



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

The Adolescent and Children`s Trust

**Park House
Room 311
10 Park Street
Bristol BS1 5HX**

Lead Inspector
Wilfried
Maxfield

Announced
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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

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Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	The Adolescent and Children`s Trust
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Ms Elaine Graham
Type of registration	IFA Fostering Agency
No. of places registered (if applicable)	N/A
Category(ies) of registration, with number of places	N/A

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 12-Jul-2004

Brief Description of the Service:

The Adolescent and Children's Trust, also known as TACT, was established in 1993 as an independent national charity providing fostering services. The Head quarters are based in London and include the organisations finance and human recourse departments. TACT operates a network of 8 branches spread across England and Wales, which are subdivided into 3 regions. The Bristol branch of the charity was first registered in December 03 and comes under the Wales Region. The area team covers both Bristol and seven counties in the South West of England. A small team is currently developing the service, which has grown substantially since the last inspection. It has successfully recruited more foster carers and widened its client base of children and young people. Services provided by the Bristol office include: Fostering to children and young people 0-17; Outreach Support Services to children and families; Supervised contact; Parent and child placements; Assessments; Foster Carer training; Support Groups. The Bristol Office is situated in the centre of the city. Due to a lack of space a campaign to find and aquire a new building was commenced last year. Positive news about this matter arrived during this inspection. Contracts have been exchanged while this report was being completed and the move should take place in the early part of 2006.

SUMMARY

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

This inspection was conducted over 3 days and involved 2 inspectors of the Commission.

The area manager of the Bristol Area Office assisted in every aspect of the inspection process. This included providing access to essential records, helping to establish and facilitate contact with foster carers and young people and illuminating inspectors on the finer detail of managing the Bristol Branch.

Additional assistance was available from the Regional manager for some of the time. She supervises operations of the Wales as well as the Bristol and South West branches.

The Area has two Supervising Social Workers one of which was interviewed during the inspection and accompanied on one of his visits to a foster home.

A number of foster families were visited in their homes, which also provided opportunities to meet some of the children and young people living there. A very good return on the Commissions 'Foster Parent's and Children's Questionnaires' helped to collect opinions on how these respective groups view the levels of care and support.

One of the inspectors observed the newly established 'Bristol Panel' for a morning and early afternoon session. This included the opportunity for a formal interview with the panel's chair and informal conversations with some of the panel members.

What the service does well:

The agency has an impressive range of policies and procedures covering all the important aspects of the service.

Record keeping and associated audit and monitoring tasks are of the highest professional standard.

Administration systems and administration support are excellent.

The Area Manager is commended for her ability and professional expertise covering the widest possible brief stretching from the most demanding managerial to day-to-day social work tasks.

The branch is effectively and efficiently managed.

Managerial back up, supervising and networking support from the Wales region is excellent.

Feedback from foster carer's about the support they receive is excellent.

Foster Carers are well selected and trained and have the right skills and experience.

Children report positively about the care and services they receive.

Staff support including formal supervisions is good.

Assessment expertise and quality assurance function of the newly formed 'Bristol Panel' is impressive.

The branch management is commended for the way it values and promotes diversity and equality.

The recent recruitment of 7 support workers (Sessional Irregular Hours Outreach Worker) has added considerable back up support and respite to the foster carer task. The agency is commended for developing this part of the service.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Prospective users of the service and other stakeholders are now better informed about important aspects of the fostering service since relevant detail has been added to the Statement of Purpose.

Foster children and young people are now better protected from people unsuitable for this work since the agency complies with all regulations and standards relating to recruitment and vetting and keeping of staff records (Schedule 1 of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002).

Service users and other relevant parties effected by the service can now contact the Commission more easily since contact details have been added to the agencies Complaints Procedure.

Work conditions for staff and facilities for foster carers and children and young people will greatly improve since Tact has found more suitable office space.

All stakeholders in the agency will benefit from better information and guidance because core policies have been updated and are now available in draft form.

Foster Carers, children and young people will feel safer in cases of emergency because the out of hour's duty system has been reviewed and improved.

Foster carers will feel better able to understand children's needs and backgrounds because the agency is making increased efforts to obtain information about children and young people from previous placements.

What they could do better:

The current policy and practice to draw on the panel chair to make decisions on exemptions needs reviewing. Equally, the practice to use the Regional Manager to make decisions of this kind when the panel chair is not available needs reviewing.

