



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

**Fostering Team - Barnsley Metropolitan
Borough Council**

**Wellington House
36 Wellington Street
Barnsley
S70 1WA**

Lead Inspector
Russell Shackford

Announced Inspection
5th December 2005 9:30

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	Fostering Team - Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Address	Wellington House 36 Wellington Street Barnsley S70 1WA
Telephone number	01226 775 877
Fax number	01226 775 864
Email address	
Provider Web address	
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Fostering & Adoption Team (BMBC)
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Mr Paul Dempsey
Type of registration	Local Auth Fostering Service
No. of places registered (if applicable)	0
Category(ies) of registration, with number of places	

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 31st January 2005

Brief Description of the Service:

The statement of purpose describes the fostering service as part of a range of services for children and young people who are "Looked After".

The stated aims being to provide a safe, stable and secure family environment, to meet the assessed needs of the child and family within the foster placement and to provide quality fostering support, staff and services.

SUMMARY

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

Prior to the inspection a number of questionnaires were sent out to placing officers, foster carers and foster children, giving them the opportunity to tell us about their own views of the service.

The inspection was conducted by two inspectors and took place over two days. One day was spent visiting foster children and their carers at home. The other day was spent at the office base, where a number of records were checked including children's, carers and staff files. Interviews also took place with a number of supervising support workers and the service manager.

The response to questionnaires, visits and interviews was pleasing and in all the total number of views assembled was: -

Children and Young People 6

Foster Carers 11

Fostering Services Staff 5

What the service does well:

The health and development of the children and young people was very well promoted by the fostering service.

A written health care record was maintained in a format that could be understood, accessed and 'moved' with the child/young person.

Suitable foster carers were being recruited by the fostering service.

Matching children and young people with an appropriate family was considered and facilitated where possible.

Appropriate training and information was available to carers.

Children and young people are provided with foster care services, which value diversity and promote equality. Appropriate training was available.

Children and young people's education was a high priority and it was actively promoted.

The service is meeting the particular needs of children receiving short-term breaks.

Children and young people are supported to maintain family contact.

The fostering service ensures that the opinions and views of children and young people are ascertained.

Foster carers provide support to young people preparing to move to independence. The leaving care service works with foster carers to help develop skills, competence and knowledge necessary for adult living.

Carers receive clear information about the allowances and expenses payable. All monies were said to be paid promptly.

The Statement of Purpose clearly sets out what services are provided for children who are placed by the fostering service. The people involved in carrying on and managing the fostering service have the necessary skills to deliver good quality childcare.

Foster carers reviews take place at the required minimum intervals. The service offers a range of good quality training. Foster carers were well supported. Case records kept for young people were up to date and well maintained.

What has improved since the last inspection?

20 new general carers were approved between December 2004 and November 2005.

14 family and friend carers were approved between December 2004 and November 2005.

In the same period just 3 general carers were deregistered/terminated giving a net gain of 17 general carers.

The service has acquired larger team accommodation.

There has been an Increase in foster allowance rate for foster carers up to the Fostering Network recommended rate.

The service has approved 5 newly recruited specialist carers to the service's enhanced fee 'Care Plus' Scheme as well as promoted 3 existing carers to the Care Plus Scheme. Care Plus encompasses specialist carers who undertake emergency care, or care for children with complex needs or significant disabilities.

The Fostering team have taken responsibility for all family and friend foster career assessments, previously undertaken by different teams which enables a more committed and specialist approach to these assessments.

Current/Ongoing Service Developments – December 2005

The Project Team are developing placement/permanence strategy.

Team to establish assistant team manager post to enhance capacity to manage expanding team and service.

Up to 60 hours admin/business support posts additional to current establishment to be established to enhance business support capacity for expanding team and service.

All Social Workers in team to undertake 4-day training course on attachment theory for family placement workers including adult attachment interviews.

Foster carer attending Men in Foster Care Event in December with a view to aiding the service to establish Men's Support Group, possibly with neighbouring authority.

What they could do better:

All staff recruitment files need to contain the required information.

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

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

12

The health and development of the children and young people was very well promoted by the fostering service.

A written health care record was maintained in a format that could be understood, accessed and 'moved' with the child/young person.

EVIDENCE:

Carers spoken to said that the fostering service provided them with as much health information as possible at the start of the placement. The importance of obtaining health information was seen as a priority in ensuring that the foster carers were able to meet the child's physical, emotional and social needs and development.

All children and young people spoken to said that their foster carer supported them to attend appointments with such people as the dentist and optician. Children and young people said their foster carers were constantly offering them advice about 'eating healthy foods', 'brushing teeth', 'exercise' and personal hygiene'.

Foster carer training was available which ensured that carers were giving accurate advice and guidance to their foster children.

Two young people spoken to said that they had a written health record, which detailed any health issues and any medical appointments, they had attended.

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

3, 6, 8, 9 and 15

Required documentation was not retained on all staff recruitment files. Suitable foster carers were being recruited by the fostering service. Matching children and young people with an appropriate family was considered and facilitated where possible. Appropriate training and information was available.

