



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

Blue Sky Fostering

**Unit 3, Pullman Business Park
Pullman Way
Castleman Crossing
Ringwood
Hampshire
BH24 1HD**

Lead Inspector
Bridgette Lowe

Announced Inspection
14th February 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	Blue Sky Fostering
Address	Unit 3, Pullman Business Park Pullman Way Castleman Crossing Ringwood Hampshire BH24 1HD
Telephone number	0845 6076697
Fax number	
Email address	
Provider Web address	www.blueskyfostering.co.uk
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Blue Sky Fostering Limited
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Ms Grace Mary Wyatt
Type of registration	Fostering Agencies
Category(ies) of registration, with number of places	

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection N/a

Brief Description of the Service:

Blue Sky Fostering is a new Independent Fostering Agency registered with the Commission for Social Care on the 5th August 2005. The service currently has thirteen approved carers and 10 young people placed, one of which is a mother and baby placement. The service aims to assess carers for young people being placed on a permanent basis.

SUMMARY

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

The inspection took place with one inspector over two days, with one day spent visiting two foster carers and young people placed with them, and the other day spent in the agencies office looking at records, files policies and procedures and talking to staff. The inspector met with the manager and the responsible individual. Questionnaires were sent out to carers, young people and placing officers, with nine four and two responses being received respectively. This is the first announced inspection that the service has received from the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

What the service does well:

The service is very good at supporting its carers and young people and this was reflected within questionnaires received from carers' young people and placing officers. The service ensures that matching considerations are effective to ensure young people are appropriately placed. The service promotes the health of its young people generally well. The service ensures that its carers receive training on a regular basis. The service offers a good quality service to young people placed with them. Placing authorities feedback to the Commission were 'young people are provided with plenty of emotional warmth, consistent boundaries and have thrived in the care received'. 'High standard of care and foster carers adept at working with maternal family and facilitate contact well'. 'Carers work well with social service department and make positive contributions to Looked After Children reviews.' Carer comments were overwhelmingly supportive of the service with comments 'very open service and very satisfied with support', 'support and back up provided is excellent', 'child centred service', 'I feel free to voice opinions about the service'. Young people reported through questionnaires that foster carers help them to eat healthy foods and stay healthy. Carers help them with their homework and they are able to keep fit and enjoy activities such as football, swimming and cubs. Comments made were 'I have more fun now', 'I am asked about where I want to live and how I feel', 'I am looked after properly and I feel safe'. The service and its carers have made positive steps to ensure that young peoples cultural and diverse needs are met. The training programme provided to foster carers is very good covering all areas to ensure that young peoples needs are fully met.

What has improved since the last inspection?

This was the first inspection that has taken place since the agency was registered with the Commission in August 2005.

What they could do better:

The agency needs to ensure they gain consent for both prescribed and non-prescribed medication to be administered by foster carers prior to young people being placed. The manager produced a new form for placing authorities to give authorisation at the time of inspection and was being faxed to every placing authority at the time of inspection. The agency needs to ensure that regular consultation takes place with young people and is documented. The agency were in the process of developing ways to engage young people in consultation. The agency needs to ensure that the register of children details includes the address that the young person previously lived at. Comments from carers through questionnaires and meetings were 'I would welcome a resource worker to take young people if they have been excluded from school', 'at present there is no education liaison officer'. The inspector was informed that an education liaison officer had been appointed and was due to start work in April 2006.

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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Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

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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 service is proactive in promoting health and development of young people, although there is a need to gain the appropriate consent before young people are placed and treatments are given.