Social Work staff new to the fostering task would benefit if their training needs were assessed and recorded on an ongoing basis.

The overall excellent quality of service to carers, children and young people would be protected and consolidated if the agency refrained from further growth until the current staffing situation has improved.

The overall management of the agency would be further strengthened if the manager continued to receive the highest levels of support and was further protected from working long and irregular hours.

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.

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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 – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 12

The agency maintains excellent systems and records to ensure children's and young peoples health care needs are met.

EVIDENCE:

Foster carers visited were interviewed and asked about the exact health requirements and arrangements of the respective children and young people in their care. Responses given were more than satisfactory and general awareness of specific medical needs of foster carers in the particular sample visited was good. Foster carers are provided with full details of the health needs of the children and young people. Records relating to this were scrutinized and found to be of a good quality. The agency makes every possible effort to obtain all of this information prior to the start of the placement from the responsible authority and passes it on to the carer. Obtaining this information can sometimes be a difficult and time-consuming task for the supervising social worker and the office administration.

Specific health records are available on children's and young people's case files as well as foster carer files. They have been designed to be able to track the flow of information, appointments and agreements made by the different parties.

Foster carers are given all necessary logistical and information support to establish essential existing health services in specific children and young people's localities.

Training programmes inspected showed a wide variety of health related courses on offer for foster carers.

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 agency protects the welfare of its children and young people by employing excellent recruitment and vetting procedures. Good foster carers provide safe, warm and nurturing homes. Children and young people are matched carefully using robust and sound assessments and procedures. An expert panel ensures good quality assurance monitoring and decision making, however the definition and the procedures around 'urgent exemptions' need reviewing.

EVIDENCE:

A requirement for the service to ensure that all staff records comply with NMS 3 and Schedule 1 of the Fostering Regulations 2002 was made as a result of the last inspection. Scrutiny of a sizable sample of staff files revealed full compliance with the required standards and regulation at this inspection. Audit trails left on files revealed strict and robust systems ensuring the best possible detail and quality facts were available on staff files and that only suitable people were recruited to manage and work for the agency as required by NMS 3 and 15.

Tact has clear policies and procedures in place to ensure that foster parents are available to children and young people who provide healthy, nurturing and safe environments. All systems are designed to warrant regular and ongoing checks to make certain that homes are suitable and meet foster children's and

young peoples needs. Supervising social workers are responsible to verify that every home complies with the high standards required by NMS 6. This is done annually as part of the foster carer's review.

Homes visited at this inspection were of a good quality. Environments were warm and clean, maintained to a good standard and adequately furnished and decorated. In the sample visited each child had her/his own bed with ample space and good privacy. Tact's procedures are very specific when defining guidance for sharing bedrooms or when allowing children to share carer's bedrooms. In the case of specific foster carers caring for a large group of siblings it was found that all arrangements were in line with the relevant standards and regulations.

Previous reports have been very complimentary about TACT Bristol's management's ability, knowledge and understanding of issues involved in the process of matching. Placement decisions to consider a group of siblings for a trans racial placement were scrutinized. This confirmed that the agency considered the exceptional circumstances of the referral and carefully considered all information and training to be made available to the foster carers. This information was clearly evidenced on the respective referral form. Interviewing the respective couple revealed outstanding support promoting the children's and young people's religion, ethnic origin, language and culture. The two oldest young people in this placement were interviewed and expressed their happiness with the way their backgrounds were being valued and respected.

Issues and decision-making regarding appropriate and high quality matching criteria arose after case tracking one young adolescent and very challenging person into circumstances involving a number of very young children. When visiting the foster carer in question it was found that the particular family circumstances might be removed from the actual needs of the young person. Some of these concerns were amplified after having interviewed the foster carer but were not confirmed by the young person who stated that he was very happy in the placement. After discussing this case with the manager and having been given the opportunity to briefly discuss this at a meeting of the panel it was felt, that the agency was promoting the best interest of the young person by constantly monitoring the suitability of the circumstances and providing every other necessary support for the placement to succeed.

Safe caring guidelines available in section 7 of the 'Foster Carers and Social Workers Standards and Practice Guidelines' were studied as part of this inspection. Foster Carers and Social Workers were interviewed for their awareness of these. Training schedules and content of training was examined for their suitability to safeguard and protect children and young people from neglect, exploitation and deprivation. Records and interviews confirmed that the agency currently manages to adhere to its own policies and procedures and high standards and all standards laid down in NMS 9.