EVIDENCE:

The manager's personnel file was checked. It did not contain all of the required information, which assists in ensuring the safety and welfare of all those using and working within the service. The files of two supervising support workers were also checked. Not all required information had been sought and placed on the files. Examples of omissions included Criminal records Bureau check details, identification, and application form details.

Information received from the children and young people interviewed and consulted with confirmed that the service recruited carers who provided a safe, healthy and nurturing environment.

Comments from young people included 'my carer talks to me about not talking to strangers', 'I'm encouraged to eat healthy food, get plenty of exercise and keep regular bedtimes'. All children and young people consulted said they felt safe at their placement.

Staff spoken to confirmed that assessments were carefully considered when matching a child with a family and the child's assessed needs in relation to language, religion, race, culture, ethnic origin and any other special individual needs were identified. Foster placement agreements seen by the inspectors confirmed that specific aspects of matching had been taken into consideration when children had been placed.

The service had a policy on safe caring, bullying and risk assessment, which was included in the foster carers policy and guidance file. The service had become involved with other local authorities to agree and work together with a new protocol regarding 'Running away from Care and Home', its aim being to safeguard children.

The carer's handbook covered the issues of difficult/ challenging behaviour and corporal punishment.

Carers spoken to had received training on the records they were required to maintain of any significant events.

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

7, 13 and 31

Children and young people are provided with foster care services, which value diversity and promote equality. Appropriate training was available. Children and young people's education was a high priority and it was actively promoted. The service is meeting the particular needs of children receiving short-term breaks.

EVIDENCE:

The service promoted equality and diversity by the monitoring of matching children to carers, planned carer recruitment strategies and by offering ongoing training to staff and carers. Carers spoken to were able to recognise and address young people's diverse needs. A number of carers spoken to had attended the training offered, which was designed to enhance their skills in assisting young people to deal with issues of discrimination, sexuality, disability and feeling of self-worth. All of the young people consulted were attending some form of educational provision. They confirmed that carers offered support with homework and other matters as required. Carers consulted said that the service provided the necessary funds and resources for children and young people's education. Children's questionnaires confirmed that young people were given practical and financial assistance to pursue activities and hobbies. Carers who regularly offered short-term care to children and young people said that they were well supported by their supervising social workers and were

visited more often than at the agreed interval of once a month. Where appropriate, they had communicated with the children's parents to ensure continuity with routines.

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

10 and 11

Children and young people are supported to maintain family contact. The fostering service ensures that the opinions and views of children and young people are ascertained.

EVIDENCE:

The fostering service had written guidance for staff in their regarding promoting contact with the child's family, relatives and friends. Information from children's questionnaires and carer interviews confirmed that both were aware of contact arrangements. Any changes to this were discussed and agreed with the carers and young people. Any resources identified as being necessary to support contact between a child and their family were provided. Details of contact visits were fully recorded on the young peoples files seen.

Six young peoples questionnaires were received. All of these stated that the fostering service had asked them their opinions about how the fostering service could be made better and asked them their opinion of their foster carers. They also stated they were aware of how to raise any concerns or complaints.

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

14 and 29

Foster carers provide support to young people preparing to move to independence. The leaving care service works with foster carers to help develop skills, competence and knowledge necessary for adult living. Carers receive clear information about the allowances and expenses payable. All monies were paid promptly.

EVIDENCE:

Carers said that they had received 'Preparation for Independence' guidance from the fostering service. Two young people surveyed said that their carers helped them to develop skills such as managing money, cooking, clothing care and other issues relating to independent living. The service has a separate Leaving Care Team, known as Backup. The service had written policies, which detailed the fostering allowances currently payable to all carers. Foster carers allowances paid were clearly documented and all carers interviewed said that they were clear about their allowances and any agreed expenses. Carers spoken to said that the payments were made promptly.

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

17, 21 and 24

The Statement of Purpose clearly sets out what services are provided for children who are placed by the fostering service.

The people involved in carrying on and managing the fostering service have the necessary skills to deliver good quality childcare.

Foster carers reviews take place at the required minimum intervals.

The service offers a range of good quality training.

Foster carers were well supported.
Case records kept for young people were up to date and well maintained.

EVIDENCE:

Staff spoken to were aware of the Statement of Purpose's existence and content.

The Fostering Service manager had the appropriate skills and knowledge to effectively run the service.

Carer reviews had taken place annually. The inspectors spoke to four supervising support workers and four foster carers, the inspectors found staff to be professional and carers demonstrated the skills and awareness necessary to carry out their role.

All supervising support workers and carers spoken to said that there was a good range and quality of training courses available. Established carers said that their supervising social workers had spoken to them about the importance attending courses.

Four supervising social workers were spoken to. All said they had good support from their line manager.

All foster carers consulted said that there was a good system of communication between themselves and the fostering service.

A copy the foster carer agreement was seen on carer's files. These contained all of the required information as referred to in Schedule 5 of The Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

Young peoples case records seen were up to date and informative.

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	2
30	X

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
7	4
13	4
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	3
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	4
22	X
23	X
24	4
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
1	FS15	20	All staff recruitment files must contain the required information.	01/04/06

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

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