



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

The Homefinding & Fostering Agency

**67 College Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME15 6SX**

Lead Inspector
Sophie Wood

Announced Inspection
13th March 2006 13:00

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 The Homefinding & Fostering Agency

Address 67 College Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME15 6SX

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Fax number 01622 765670

Email address kent@homefinding.fsnet.co.uk

Provider Web address

Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable) Mr Stephen Harry O`Brien

Name of registered manager (if applicable) Mrs Jayne Charlton

Type of registration Fostering Agencies

Category(ies) of registration, with number of places

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 17th August 2004

Brief Description of the Service:

The Home Finding and Fostering Agency seeks to provide both short and long term foster care placements for children and young people of all ages, throughout Kent, London and Sussex.

A wide range of carers are recruited in order that placements can be made, pertaining to the specific needs of the individual, including; mother and baby placements, sibling groups and those with a history of enduring different forms of abuse.

Historically, a particular strength of the agency was, (and is), its provision regarding 'unaccompanied asylum seeking minors' and to this end, carers of African origin were specifically sought, as were those living in the Brighton region, with regards receiving children from Eastern Europe. Given recent changes, in terms of London Boroughs consciously avoiding the placement of individuals 'outside' of their locality, such referrals are now rarely made and this factor has resulted in a number of skilled and experienced carers not being used.

Given the agency's commitment to provide quality training and support to its carers, which results in securing high quality services for looked after children, this factor is extremely disappointing, particularly given the shortage of foster carers countrywide.

SUMMARY

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

This was the third announced inspection to be conducted under the auspices of the Care Standards Act 2000, using the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards and was conducted by Sophie Wood over a five day period, commencing on 13th March 2006.

Time was spent interviewing the registered manager, responsible individual and managing director, as well as social work and administrative staff. Policies, procedures and other relevant documents were scrutinised. Four carer families were randomly selected; their files, and those of the children / young people placed with them were inspected and each household was visited.

A panel meeting and training session was observed and other relevant material was gained through the receipt of the manager's pre –inspection questionnaire and self – assessment.

An overwhelming response was received from carers, children / young people and placing authorities, through their returned questionnaires, which provided excellent additional inspection material.

Overall, such documentation provided very positive comments about the agency, with quotes including:

'The carer is safe and nurturing. She always communicates and works well with us'. (Placing Authority).

'Very efficient, friendly service provided by the agency. Carers are well supported. Reports are well written and received promptly. Contact work is very helpful. Generally a flexible service and very committed to the needs of the child'. (Placing Authority).

'I have a nice home and live with a lovely family, but I still miss my mum'. (Child in placement).

'I feel safe, secure and loved. There is no 'worst thing' about being fostered'. (Young person in placement).

'I'm getting the help I need to live independently'. (Young person in placement).

'They do an excellent job. Very friendly, helpful staff. Doesn't matter who you talk to, they're always there, ready to offer support and advice'. (Foster carer).

'They don't take things for granted. They're always asking how could they improve, but they don't need to!' (Foster carer).

What the service does well:

Sound and robust recruitment procedures are applied in terms of carers and social workers; this protects children / young people and they are placed with families who can meet their needs.

Social workers possess an explicitly clear understanding of their role and function; that this is to 'supervise', as well as to support carers, and the agency remains clear of its requirement that all agency staff and carers must attend regular training courses annually.

Carers are recruited from a wide range of backgrounds and geographical areas; hence, their own particular areas of skills and expertise leads to appropriate 'matching', upon the receipt of referrals. In the best interests of the 'right' placements being secured, the agency is quick to refuse a referral if it believes it does not have the best possible placement, even if its carers do have 'vacancies'.

Agency staff receive regular, ongoing supervision, which explores their performance and ongoing training needs. They benefit from generous terms and conditions of employment and carry manageable caseloads. In turn, carers receive regular visits and benefit from excellent consultation processes. They feel valued and well – supported by the agency.

Children and young people feel safe and they know how to make complaints and representations. Their educational needs are very well supported by their carers and the agency, as is any 'contact' with those who are important to them.

