



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

### **Bath & North East Somerset Fostering Services**

**Social and Housing Services  
PO Box 3343  
Bath  
Bath & N E Somerset  
BA1 2ZH**

*Lead Inspector*  
Sam Chisholm

*Announced Inspection*  
21st November 2005      09:30

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

<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>	Bath & North East Somerset Fostering Services
<b>Address</b>	Social and Housing Services PO Box 3343 Bath Bath & N E Somerset BA1 2ZH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01225 395332
<b>Fax number</b>	01225 396951
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	Bath & North East Somerset Council
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Ms Sara Worth
<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 June 2004

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

The Bath and North East Somerset Family Placement Team provides Fostering, Family Link and Adoption placements with approved carers for local children in need of these services. The fostering service includes placements with kinship carers and therapeutic carers, as well as mainstream short and long term care. The Family Link service provides short breaks with foster carers for children with disabilities.

# **SUMMARY**

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

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

The service provides a very good level of training for foster carers, including NVQ programmes. Fostered children benefit from a good level of education promotion from both their carers and the education co-ordinator. They also benefit from a very supportive psychology service.

The fostering panel provides a robust system for approving, reviewing and de-registering carers. The Family Link service is well managed, with carers feeling well supported and trained for their role.

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

The service now has a system for providing specialist out of hours support for carers. Allowances have been reviewed and carers provided with comprehensive information about what they are able to claim for.

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

The service could provide more information to carers about bullying, and set up a system to monitor incidents of bullying.

The service needs to ensure that all relevant LAC paperwork is given to carers and kept on file. They also need to ensure that carers know which LAC forms they should get and when.

The manager needs to ensure that all new social work staff receive training in behaviour management methods used by the service.

The team need a suitable space for confidential discussions.

It is recommended that the manager be provided with her own office for confidential work and discussions.

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**

The promotion of health and development of children and young people are supported through access to a specialist range of health care services.

### **EVIDENCE:**

A medical advisor attends the panel meetings and reviews. The carers have been proactive about meeting the health needs of the children in their care.

All children are offered a medical examination by the medical advisor. Copies of these were seen on files. Some older young people choose not to attend. The service has been extended in providing a drop-in service to these young people. The venues of these are arranged by the young person and a children's nurse. These can be arranged by telephone calls on a mobile for text messages at short notice. Young people are provided with a gender specific information about local health services. A children's nurse is available to meet young people in the Family Planning Clinic. Routine medical examinations take place during school hours on a set day each month. Carers are encouraged to maintain registration with the child's own GP enabling consistency and continuity of health care.

Carers looking after children with specific health needs were positive about the support they received from the community health care teams in relation to advice, training and provision of equipment.

One carer raised their concern in documenting medication to their child/young person. A number of examples were given. Their concern was the recording of these. They were not aware of a proforma. It is recommended that there is a joint discussion and drawing up of a proforma.

Children that take the drug Ritalin for the condition of A.D.H.D. (attention deficit disorder) continue to be monitored monthly for first 3 months then 3 monthly thereafter.

The 'locate' project continues to offer support from a consultant psychologist and psychotherapist from the CAMHS team. This looks at the psychological, emotional and behaviour needs of looked after children. They provide advice and training group session for carers, and will undertake individual assessments to support carers and prevent breakdown of placements.

A carer stated, "This support has been the reason our placement has remained with us. It provided support to us as carers and our young person." Other carers who had received help from Locate were also very positive about the service.

# 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**

The team has appropriate procedures in place for ensuring that all persons carrying on or managing the service are suitable.

The fostering service provides foster carers who provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment.

The service matches children to carers appropriately.

The fostering service generally has appropriate systems in place to protect children from abuse and neglect. However it needs to improve its anti-bullying information and recording and ensure that all carers receive full information about the child placed with them.

The team has appropriate recruitment and selection procedures for appointing suitable staff. Non-social work qualified staff are supervised appropriately.

The fostering panel is organised efficiently and effectively. Appropriate decisions are made about the approval, review and de-registration of carers.

## **EVIDENCE:**

CRBs are renewed every 3 years. The admin assistant has a system for automatically being reminded which CRBs need renewing. Evidence of this was seen on her database and showed that they had been appropriately renewed.

