



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

SWIS Foster Care Limited

**3rd Floor Royal Buildings
2 Mosley Street
Piccadilly
Manchester
M2 3AN**

Lead Inspector
Sarah Oldham

Announced Inspection
15th March 2006 10:00

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	SWIIS Foster Care Limited
Address	3rd Floor Royal Buildings 2 Mosley Street Piccadilly Manchester M2 3AN
Telephone number	020 7307 8383
Fax number	020 7307 8384
Email address	
Provider Web address	
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	SWIIS Foster Care Ltd
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Cynara Frances Ogden Smith
Type of registration	Fostering Agencies
Category(ies) of registration, with number of places	

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

1. As detailed in the Service's Statement of Purpose dated January 2004, SWIIS Fostering Service will provide placements to children and young people that meet their personal, social, health, development and education needs including:
 - a) Planned short term, task centred placements for children/young people towards specific goals, for example, assessment placements, bridging, preparation for adoption, permanency or return home, or placements which meet other care plan objectives
 - b) Planned longer term placements for individual children/young people and sibling groups who cannot be rehabilitated home
 - c) Parent and Child Placements
 - d) Sibling placements
 - e) Placements for Children with Disabilities
 - f) Short break and Respite placements
 - g) Unplanned, short notice or emergency placements.
2. The service is managed at all times in accordance with the guidance and regulations issued in respect of fostering services by the Secretary of State for Health under Sections 22 and 23(1) of the Care Standards Act 2000.
3. The staff and carers receive relevant and updated training to assist them in their work with children/young people, in particular the management of child protection allegations and safe caring.
4. The organisation must at all times employ a suitably qualified and experienced manager who is registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

Date of last inspection 22nd February 2005

Brief Description of the Service:

Swiis Foster Care Ltd. is a national independent provider of foster care services to local authorities. The company currently has offices in Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle and accepts referrals for the placement of children and young people from all areas of the United Kingdom. The service offers a full range of short term, long term or respite placement choice for children and young people.

Qualified and experienced professionals from the multi- disciplinary team who include supervising link social workers, education caseworker's, health advisors and placement support workers manage each placement.

The service is responsible for the recruitment, assessment, approval, training and support of foster carers.

The Manchester Office of Swiis Foster Care is situated in the City centre in an area known as Piccadilly. The fostering service are accommodated on the third floor of the Royal Building with mostly open plan working area.

The fostering service comprise of a Regional Director who manages the service, Operations Manager. Principal Social Worker (1), Senior Social Workers (5), Education Case Workers (4), Education Support Workers (2), Health Advisor/Training Co-ordinator (1), Office Manager (1) and Administrative Assistants (2).

SUMMARY

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

The inspection of Swiis Fostering Service commenced on the 15 March 2006 conducted by two inspectors and took place over three days. The process included meeting with the service manager, social work staff, link workers, education and health workers and administrative staff. A range of files, policies and documents were viewed.

The inspectors also carried out a case tracking process, which is a method in which records of children/young people are chosen at random and all records pertaining to these people were inspected along with the records of the approved foster carers. The inspector also visited the carers and young people within the placement setting.

The manager completed a self-assessment form and a pre-inspection questionnaire, which provided additional information.

A Panel meeting was also observed as part of the inspection process.

Letters and questionnaires were sent to carers, young people aged 8 and over and placing social workers. A high response of questionnaires was received from the young people and the carers and a number of placing social workers also responded.

What the service does well:

The agency has a multi disciplinary team consisting of social workers, support workers, education staff, and a health advisor. The team presented as very supportive of one another and were able to demonstrate a consistent approach to supporting foster carers and the children/young people placed with them.

Carers' comments included " Working for Swiis is very good, the support received from them is second to none. Whenever I have telephoned to speak to someone I am not kept waiting and advice and support is always available". Another commented, " The link worker is always helpful and suggests different ways of supporting the children. It is really good that there is education support which I feel has not only been helpful for the children but also for us as well".

The young people spoken to or who had completed a questionnaire said they were happy and satisfied with their placements and the care they received. Comments included " I feel safe". " I get support and lots of attention and get asked about things that I want to do and what is important to me". " I have loads of people to talk to and being able to meet new people".

One social worker said in their response to the questionnaire, "the support given has been very good and enabled this young person to develop and grow in a supportive environment."

The arrangements for the health care of the children/young people were good. The agency had a health care advisor who liaised with the Primary Health Care Trusts to ensure that the health care of the young people was delivered in accordance with their needs. The health care advisor also supported the children and young people with other aspects of health care including smoking cessation and healthy diets. One young person had assisted the health advisor with a presentation about healthy eating given to foster carers. The young person was able to talk about the changes that a healthy diet had made when first being fostered and how this had affected her both in a positive and a negative way. Carers spoken to about this presentation felt that this had been very helpful and enabled them to see the situation from the young person's point of view.

The agency has four educational workers who support the young people with their educational needs. At the time of the inspection all children/young people were attending school and there were no children who had been permanently excluded from school. The educational workers were based within the main office and were able to give support and advice to link workers.