The agency is managed by an experienced and competent individual, who is committed to providing a quality service for 'looked after' children / young people. Her motivation and inclusive style of leadership is well – received and appreciated by an equally enthusiastic and dedicated staff team.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The registered manager has successfully completed NVQ management training and has implemented greater and more stringent monitoring processes.

Records pertaining to complaints and allegations are more thorough, detailed and clear and the Foster Carer Agreement is being reviewed and updated.

Agency staff are being 'funded' to receive appropriate additional professional training and 'consultation' processes continue to develop further.

What they could do better:

The content of the Foster Carer Agreement, which is already being reviewed and amended, needs to be measured against the criteria, as outlined under Schedule 5 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

The recruitment processes and personnel records of all members of staff employed by the agency need to meet with the requirements, as outlined under Schedules 1 & 2 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. This requirement is made with particular reference to the recruitment of 'contact supervising / driver' staff, employed by the agency.

A dedicated 'pro forma', detailing the questions and answers made during the staff interviewing process would provide additional safeguards, as would an increase to the frequency of conducting 'unannounced visits' to carers' homes.

A review of 'case recording' policies and procedures would provide additional, necessary guidance for both carers and agency staff and it is recommended, in the interests of promoting 'confidentiality', that the case records of siblings, be separated into their own dedicated files.

The staff disciplinary policy should be reviewed against Regulation 21 (2)(a) and Placement Agreements, that meet with the requirements as listed under Schedule 6 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002, should be present within all case files for children / young people.

It is strongly recommended that the panel membership be reviewed in terms of the current Chair and the role of the registered manager. It is further recommended that all panel members be provided with pertinent training, and it is required that adequate written material be provided for all panel

members, in order that they can make informed decisions, without necessitating deferment to the following meeting.

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.

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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.

Children and young people positively benefit from having their health needs identified, provided for and monitored. Carers are in the process of receiving specific training dedicated to this core subject.

EVIDENCE:

The care files of children and young people were scrutinised and carers were specifically asked about their role pertaining to the 'health promotion' of those in their care.

All of the care files seen held a separate section pertaining to 'health & education', whereby details of the GP, Dentist, Optician, etc were recorded. Where obtained from the placing authority, details of historic immunisations and illnesses / medical conditions were also recorded.

Carers spoke very knowledgeably in terms of their own responsibilities to promote and ensure the health promotion of those in their care; this is clearly explained within the Foster Carer Agreement and records of Review Meetings demonstrated that carers had fulfilled such responsibilities.

The registered manager has recently completed training on this subject and a review of the agency's training programme for carers, demonstrated that she plans to disseminate this throughout the forthcoming year. She has also invited the LAC Nurse to attend the next full staff meeting.

This standard carries a 'good practice' recommendation for the agency to consider the implementation of a clear and dedicated health record, containing details of all 'health professional' involvement to be provided for children / young people, that could be taken with them, upon leaving the agency's care. The need to continually 'chase' placing authorities for historic and pertinent health information was also recognised by the registered manager.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

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

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

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

3, 6, 8, 9, 15, 30.

The agency is managed and staffed by a suitably qualified and competent team. Children / young people benefit from being placed with safe carers, who implement sound systems and procedures that offer protection. Improvements to matching evidence and panel operations would ensure additional safeguards.

EVIDENCE:

Through the inspection of staff personnel files and from interviewing key individuals, it was evident that staff possess the qualifications and background experience commensurate with their roles. Additional relevant post – qualifying training continues to be offered and funded by the agency and the registered manager has recently attained an NVQ management qualification. Carer files were scrutinised and the written evidence of a thorough assessment process was further endorsed and described by those carers interviewed in their own homes.

All of the four homes visited were furnished and maintained to a good standard, with each providing single occupancy bedrooms. Carers described good communication and information being provided by the agency, whilst placements were being negotiated, though they often reported a lack of information being received from placing authorities. It was very evident that

children and young people are carefully matched, with referrals being refused if the agency feels it does not have the best possible placement; however, this good practice was not always clearly evidenced within written records and the agency is advised to review and amend such records.

Carers receive explicit 'safe care' guidance and training from the agency; the practice of this was observed whilst visiting families within their own homes. Whilst such evidence was positively found, the agency is advised to stringently monitor the contents of carers' own written safe care policies, throughout supervision visits and during their annual reviews.

