



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

### **Fostering Services (RBKC)**

**Social Services Department  
Westway, 140 Ladbroke Grove  
North Kensington  
London  
W10 5ND**

*Lead Inspector*  
**Peter Montgomery**

*Announced Inspection*  
**26th September 2005      10:30**

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

Reader Information	
Document Purpose	Inspection Report
Author	CSCI
Audience	General Public
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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>	Fostering Services (RBKC)
<b>Address</b>	Social Services Department Westway, 140 Ladbroke Grove North Kensington London W10 5ND
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7598 4506
<b>Fax number</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Mr Martin Fry
<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** 14<sup>th</sup>. February 2005

## Brief Description of the Service:

The fostering team office is located in the social services area offices in Ladbroke Grove. At the time of the inspection there were 97 foster carers supported by the service, providing placements for over one hundred children and young people. There have been no changes in the team structure since the last inspection, the team comprises of the Team Manager, a Senior Practitioner (shared post), 12 Social Workers, 1 Recruitment Officer, 1 Placements officer, and 2 Business Support staff. The building is shared with a number of other teams from Kensington and Chelsea social services. Disabled access is available throughout the building.

# SUMMARY

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

The inspection took place over five days from 26<sup>th</sup>. September 2005. The Inspector spent time meeting with foster carers and young people. Time was also spent speaking with staff in the Fostering Service and reviewing records. The Inspector also attended the Fostering Panel on 19<sup>th</sup>. September 2005 and interviewed the Panel Chair. Seventeen foster carers and three young persons returned confidential questionnaires. No Requirements were made at this, or the previous inspection.

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

The service provides an excellent range of support, plus a wide range of training opportunities to carers, and staff in fostering services. These include personal training plans, support groups, and looked after children reviews. (LAC). Comments from the service users made it clear they were satisfied with the quality of training, and in particular the levels of support available. This is most evident in the role of the recruiting and supervising social workers. Carers commented on their confidence in the departments staff, and their response to any concerns they may have. Staff were experienced, knowledgeable and positive in their opinions of the service, and the provision of training available. Records also demonstrated staff supervision and support networks are good, and individuals maintain good standards of practice.

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

Foster carers out of hours support group meetings have been well received, and a greater range of training opportunities for carers and staff facilitated.

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

The role of the quality assurance monitoring officer is currently split to include LAC reviews. Given that these reviews are a core requirement, it could be argued why this may be a practical use of resources. However to ensure improvements in service delivery are maintained, the inspector Recommends the role of quality assurance officer should be focused solely on service assessment and development, rather than reviews.

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**

12

The provision for the young peoples care, welfare, health and safety is good.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Looked After Children procedures ensure the health and care needs of young people are appropriately assessed and monitored. Foster carers are required to ensure identified needs are met, and all young people are registered with a GP. The fostering manager, supervising social workers and carers confirmed that everyone has access to a wide range of health care services, which includes the Children's Resource Team, comprising of a nurse, a substance use worker and clinical psychologist. Carers support group meetings (plus an out of hours support group) supervising social work visits, and further induction training days for all newly approved carers ensures young peoples care, welfare, health and safety remain a priority for the team.

# 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**

3,6,8,9,15

There is a supportive and caring atmosphere in which young people feel safe, secure and comfortable.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Copies of agreements on foster carer files were reviewed, and were signed by foster carers, their supervising social worker and the fostering manager. A part of the recruitment process requires a safety assessment of the prospective carers home by staff from the fostering service, and carers complete a safety assessment of their homes, carers also have annual reviews, including a health and safety review. Training provided by the authority covers managing challenging behaviour, and support is available from nursing and clinical psychology services working with looked after children. The fostering service manager maintains a record of all allegations and an annual report is made to the fostering panel. This was reviewed during this inspection, and it was noted allegations were well recorded and investigated. The inspector attended the fostering panel meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup>. September 2005 and also interviewed the chairperson of the panel. The panel comprises of independent service providers, social workers, a member of the council, and a person who has previously lived in care. The Panel meets the requirement to include 4 independent members.