The meeting of the newly established Bristol panel was observed. The chairwoman of this panel also chairs the Wales panel for TACT in Neath. Observation of discussions showed that members had considerable knowledge of the entire fostering process. It was also noted that the panel was thorough in their approach to the approval of foster carers. The discussions confirmed that each of the members had a sound understanding of the arising issues. The chair and every member were able to demonstrate a very good understanding of the cases discussed. All members of the panel confirmed understanding of the fostering task and the needs of children looked after. The panel checked that all the required references and checks had been completed for prospective carers and asked pertinent questions of assessing social workers and prospective carers.

Scrutiny of Form F assessments was exemplary thus ensuring the panels all important quality assurance function.

Membership was found to be in line with the requirements of Regulation 24 of the Fostering Service Regulations. A sample of file records of members of the panel was inspected and found to comply with 30.3.

Issues arose regarding the reading of the agencies 'Exemptions policy' and the fact that a decision regarding any 'urgent' exemption can be made by the supervising social worker and the Area Manager in consultation with the panel chair (see: Standards and Practice Guidance, Section 23.6). The agency is reminded of Regulations 28. (2), (3), (4), expressly negating service providers to use any member of the panel in any decisions made by the provider regarding the terms of any approval of a foster parent. Section 23.6 was discussed with the panel chair and after taking her views into account, a review of current policy and practice seems even more urgent. This is also considered because the chair has been used in this capacity on a great number of occasions suggesting that the term 'urgent' might have been used on too many occasions. A requirement to review this practice is made in the relevant section of this report.

In a response to the draft report the service clarified the following:
"Amendments are being made to the variation of approval form. They are variations rather than exemptions that have been coming to the panel chairs. Exemptions go to the local authority. The practise of using panel chairs in decision making will cease following a meeting of key managers on 8 December 2005".

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.

The service develops and promotes a diverse workforce and actively seeks black, Asian and mixed parentage carers. TACT promotes and supports the educational achievement of children and young people and gives high priority foster carer's meeting young people's educational needs.

EVIDENCE:

TACT's 'Equal Opportunities and Valuing Diversity' policy can be found in the Foster Carers and Social Workers Standards and Practice Guidance.

The service develops and promotes a diverse workforce and actively seeks black, Asian and mixed parentage carers. A same race placement policy is in place. There is ample evidence that issues of diversity and equality as well as strategies to enhance children's and young people's confidence and feeling of self worth are promoted throughout the service. The agency strives to match the ethnic needs of any child placed with a foster carer. Links with the child's ethnic origins are maintained wherever possible and placements in a multi-racial area are supported if deemed an assessed need.

Equality and diversity issues are addressed in support sessions with social workers as well as in the comprehensive preparation and ongoing training package.

There was good and robust evidence that the agency promotes educational achievement of children and young people and that high priority is given to helping foster carer's to meet young people's educational needs. Foster carer's

roles in supporting children and young people are clearly laid out in the relevant policy document as well as the placement agreement. All foster carer's are encouraged to attend PEP meetings and parent's evenings and keep all school reports.

Two of the young people placed with TACT at the time of this inspection had been excluded from school. There was good opportunity to case track the agencies efforts trying to find alternative school places and liaise in partnership with foster parents. Part of a meeting with this at heart was observed as part of the inspection process and found to be of excellent quality.

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.

Particularly robust procedures and practices ensure family contact is maintained and promoted. The agency strongly promotes consultation with children and young people during all stages of the placement.

EVIDENCE:

Findings were positive and included case tracking exceedingly complex contact arrangements for one particular placement arrangement. It is clear that the agency does everything in its control in order that children's and young people's views can be sought and given weight in determining contact arrangements. The 'Standards and Practice Guidelines' promote contact and give guidance on reporting and concerns.

Clear procedures are in place promoting and supporting contact and details of these are clearly outlined and maintained in the 'Individual Placement Agreements'. Risk assessments are carried out regarding all contact arrangements and possible supervision issues are clarified using this tool. Overriding requirements, such as court orders, are clearly published and known to all parties. Foster carers receive good quality practical support in order to be able to deal with difficult arrangements.

Preparation training for foster carers includes guidance on the promotion of contact.

Contact issues are monitored by social workers during supervision sessions. LAC forms are used to specify individual contact arrangements for each child. The agency ensures that interagency planning meetings and reviews agree and review contact arrangement.