Policies and procedures pertaining to 'child protection' were being implemented and the Commission continues to receive relevant written notifications without delay. Carers know how to report 'significant incidents' and to whom. This particular standard carries a recommendation for the staff disciplinary policy to be reviewed, in terms of a section being added with regards the requirement for agency staff to immediately report any concerns pertaining to the abuse, safety or welfare of children / young people, as outlined under Regulation 21 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

Whilst the personnel files pertaining to all social workers employed by the agency held clear evidence as to reference checks, qualification evidence and telephone verification of written references, the records in respect of contact supervisors / drivers, were not as detailed, and a requirement is made to rectify this shortfall in order to further protect the children / young people placed, and the agency.

A panel meeting was observed and minutes of previous meetings were scrutinised. From the evidence obtained, it was clear that this group takes very seriously its responsibilities in terms of providing additional safeguards for children / young people. The input from the social workers employed by the agency was particularly impressive; they questioned and scrutinised all of the information presented diligently and appropriately. From the cases observed, it was evident that 'independent members' had not been provided with sufficient background information with regards all of the cases presented; this needs to be addressed and the agency is advised to further consider the benefits of providing training, specific to this group.

Recommendations in respect of this standard include:

- To consider the value of appointing an 'independent' Chair of the panel.
- To review the current written criteria, which is used in the event of a consensus decision not being reached by those panel members present.
- To consider the current position of the registered manager as a panel member, for example, by giving her the role of a non – voting, panel advisor.

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.

Diversity among children and carers is valued and young people receive the help they need to reach their academic potential.
Standard 31 is not applicable.

EVIDENCE:

Carers continue to be recruited and retained from a range of geographical locations, including the Kent region as well as close to, and within London Boroughs. A current and ongoing recruitment drive focuses upon seeking to obtain carers from a wide and diverse background, recognising diversity in terms of religious, ethnic and economic backgrounds. This factor was clearly reflected through the perusal of the foster carer register and is satisfactorily covered within the training programme for carers. The agency holds a particular interest and expertise in the placement of 'asylum seeking' minors, albeit that referrals to this aspect of the service have reduced of late, given the decision, in particular, by London placing authorities to consciously avoid the use of 'Kent' IFA's, preferring to make placements within their own localities.

Care files held clear details pertaining to educational information including the name of the individual's school / college, year group, PEP information and a record of academic achievement.

One child visited was attending school on a part time basis, due to 'behavioural difficulties'; the agency and carers are commended for their efforts in working to maintain this placement. The foster carer provides extensive support by assisting within the classroom and the agency continues to fund a number of

children with support assistants, at no extra cost to placing authorities. Case records included clear details pertaining to educational review meetings and a running log is held, which records every time a carer attends a school meeting. The Foster Carer Agreement outlines very clearly, the expectations of carers to support and promote the educational achievement of those in their care and those spoken with were very clear about their responsibilities. This standard carries a recommendation for the manager to expand upon her current monitoring mechanisms, to ensure school placements, exclusions and achievements are robustly monitored.

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.

Children / young people positively benefit through maintaining contact with those who are important to them and the agency implements excellent consultation processes for all its stakeholders.

EVIDENCE:

The agency actively promotes the importance and value of 'contact' for children and young people; this topic is extensively covered within initial and ongoing carer training.

Those carers visited further confirmed this view and gave many positive examples of the practical and sensitive ways in which they support this. The agency continues to employ a number of its own drivers and contact supervisors, who are coordinated by a key member of the agency team. She liaises with all placing authorities, ensuring that 'contact' arrangements and information remains up to date and she retains the responsibility for the recruitment and ongoing training for such personnel; this includes report writing, first aid, child protection, working with families, etc.

All individuals have had an Enhanced CRB search conducted, been issued with a written contract of employment and job description and attended induction training. A requirement is made within the context that the personnel files in respect of this team must be reviewed against the criteria as described under Schedules 1 & 2 of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002, and it is further recommended that separate files be held for each individual.