The agency takes particular care when matching young people and records all matching clearly. Carers spoken to said that they felt that the agency was very thorough with regards the matching process to ensure that the child placed was supported well. Carers said that they received appropriate information with regards the child to enable them to provide the child with the care and support that they required. Workers spoken to were very clear about the importance of the matching process and how the child's needs would be best supported and met.

As part of the Panel procedures, carers are reviewed to ensure that they continue to provide a good quality of care that meets the needs of the children placed with them. The panel also reviews the support that carers receive by the agency with their own learning and developmental needs. A Panel meeting was observed as part of the inspection and found to be clear about their role and responsibility in relation to making safe and appropriate recommendations.

The agency supported carers in managing contact and this was taken into consideration during the matching process. Carers spoken to and those that returned the questionnaires confirmed that they felt "extremely well supported in respect to managing contact".

All staff spoken to were clear about their role and responsibilities within the agency. As the agency is relatively small all staff had knowledge of the carers and the children/young people placed with them. There was an emphasis on working together as a team and all felt very well supported both by the

management and their peers. All staff had the appropriate qualifications to carry out their role.

The administrative arrangements were good and well organised. Files and administrative records were well kept and organised. Social work, educational workers, support staff and the health advisor felt that they were well supported by the administrative staff.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the previous inspection the agency did not receive any requirements. This however has not prevented the agency from moving their service forward. The agency had recruited a health advisor that supported the children/young people with their health care needs. This included liaising with Primary Care Trusts, general health care needs, healthy eating, smoking cessation and linking with the Looked After Children (LAC) health reviews.

The health advisor had also enlisted the help of a young person in foster care to discuss with foster carers healthy eating and what this meant for a young person.

The agency had expanded the support groups and now had two support groups that meet in the north and the south of the city. Further development had included a focus group for carers that looks issues that affect carers.

The birth children of the carers had their own forums to discuss issues and arrange social events. The forums catered for both older and younger children to ensure age appropriate topics. The agency supported these groups.

The manager acknowledged the need for the agency to improve the number of foster carers to for adolescents and was focusing on recruiting for this age group.

What they could do better:

The agency is situated in Manchester City Centre in offices on the third floor of the Royal Building. The office layout is predominately open planned and shared with the recruitment service of SWIIS. There is limited availability of small office areas that could facilitate confidential working, for example, supervision, small meetings etc. In addition to this, there are no facilities in the way of rooms for education, training, and for meeting with foster carers.

During the course of the inspection on two consecutive days the lift was not working and the only other access was via the stairs. This meant that those individuals with restricted mobility have found it difficult accessing the service on these days.

Parking is limited to city centre car parks and meters. Foster carers spoken to said that "it could be difficult getting to the office if they had a need to do so".

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

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

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Being Healthy

The intended outcome for this Standard is:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at the outcome for Standard:

12

The fostering service promoted the health and development of the children and young people.

EVIDENCE:

The health care needs of the children/young people were known and clear documentation regarding to their health needs and immunisations were maintained. Copies of the health care needs of the young people were made available to foster carers. Foster carers also maintained health information relating to the young person placed with them. This information was also made available for children/young peoples' reviews. When the young person moved this information accompanied them to ensure a continuity of their health care needs.

The agency had appointed a health care advisor who was able to negotiated with a number of Primary Care Trusts (currently 18) to ensure that the health care needs of the young people are addressed. All of the young people were registered with local GPs and other medical practitioners.

The health advisor provided training and support to carers who had been approved to care for babies and young children. In addition the health care advisor provided ongoing training and support to children/young people and foster carers about healthy eating, smoking cessation and health promotion.

Carers spoken to by the inspectors were able to give detailed accounts of the health needs of the children placed with them. Those children old enough to make a comment said that they felt well looked after. Some young people in the response questionnaires also said that they felt that they were looked after well and supported to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

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

The Commission considers Standards 3, 6, 8, 9, 15 and 30 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following Standard(s):

3, 6, 8, 9, 15, & 30

The agency is committed to keeping children and young people safe.

EVIDENCE:

The agency had appointed a number of new staff. Personnel files for new staff were found to be satisfactory, containing appropriate information and statutory checks, including Criminal Record Bureau checks (CRB) to ensure their suitability to work with children and young people. The manager had submitted an application to the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) to be registered as manager.

Carers are required to create Safe Caring Policies and undertake training on Child Protection. A number of files viewed demonstrated that the Safe Care Policies had been completed in relation to the home and also the young people placed. This ensured that the care and safety of the young person was paramount. These policies were discussed with the supporting social worker. Foster carers spoken to confirmed that they had undertaken child protection training. Carers training profiles clearly demonstrated this.

The arrangements for the annual review of carers were good and it was reported that all annual reviews had taken place. A number of reviews/reports were inspected and found to contain comprehensive details regarding the

foster carer. The panel meeting held during the inspection looked at a number of foster carers reviews.

