly detailed.
- Fostering Panel minutes confirmed good Panel practices and appropriate membership. Inspectors however were concerned to note that, where the Agency Decision Maker had not agreed with a strong recommendation made by the Fostering Panel, the following set of Fostering Panel minutes did not reflect, or refer to the matter at all. The Panel had, while recommending the variation of a carer approval to long-term status, also made a strong recommendation with regard to the long term planning for the child in that placement. The Agency Decision Maker agreed only to the variation of approval status. There was no discussion between the Agency Decision Maker and Panel Chair about why the second recommendation would not be agreed to, but the Senior Supervising Social Worker fed back the reasons for the outcome at the following Fostering Panel, however there was no record of this in the minutes.
- Children currently in placement are well matched and placements have remained stable since the last Inspection. A very good Placement Agreement was on the file of a carer providing respite care to a child in another placement, in addition to a professionally written profile of that child's needs by his main carer.

# 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**

Standard 7, 13 and 31 Inspected.

The Fostering Service provides good support to carers and children, to promote the educational achievement of children placed.

## **EVIDENCE:**

- Carers at the carer's group meeting showed a very good awareness of school systems and about the value of books, play and maintaining good communication with schools. They were confident about the good level of support they receive from their Supervising Social Workers with school related matters. One carer however described how staff at a school were becoming over involved with the child placed with them, and were overtly and directly undermining the strategies they had implemented for managing some of the challenges he presented. The carer's Supervising Social Worker had endeavoured to discuss the matter with the staff in question but the staff member had refused to engage in dialogue about this. Inspectors advised that this matter should therefore be taken up at a more senior level.
- Children in placement are provided with a personal or laptop computer, and soft wear if necessary. Carers confirmed that extra financial support is provided sometimes for children's school trips and extra home tuition. One family carer said the fostering service provided financial support for her child 's piano lessons.

- Although the fostering service has identified a need to advertise for carers to provide respite breaks for children who have a disability, a good, small, flexible respite foster care service, including day and after school care is available.
- Carer's recently received training on Diversity, and Inspectors saw a good two-session programme for this.

## **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**

Standard 11 was Inspected. Standard 10 was Inspected earlier this year.

Rutland County Council Fostering Service and carers consult with children well.

### **EVIDENCE:**

- Carers told Inspectors that they had information about the Children's Rights officer, who had visited those with placements. The Senior Supervising Social Workers (fostering service managers) said that the Children's Rights Service was under review and being reorganised. Carers said that they involved children in day-to-day decisions about e.g. meals, bedrooms, and activities. Very good, illustrated, age appropriate consultation booklets, are provided for children to complete at the time of their review.
- All carers and children receive an annual visit from the County Council's Corporate Parent and Head of Inclusion. All children receive a visit from the Corporate Parent. This is commendable.
- There is now a special group for carer's children and Looked After Children. Carers have positively welcomed this development, and the Christmas bowling outing was being discussed during the carer group meeting attended by Inspectors.

# 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**

Standard 29 was inspected.

Carer allowances are paid promptly and some additional allowances are made available on occasions.

## **EVIDENCE:**

- Carers told Inspectors that they receive allowances on time and that there is a breakdown of allocation of the allowance in the Carer's Handbook. Additional allowances and payments are available in some circumstances and carers gave examples of these to Inspectors. Carers commented 'They look after us well.' 'We haven't come across a situation where we haven't been supported.'

# 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**

Standard 17, 21, 24 and 32 Inspected.

Carers receive very good levels of support.

The fostering service operates very good recording systems.

## **EVIDENCE:**



- Since the last Inspection of the Fostering Service a Director of Children and Young People's Services for Rutland County Council has been appointed, and the Head of Children's Services has become the Head of Inclusion. Other changes within the structure of the Children's Services are currently being implemented on an incremental basis.
- Two part time Senior Supervising Social Workers continue to operate, manage and support the Rutland Fostering service. The carer group has grown from seven to twelve since the last Inspection and additional carers are going through the approval process. Since not all carers have children in placement it was not possible on this occasion to assess whether they would continue to receive the high level of supervision, training and support currently provided by the Supervising Social Workers if they had placements, and whether this would be a manageable task for the Supervising Social Workers. Some carers approved earlier this year have had no placements yet and are eager to have a children placed with them. Inspectors acknowledged the difficulties inherent in recruiting and retaining an appropriate number of trained and experienced carers to meet the needs of a small but potentially fluctuating group of Looked After Children.
- Both Senior Supervising Social Workers are part time, and have been provided with an extra day a week to complete NVQ 4 Management. They acknowledged that the additional time was helping them to swiftly progress the award.
- A temporary full time social work post has been dedicated to the development of family/kinship care support work, supervised by the Senior Supervising Social Workers. The remit of the post includes developing family group conference meetings and raising the awareness of private fostering. If this post were to be confirmed on a longer-term basis it is envisaged that the current kinship care support could be more appropriately allocated to this worker.
- Carers at the carer's group were very positive about the support provided by the fostering service and especially the work of the Senior Supervising Social Workers. 'If you have to ring you never feel it is too trivial.' Some carers said they liked the fact that the Rutland carer group was small because of the closer relationship they could enjoy, and the direct support they could offer each other.
- Fostering case records looked at by Inspectors were very well organised, clear and accessible. All essential information was available. An excellent new checklist has been introduced to ensure essential paperwork is on files and administrative tasks undertaken including e.g. LAC forms, Children's Rights info, Risk Assessment, etc. Evidence was

seen of the provision of regular and thorough supervision sessions, tailored to carer's individual needs.

- Carers confirmed that they maintain records for each child. There is a new foster care recording system, which can now be completed by hand, or computer. Additionally, a voice-activated system is available if carers have difficulty with recording.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services have been met and uses the following scale.

**4** Standard Exceeded (Commendable)      **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)  
**2** Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)      **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion  
 "N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

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

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

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

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

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

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

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	FS6	Carers should be supported to draw up a Fire Plan in respect of their individual homes.
2	FS6	Fostering Panel minutes should reflect when the Agency Decision Maker has not agreed to previous Panel recommendations.
3	FS12	The Health Passport (Clayton) file should be explained and discussed at a carer support meeting in the near future.
4	FS13	In the situation whereby school personnel are allegedly undermining the work undertaken with a Looked After Child by foster carers, and will not engage in dialogue with the Supervising Social Worker, the matter should be addressed at a senior level.

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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