The Children's Guide to services includes a section, which clearly states that the child's views and wishes are important. The guide informs children and young people of people they can talk to, call or write to. TACT encourages the use of independent adults and advocates and the Children's Guide also includes the contact details of 'Voice for the Child in Care' and the 'Children's Advocacy and Representation Service'. A separate booklet, which comprises the 'Children's and Young People's Advice and Complaints Procedure', has been produced containing a pre-paid response envelope.

From the sample of young people interviewed during this inspection 3 claimed that they had not been given a Children's Guide or a complaint leaflet nor had their support social worker discussed many of the issues that can be found in those guides. A recommendation is made for the agency to review its procedures so that they can ensure the distribution of these documents to the children and young people and evidence this more robustly.

Talking to social workers and carers about consultation issues it was apparent that the fostering service provides very good opportunity for children to express their views. This includes the use of the LAC reviewing system. A review booklet is used by the agency to document children's views and wishes and filled in by the young people before each review.

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) 14, 29.

Preparation for Adult Life policies and procedures are sound. The agency fully complies with all the standards regarding foster carer's allowances.

EVIDENCE:

The written procedure for 'Preparation for Adult Life' was scrutinised as part of this inspection. TACT's core values regarding the preparation for adulthood are to be found in this policy: Involve the young person fully in all planning and decision-making; Treat young people as active partners in the care process; Help to develop skills in independence; Emphasis to enable young people to have the confidence to make responsible decisions; help to inform the young persons self esteem and identity.

The policy also provides guidance for this process and specifies roles and responsibilities for the conduct and co-ordination of the various stages of the leaving care assessment and pathway planning process. Up to date information on local authorities duty and responsibilities to provide assessment for Pathway Plans and timescales to be adhered to is also part of the Standards and Practice Guidelines. A commitment to train foster carers especially those providing a long-term placement for young people of secondary school age is made as part of the policy. There was good evidence from interviews with foster carers that these basic principles were well known and applied.

Fostering allowances are reviewed annually. Each carer receives information about the allowance and expenses payable in their Foster Carers Practice Guidelines and it is detailed in each child's and young people's Foster Care Agreement. Following approval, the supervising social worker provides a detailed explanation of the allowances, special payments and incentives.

Comments from foster carers showed that fees were paid on time, and that they considered the fees to adequately cover their costs.

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) 1, 2, 4, 5, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 , 26.

In spite of recruitment problems the Bristol office is currently efficiently and effectively run fully within the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose. However, the manager needs ongoing support and protection from working long and irregular hours. Training, supervision and general support is good for staff and foster carers alike. New social work staff would benefit from a training assessment soon after appointment. Case records and general administrative record keeping is of an excellent standard.

EVIDENCE:

The Fostering Service's Statement of Purpose is a comprehensive and clearly written document. It contains all the elements required in NMS 1.4.

Equally, the children's guide is a well-constructed booklet containing all the relevant information in an age appropriate format.

The Manager for Bristol is an experienced Social Worker. She holds the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work, the Certificate in Advanced Child Care, the NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) level 5 in Management, the Certificate in Welfare Studies and a BA (Hons) in Social Science. She has worked within Fostering and Adoption since 1987 and joined TACT in 2003.

The Bristol Manager is supported by a very experienced Regional Manager based at the Neath area office.

The staff group is made up of two Social Workers and an Administrator. Both Supervising Social Workers are qualified Social Workers. One of the 2 has joined TACT very recently. Social Work staff new to the fostering task would benefit if their training needs were assessed and recorded on an ongoing basis. A recommendation is made in the relevant section of this report. The service responded to the draft report by highlighting that..."the new induction procedure includes identifying the personal development needs of the staff member and then links to the Performance Review process for all staff so training needs are identified early on". Relating to the other core standards of NMS 19 it was apparent that all staff interviewed felt that the service were providing them with every opportunity for training. Social workers described a great variety of training options available to them both on external as well as in-house training courses.

The Administrator is held in particularly high esteem. The Bristol Office heavily relies on her for constant support and expertise. Overall, there was no doubt that the Bristol Office is run very effectively and efficiently. There are written procedures for controlling the activities of the fostering service. There are written administrative and financial procedures in place. Information provided to purchasers is in line with NMS 4.4.

The job description of the manager and social work staff were scrutinized as part of this inspection. As with all other staff interviewed it could be confirmed that their duties and responsibilities were those as described in their job description.