The agency ensured that there was a formal system in place for unannounced inspection of foster homes. These were recorded in the foster carers files. The purpose of the unannounced inspection was to promote the continuing health and safeguard of the children placed with the foster carers.

The agency promoted appropriate matching of children with carers. Clear documentation was in place to ensure that children/young people were matched with foster carers who would be able to meet the child's needs including their physical, social, cultural, emotional and psychological needs. The manager said that great emphasis was placed on getting the matching process right to begin with to avoid additional disruption to the young person being placed.

A number of Form F assessments were inspected and found to be of a good standard. Panel members spoken to were clear about the importance of a comprehensive Form F assessment and their role in examining any areas that they felt needed further discussion to ensure that approval of carers had been subject to close examination.

The response of the young people in their questionnaires demonstrated that they felt that they were well cared for and safe. A high proportion of questionnaires were returned to the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)

The manager said that the agency were actively promoting the recruitment of foster carers who could meet the needs of older children as well as reviewing the approval level of existing carers. Those carers who expressed an interest in supporting older children were offered additional support and training to enable them to meet the needs of older children.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

7 & 13

The individual and educational needs of the young people placed were being met.

EVIDENCE:

The manager was able to demonstrate that the needs of the children and young people with diverse religious and cultural needs were being met. This included information on the Form F assessment and the matching process undertaken by the agency.

At the time of the inspection, the agency did not have any children/young people placed who were permanently excluded from school. The agency employed a number of educational workers who supported the children/young people with their educational needs. This included pre school age children through to young people attending college and further education. Carers and young people said that this support and advice contributed significantly to educational outcomes. The educational workers also supported carers attend parent's evenings. Education workers also supported the children/young people attend schools of their choice. One carer spoken to said that the educational workers were "helpful and responsive not only to the needs of the child placed but also supportive to their own children and them".

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

10 & 11

The agency supported and promoted contact arrangements for the children/young people. It also provided good arrangements for consultation with the young people.

EVIDENCE:

The agency was clear about the role and responsibility of promoting contact. Details of contact for individual children/young people were clearly documented.

Carers were supported to ensure that contact arrangements were promoted as detailed for the individual child/young person. Carers spoken to were aware of the importance of contact and confirmed that training and support regarding this was undertaken as part of the preparation training. Carers also said that their link workers were always available to discuss any issues that may occur in relation to difficult or distressing contact to enable them to support the child appropriately.

The agency organised regular support groups and a focus group. The groups met in the North and the South of the City. Some carers who live some distance away find some of the venues for the meetings difficult to attend. This had been discussed with the manager who said that as the office facility was not suitable for training or support meetings external venues had to be found. Wherever possible the venues were alternated to be accessible to the majority of their carers. However, the agency was always looking at ways to improve on this facility.

The agency also held groups for birth children for both younger and older children. This was to ensure that opportunity was given to birth children to discuss their views and also to provide a social event for them.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

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

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 the following standard(s):

29

Foster carers received appropriate allowances.

EVIDENCE:

The Foster Carer agreement clearly stated the allowances relating to the placement, this included transport expenses payable.

Carers spoken to say that payment was received within the agreed timescale and that they were satisfied with their allowance and the arrangements for payment and equipment.

Management

The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

17, 21 & 24

The agency is effectively managed and staffed with competent team of staff.

EVIDENCE:

The agency is staffed with competent, loyal, committed and experienced workers who were clear about their role and responsibilities in relation to the

needs of the carers and the young people. The number of staff in terms of experience and qualifications is in accordance with the fostering services Statement of Purpose and meets the needs of the agency.

Staff receive regular support, supervision and appraisals that clearly identify any training needs. Staff are able to apply and to attend external training courses to complement their training already undertaken.

Form F assessments contain good levels of information regarding potential foster carers qualities and knowledge regarding caring for children and how this is put into practice.

Foster carers felt that they had been supported well throughout the assessment process and were able to demonstrate a good understanding of why the assessment process was as detailed as it is.

The agency continues to support carers once approved with ongoing training and development, supervision and support. Carers spoken to said that they were always able to get in touch with someone for support and or advice. The agency has an out of hours service that foster carers had full details of.

Foster carers reviews were clearly detailed and reports prepared and presented to Panel. A Panel meeting was observed as part of the inspection process and a number of foster carer annual reviews were presented at Panel. The format of the annual review was detailed and panel members were able to ask the supervising social worker appropriate questions in relation to the review.

The agency maintained clear records and documentation. The foster carers and children's' files were organised and well kept. The files viewed contained all the required documentation and details of casework decisions and why these decisions were made. There was also clear evidence of good communication between the placing authorities social worker and the agency's supervising social worker to ensure that the aims and objectives of the placing authority and the agency were working in partnership to meet the needs of the child/young person.

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	3
9	3
15	3
30	3

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

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
10	3
11	4

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	4
18	X
19	X
20	X
21	3
22	X
23	X
24	3
25	X
26	X
27	X
28	X
32	X

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	FS26	It is strongly recommended that the agency find alternative premises that offer more appropriate accommodation and facilities plus better access.

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