EVIDENCE:

Three young peoples files were looked at, two had the appropriate medical consent and one was lacking this. The service must ensure they gain consent for any treatment, emergency, prescribed or non-prescribed from placing authorities prior to young people being placed with the carers. The manager produced a form at the time of inspection to gain the appropriate consent from placing authorities. The inspector will check all consents have been gained on the next inspection, as at the time of inspection there was no evidence to confirm Local Authorities had responded to the services request. Medical information relating to young people was clearly evidenced on file. One carer is a highly qualified nurse and the manager spoke of developing the service so that carers with such qualifications may be able to foster and care for young people with sever disabilities or children currently in hospitals. The service produces monthly reports relating to young people for the placing authorities that include any health issues. The inspector was able to evidence that young people were receiving statutory Looked After Children health assessments. Young people confirmed throughout questionnaires that carers help them to eat healthy and keep fit.

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

The service is well managed with good safeguards in place to appropriately provide suitable foster carers and offer a service that matches the needs of young people with the skills of the carers.

Staff were aware of child protection procedures and promoting the safety and welfare of young people.

EVIDENCE:

The inspector looked at the three personnel files including the current managers, a senior supervising social worker and the new managers. All were evidenced as having been appropriately vetted for the protection of young people. The current manager is well qualified in management and social work and has extensive experience of fostering and has previously managed an independent fostering service. The service is in the process of registering a new manager with the commission and the current manager will remain with the service.

Two foster carers and young people were visited in their homes by the inspector and they were well aware of their responsibility to promote and safeguard young people. Carers and young peoples files were also looked at. Placing officer questionnaires received were positive about the good level of

care and support that carers offered young people. The carers' register was viewed and held all the appropriate information. Foster carers and young people spoke of the positive matching considerations undertaken by the service. The service has implemented a CD ROM so young people can view prospective carers. Qualified social workers undertake rigorous assessments on foster carers, including health and safety checks, four personal references, two of which are also visited, employment reference and a check on previous partners. The service also undertakes enhanced CRB checks on all household members aged 16 and over and all regular visitors aged 17 and over. Probation checks, NSPCC checks and Local authority checks are also sought. Initial enquiry forms look at whether carers have worked with young people before, have appropriate space to accommodate them and whether they have any health or emotional issues. Pre placement information seen on young peoples files looks at matching considerations and placement including looking at ethnic origin, religion and nationality, culture, language, education, health, disability and other areas of concern. Risk assessments are also undertaken as part of the matching process. The service has an extensive pro forma which is used to ensure appropriate matching takes place and identifies specific qualities of carers to meet the needs of young people.

The safety and protection of children and young people is outlined in the foster carers agreement and covered in the carers' handbook. The service provides an extensive range of training for carers to ensure young people are protected and safeguarded. One carer spoke of requesting a specific more intensive external Child Protection training course, which the service funded. Competencies for fostering were seen on carers' files that outlined how carers provide a safe and caring environment. Safe caring plans were seen on carers files which are undertaken with qualified social workers and look at issues around privacy, confidentiality and protecting and safeguarding. The service has sent out child protection awareness programmes to carers that are assessed by the NSPCC. Young people reported feeling safe in questionnaires. The service has its own policy and procedural guidelines for staffing the event of a young person going missing and guidance specifically for carers in this event. The significant events or incidents are recorded and monitored by the manager. There were no Child Protection concerns at the time of inspection.

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):

7,13,31

The agency ensures that children and young people are provided with foster care services that value diversity and promote equality.

Young peoples education is supported and promoted.

Carers do not provide short-term breaks and approval is mainly for permanence.

EVIDENCE:

The manager spoke of being aware of the need to promote diversity and gave a recent case study where work had been undertaken to match a young persons social and cultural needs with that of a foster carer. The files sampled showed a wealth of evidence that during assessments valuing diversity was crucial, and that the services supervising social workers continue to promote this in supervision with foster carers. Matching considerations look at all areas of cultural and religious needs and training is undertaken with carers in relation to valuing diversity. The service has an information sheet that is discussed With carers and young people and is mapped to Every Child Matters and the five key outcomes for young people too ensure their needs are met. These were seen on young peoples files.