Files were seen for the two most recently recruited staff. These showed that records had been kept of their CRB checks and written references. Evidence of telephone follow-up for references was also seen.

A wide range of training courses that include health and safety issues were seen in the Training Plan. Carers also receive guidance on health and safety from family placement team staff. Both staff and carers confirmed this. In instances where foster children share bedrooms, a full assessment of risks and relevant issues is carried out in consultation with the children's social workers.

The homes of foster carers visited were seen to be suitably furnished, decorated, clean and safe. The homes had sufficient space to meet the needs of the children placed there.

The team manager and staff confirmed that placements are planned and include a period of introduction where possible. Social workers complete a Placement Request Form which is then used by the Family Placement Team to match the child to an appropriate foster carer. A copy of this form was seen to be comprehensive in its coverage of the information necessary to make a suitable match. Some staff commented that matching could be improved if there were more carers to choose from.

The training plan showed that carers have access to a comprehensive range of child protection courses. The training officer keeps a database record of all training undertaken by carers. This showed that carers had attended a wide range of courses in child protection. Child protection is included in the 'Choosing to Foster' course that all carers attend, and is one of the core training elements of ongoing training that all carers are expected to complete within two years.

All carers now have their own safe care policies that have been written in consultation with staff. Copies of these were seen to be satisfactory.

All carers sign Foster Carers Agreement, which includes an agreement not to use corporal punishment.

The team manager maintains records of allegations and incidents, including complaints about carers, to enable ongoing monitoring. This was seen to be satisfactory.

At present the Foster Carers Handbook contains a small amount of information about bullying, which could be expanded. Also no system is in place to record and address instances of bullying. A system for this needs to be created.

Seven children's files were seen. Four files contained all of the relevant Looked After Children (LAC) paperwork, but three did not. The service needs to ensure that all foster carers received the relevant LAC paperwork for the children placed with them. It is also recommended that the service ensures that carers know which LAC forms they should receive and when they should receive them, as some carers expressed confusion about this.

The files for the two most recently recruited members of staff were seen. These showed that appropriate recruitment and selection processes had been followed, including checks and references. Copies of qualifications were also seen.

The team currently only has one non-social work qualified member of staff, who is supervised by the team manager.

The panel was seen to have appropriate membership, which included representatives from health and education. The panel's clear policies and procedures were reflected in the efficient, effective way that it was seen to carry out its quality assurance function in relation to approvals, reviews and de-registration. Panel members are subject to appropriate checks, copies of which were seen.

# 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**

The fostering service values diversity and continues to seek to recruit a diverse range of carers.

The fostering service promotes educational achievement through a number of effective initiatives and monitoring systems.

The fostering service has a well-run short breaks service that works in partnership with parents appropriately.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The team have continued to experience difficulties in recruiting carers to meet the needs of all children requiring placements, including in relation to ethnicity. They are continuing to address this shortfall.

Detailed education guidance was seen in the Carer's Handbook and many carers were able to give examples of the ways in which they had promoted the education of the children in their care. They felt they had been greatly assisted in their task by the service's Education Co-ordinator. The children also feedback that they felt well supported with their school work and educational issues. Many had received catch up tuition to help them keep up with school work and had found this useful.

The service has a comprehensive Education Policy, which was seen to contain a Strategy for Improving Educational Attainment and Procedural Guidance for Exclusions.

The education Co-ordinator collects data relating to attainment and exclusions. This was seen to be appropriate. Children excluded from school received 25 hours of education from the Pupil Referral Unit.

Training is provided for carers in promoting educational achievement and some Looked After young people recently gave a presentation to elected members of the council on the Education Policy.

Foster carers for the Short Breaks Family Link service were positive about the support they received from their social worker through telephone calls and visits. They also felt that there were plenty of training opportunities available to them from healthcare professionals and Specialist support. Records in relation to this service were seen to be satisfactory.

## **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**

The fostering service promotes contact and encourages children and young people to communicate their views on this.

The fostering service promotes consultation with children and young people.