As pointed out before the Wales Regional Manager supervises the Bristol Area Manager. Although levels of support and supervisions are excellent it was also very obvious that the managers workload and current remit does not always allow her the comfort of a sole focus on management issues. While this currently does not affect the efficient running of the office it is important to point out, that this is almost entirely due to the managers 'untiring flexibility', working long and irregular hours. It is therefore recommended that the agency continue to protect its managers from the possible negative impact of such a stressful workload. There can be no doubt that the overall management of the agency would be further strengthened if the manager continued to receive the highest levels of support and was further protected from working long and irregular hours.

Part of the above can also be seen as obvious symptoms of the side effects of working for a very small team. In addition overall growth in terms of foster carers and placements over the last year has been considerable. The agency has long recognised this and has been trying to recruit for another member of social work staff for some time.

The organisation issued a statement as a response to the draft report in which it acknowledges the current shortage of staff and accepts that "where there is a shortage of staff then the recruitment of foster carers has to be carefully managed" and that "TACT refrains from recruitment campaigns when it does not have the staff to manage the response". Understandably, the reply also highlights the need to continue to develop a service "if the service is to sustain itself in the market place" and that "refraining from growth is not necessarily the way to ensure TACT's continued viability". The service can be fully reassured that the inspection process identified very good evidence of the TACT Bristol and South West Branch' management expertise and that subsequently the current staffing problem is being well managed. There is currently no reservation that the carers will continue to receive the existing high levels of support. Subsequently the following statement has been amended: "In the interest of present placements it is important that the agency achieves this before further expansion. The overall excellent quality of service to carers, children and young people would be protected and consolidated if the agency refrained from further growth until the current staffing situation has improved". It should now read: The organisation needs to continue to carefully monitor its shortage of staff and cautiously manage this when recruiting more foster carers. An earlier recommendation was also amended accordingly and can be found in the relevant sections of this report.

The manager manages the team's accountability for all duties and casework via supervisions. Records showed these to be at frequent intervals and of good quality. The manager provides supervision for the whole of the small team. The content and quality of supervision and annual appraisals documents was particularly impressive. Lines of communication encompass managers, staff

and carers. A number of team tools are used to focus on practise issues. These include regular team meetings. Minutes of meetings are kept.

After a long period of consultation between regions and areas the Bristol office has adopted a new out of hours system for Social Workers. Out of hours support is now seen to be a regional activity managed by the Regional Manager. Still in the early 'trial stages' the Bristol manager seemed content to view the new procedures as a great improvement taking some of the considerable out of hours pressures away from the sole responsibility of the small team.

Feed back from the group of approved carers visited during this inspection was positive about levels of contact and support. Supervision visits for carers are recorded and a checklist defines issues to be discussed. Supervising social workers caseload is constantly under review to ensure maximum support and input for carers. The fostering panel considers an Annual Review of the carers prepared and conducted by the Area Manager.

General feedback from carers indicated that they are satisfied with the training provided and are able to access other external training.

A comprehensive case record is maintained for each child and young person. These are kept at the highest possible professional standards and fully comply with NMS 24. Equally, the remainder of the fostering services administrative records contain all significant information and more than comply with NMS 25.

The agency has leased new offices in the same office block since the last inspection. While these new premises now comply with NMS 26 TACT has had plans for even more suitable premises for some time. The Bristol office is congratulated on having found new premises. This event was celebrated while this inspection was ongoing.

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	4
6	3
8	3
9	3
15	3
30	2

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
7	4
13	3
31	X

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	3
29	3

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	3
2	3
4	3
5	3
16	3
17	3
18	3
19	2
20	3
21	3
22	3
23	3
24	4
25	4
26	3
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.	30	28.2,3,4.	Members of the panel (including the Chair) should not be used in any decisions made by the provider regarding the terms of any approval of a foster parent. The practise regarding 'urgent' exemptions needs reviewing.	1/12/05

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.	1, 11	The agency to review its procedures ensuring the distribution of the Children's Guide and Complaints Procedure documents to the children and young people and evidence this more robustly
2.	19	Social Work staff new to the fostering task would benefit if their training needs were assessed and recorded on an ongoing basis.
3.	16, 18, 20	The overall management of the agency would be further strengthened if the manager continued to receive the highest levels of support and was further protected from working long and irregular hours.
4.	16, 17, 18, 21.	The organisation needs to continue to monitor its shortage of staff and cautiously manage this when recruiting more foster carers

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