Two carers reported through questionnaires that they would welcome an education liaison officer to support carers and young people. The manager informed the inspector that an experienced teacher is due to start in this role for the service in April 2006. Personal Education Plans were in place and on file

for young people and carers and young people confirmed that they had been part of the meeting to prepare the plan. There was evidence in contact sheets that young peoples education was discussed and carers confirmed taking an active role in young peoples education. The service sent out an educational booklet from the Department of Education and Skills to carers informing them and guiding them how to support the education of Looked After Children in care.

The manager spoke of encouraging local authorities to actively promote permanency for young people and they aim to assess carers for approval for permanence. Carers are entitled to a certain amount of respite per year and this is managed within the services own carers and framework. One carer has been specifically assessed for respite care.

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 service ensures that all young people are encouraged to maintain positive contacts with family members.

Children were not being routinely consulted, although the agency had plans to ensure that their opinions were being sought in relation to their daily life and future.

EVIDENCE:

Carers, young people and placing officers reported positive links with family members and specifically the good work undertaken by carers to help young people maintain family contact. Training is provided to carers 'promoting positive contact with birth parents'. Contact details were clearly documented on young peoples files and Looked After Children documentation detailed contact arrangements.

The manager and responsible individual spoke of the service developing ways to engage and consult children and young people. Welcome letters are sent to all young people and young people have a children's guide with complaints information, useful contact details and photographs of staff. Young people have been placed with carers since November 2005 and the service plans to organise family days for carers birth children and foster children as a way of involving young people have a view about being in foster care and to enjoy themselves. The manager spoke of developing a newsletter for both carers and young people. The service needs to ensure that supervising social workers regularly ascertain the views of children and young people and document any consultation. One young person spoke of not being regularly consulted by

either the local authority social worker or the services social worker, but confirmed that the carer asked her views on a regular basis. The service has confirmed that young people are visited on a regular basis to gain their views.

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):

This standard was not assessed on this occasion. During the inspection there were no reasons for cause for concern.

EVIDENCE:

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 service has a competent qualified staff team who can meet the needs of both foster carers and young people. Case records are comprehensive, well maintained and stored securely.

EVIDENCE:

The inspector met with staff and the manager confirmed that staff experience in fostering services and qualifications were a strength of the service provided. The service uses independent qualified social workers to undertake the form F assessment of foster carers. The service has two senior supervising social workers who are both qualified. The service manager and registered manager were both interviewed on inspection, as well as personnel files viewed. There was clear evidence that all staff are suitably competent and qualified to meet the needs of both carers and young people. All social workers are registered with the General Social Care Council.

The training and support provided to carers is excellent. The training is detailed in the STAYING SAFE part of this report. Carers confirmed that the training and support was very good and their needs were met on an individual basis to ensure that they gained the specific skills needed to meet the individual need of the children placed with them. Carers receive visits once a month from supervising social workers and detailed contact sheets were seen evidencing regular telephone contact with carers. Discussion items in supervision with carers were mapped against the Every Child Matters five key outcomes for young people. The foster care agreement states that support and access to a member of staff from the service will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. Regular coffee mornings are held, and some carers reported that they would welcome having some meetings within the Ringwood office and not always in each other's homes. Carers are able to access an independent learning NVQ level 3 training course in health and social care as well as a certificate in foster care NVQ level 3 course.

The inspector sampled two foster carers files and three children's files. All were comprehensive well ordered with all the relevant information apart from medical consent as previously mentioned in this report on one young persons file. All files were stored securely and confidentially. The service holds a children's register this did not have information relating to the young persons previous address prior to being placed with the services carers.

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	2

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

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

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
10	3
11	2

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

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

N/A

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	FS11	35	The service ensures that supervising social workers consult children and young people on all matters affecting them, and record any contact.	14/04/06
2	FS12	34(3) schedule 6(3)	The agency must ensure they gain consent for any medical or dental treatment and administration of both prescribed and non-prescribed medication prior to young people being placed and for all young people currently placed without such consent.	14/04/06
3	FS24	22 Schedule 2	The children's register contains the address where the young person lived prior to placement.	14/04/06

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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