### **EVIDENCE:**

The Carer's Handbook was seen to contain appropriate guidance on promoting contact. Carer's weekly recordings contain details of contact and the children's views and feelings about this. Training for managing contact is provided for carers as part of their induction and was also seen on the planned training programmes for 2006. Foster carers and children were generally satisfied with contact arrangements. Two young people expressed dissatisfaction with lack of contact and these issues were fed back during the inspection.

Evidence was seen that children are able to communicate their views prior to their own statutory reviews and the annual reviews of their carers. An advocacy service is available to help them with this. Carers were able to give examples of the ways in which they had advocated for the children in their care. Most children fed back that they knew how to complain about the service if they wanted to.



# **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**

The fostering service pays carers on appropriate allowance and expenses. Carers are fully informed of their entitlements.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Carer's allowances have now been reviewed and details of these were seen to be appropriate. Carers now have full information about allowances and what they can claim for and reported that they are happy with the new system.

# 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**

The manager needs to ensure that new members of staff receive training in behaviour management methods used by carers and appropriate ways to support them.

The room currently being used for confidential discussions is not suitable for this purpose. The team manager and team need a suitable space for

confidential discussions. It is recommended that the manager has her own office for confidential work and discussions.

The fostering service has clear strategies for working with and supporting carers.

Case records for the children and young people were generally satisfactory but the manager needs to ensure that all appropriate LAC paperwork is completed for each child that is placed with the service's carers.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The admin assistant places the initial advert for foster carers in local papers, telephone directories, buses and other suitable outlets. Copies of these were seen on file. A database was also seen that showed a wide range of appropriate outlets had been used to recruit a diverse range of carers.

The team has had a change of social workers responsible for recruiting foster carers, which has resulted in a vacancy in this post for several months. The recently appointed worker to this post described a suitable proposed strategy for recruiting a range of carers.

Copies of completed For F assessments of carers were seen to be comprehensive and suitably detailed. Carers confirmed that they felt the assessment process was thorough.

The team has had several vacancies during the past year and currently has one post to fill. The team manager commented that recruitment of staff has been difficult and has resulted in herself and the assistant team manager supporting some carers themselves. Some carers commented that they felt new members of staff allocated to support them had not treated them appropriately and did not have sufficient knowledge to support them properly in relation to behaviour management methods. It is recommended that the Team Manager ensures that new staff receive training in the behaviour management methods used by carers and that they receive guidance on working relationships with carers as part of their supervision.

The team's working area has been re-designed since the last inspection. This has resulted in the Team Manager losing her office and being located at a desk next to her team members. Both staff, the manager and assistant manager expressed dissatisfaction with this. The team now only has one small room where confidential discussions can take place. This room is adjacent to another similar room belonging to another team. The rooms are not sound proof and conversations could clearly be heard through the walls during the inspection. These arrangements do not therefore currently provide suitable

facilities for the manager and the team to have confidential discussions. This issue needs to be addressed.

Arrangements for the support of foster carers are detailed in their handbooks. The team now operates an out of hours telephone support line during evenings and weekends for carers.

Carer's reviews were seen on their files and during observation of the panel.

Both family placement and children's social workers confirmed that they have clear communication and understanding of each other's roles. This has been further improved now that the teams are located together.

Children's case records were generally seen to be satisfactory apart from the need to ensure that all LAC paperwork is completed. The training programme for carers was seen to include Life History work and carers gave examples of support they had given to children in relation to this.

# 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>	2
<b>15</b>	3
<b>30</b>	3

<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>	3
<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>	3
<b>22</b>	X
<b>23</b>	X
<b>24</b>	2
<b>25</b>	X
<b>26</b>	2
<b>27</b>	X
<b>28</b>	X
<b>32</b>	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	9	17	Ensure that carers receive all relevant LAC paperwork.	14/12/05
2	26	23	Provide the team manager and team with suitable space for confidential discussions.	31/08/06

### **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
1	19	Provide carers with more information about bullying and record and monitor bullying incidents.
2	9	Ensure carers know which LAC forms they should get and when.
3	17	Provide new social work staff with training in behaviour management methods and working with carers.
4	12	Draw up proforma for recording medication administration.
5	26	Provide the team manager with her own office for confidential work & discussions.

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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