# 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**

7,13,31

Links with community services are good and support and enrich the young peoples social and educational opportunities.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The authority promotes diversity and anti-discriminatory practice, all carers undertake training which promotes diversity and consideration of how each young person's ethnic, religious and cultural needs can be met in the foster home. Carers are provided with information relating to young peoples cultural needs, and are required to support them attend places of worship. Young peoples educational needs are support by a number of individuals, including the supervising social worker, foster carer and education officer from the Children's Resource Team, who also advises social workers and foster carers on educational issues, and funding is available from the local authority to purchase equipment for young people in foster care. All the young people who returned confidential questionnaires said that their carers helped them with their education. The Service aims to provide individual short term care packages - where this meets the needs of the young person - which includes identifying, and meeting the needs of the parents. Where there is a shortage of carers who are able to offer this kind of placement, the authority can arrange through an Independent Fostering Agency to provide services.

# **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**

10,11

The service has created an environment in which young people have the confidence to be themselves and to develop personally and emotionally.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The Service provides guidance on contact with family members for carers, carers also stated contact issues were discussed during training courses and as part of the placement agreement agreed for each young person. All carers who returned questionnaires said that they supported young people to maintain contact with families and friends and this was confirmed by young people. Arrangements for contact were detailed in the foster care agreements retained on carer's files. Young people also confirmed they were asked for their opinions and views about the care received and their views were listened to. The Fostering Services Manager, social workers and foster carers told the Inspector that training included listening to the views of young people. As stated each young person has an allocated social worker and the Royal Borough's Looked After Children review procedures ensure that they are consulted about their care. Supervising social workers also stated they would speak with young people during monitoring visits to the foster home. All the young people who returned confidential questionnaires said that they had been asked for their opinions about their foster carers and the fostering service.

# 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**

29

Financial support is appropriate and provides the opportunity for young people to develop independent living skills and aids carers access resources.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The fostering manager stated, and records confirmed all carers receive an allowance that exceeds the Fostering Network's recommended rate for London, this allowance is also used to cover the costs of outings, birthdays, festivals etc. Carers spoken with during the inspection told the Inspector that payment is regular and prompt. Carers also confirmed that they received written guidance on payment of fees and allowances, taxation and other financial issues. All carers said that they were able to contact their supervising social worker or the Fostering Service administrator if they had any queries regarding allowances or payments.

# 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**

17,21,24

Management have a good understanding of the service and appropriate systems are in place to ensure the needs of young people are met.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The team comprises of the manager, a senior practitioner (currently a shared post) 12 Social Workers, 1 Recruitment Officer, 1 Placements officer, and 2 Business Support staff. Carers recruitment is co-ordinated by the fostering recruitment officer, who is responsible for carers from initial enquiry through to their approval as foster carers. The recruitment social worker also ensures information packs are provided to all people interested in fostering, and provides an initial visit to the carer's home within two weeks of an enquiry. Carers stated that they had a named supervising social worker and all said that they could contact them for support or advice at any time. Carers are provided with detailed advice on working with other agencies, including health services and education. The post of Reviewing Officer responsible for managing carers' annual reviews is vacant, and the Quality Review Monitoring Officer is currently responsible for reviews – dividing her hours between the two posts. The inspector considers quality assurance to be essential in ensuring improvements in service development are maintained, and this persons' time should be focused exclusively on the role of quality assurance, rather than reviews. This is a Recommendation.

# 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>
<b>12</b>	4

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>3</b>	4
<b>6</b>	4
<b>8</b>	3
<b>9</b>	4
<b>15</b>	4
<b>30</b>	4

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

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

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>14</b>	3
<b>29</b>	4

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



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

### **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	16	The post of the Quality Assurance Officer should be prioritised and not combined with that of the Reviewing Officer.

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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