Everyone involved knows how this aspect of the service is managed and coordinated and this ensures that contact arrangements are well – planned, run smoothly and can accommodate long distances if necessary, in the best interests of the families involved.

Written records pertaining to such visits were well – written, factual and being passed on to the placing authority.

In addition to the numerous contact venues used by placing authorities, the agency's main office building also lends itself, by providing a separate dedicated room in order for contact meetings to be facilitated. This environment is well – decorated and appropriately furnished with comfortable seating, toys and games, etc and it was especially valuable to speak with a parent who had arrived for a contact visit. The agency staff team was described thus:

"They always welcome you and offer you a drink. You're made to feel comfortable and the supervisor tries really hard to remain in the background writing his notes and not getting involved, unless he has to".

The agency continues to actively seek the views and opinions of children / young people, carers, employees, placing authorities and all other interested parties.

From the returned questionnaires, children / young frequently reported that they are regularly consulted by their carers as to the decisions they need to make about their own lives; they also routinely answered that they know about the agency's own complaints procedure and how to contact other relevant 'outside' agencies and organisations, if they should need to.

Whilst visiting carer families in their own homes, the children / young people in placement spoke very positively about their carers' own supporting social worker from the agency. Comments included:

"She always asks me how I am".

"I see her more than my own social worker and she often talks to me on my own, to make sure everything is okay for me".

One carer family also spoke very positively about the agency's commitment to obtain the views of 'birth children', stating,

"Most of our children are grown up and have left home, but while they were here, their views and needs were always considered to be very important".

Carers reported that they are able to provide their own feedback, in a formal sense through their own annual reviews and 'routinely', on a more informal basis, during their monthly support visits and at training sessions.

The current arrangement regarding the annual review process is for the supervising social worker to complete the necessary processes and one member interviewed stated that she thinks it may be of greater benefit for social workers to complete this work on behalf of the carers they don't actually supervise. She believes such a system would benefit carers by providing them with a 'reviewing officer' who could retain greater independence, thus they may feel more encouraged to express their own views. Such thinking further

demonstrates the agency's ongoing commitment to provide carers with the best possible consultation forums and systems.

Placing authorities provided excellent feedback through returned questionnaires, which demonstrated a close working partnership with carers and the agency. Comments included:

'The carers really value the child in placement and give him every opportunity to make his own decisions'.

'A fantastic placement, very well - supported by the supervising social worker. She ensures I am fully appraised of all developments, no matter how minor'.

Another development concerns the agency's own carer recruitment processes, whereby the views and assistance of current carers have actively been sought. A 'working group', consisting of agency staff and carers has been formalised to look specifically at creative strategies of recruitment, again demonstrating the agency's desire to work in partnership with all of its employees.

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):

14, 29.

Young people benefit from receiving the support and guidance they need to prepare them for adulthood and independent living and foster carers receive the allowances and expenses to which they are entitled, correctly and on time.

EVIDENCE:

Where applicable, transitional plans for semi or independent living are in place and carers are fully aware of their own responsibilities in terms of preparing young people for leaving care. This is achieved through information contained within the Foster Carer's Handbook and ongoing training courses.

Questionnaires received from young people were extremely positive with regards the help and support received from carers and the agency, with many practical examples provided. The agency itself is committed to supporting adolescents to make this huge transition and has a history of assisting with college / university, remaining with carers as a 'supported lodgings placement', etc and continuing ongoing appropriate contact with individuals as they reach adulthood. Such practice is commended.

Carers reported that they receive their agreed payments and expenses on time and such amounts are clearly recorded and communicated, in line with the organisation's prescribed financial policies and procedures.

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):

1, 2, 4, 5, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 32.

The Statement of Purpose is clear and concise. Managers and staff of the service are suitably qualified and experienced and carers receive frequent support visits.

Case records for children are regularly monitored and staff and carers benefit from regular, good quality training.

All staff and children / young people benefit from the security offered by a financially viable agency.

EVIDENCE:

The agency continues to review and amend its documentation; this includes the statement of purpose and children's guide. Policies and procedures are continuing to evolve and develop and, as previously stated, the Foster Carer Agreement is currently under review. Such activity supports that the agency works hard to keep abreast of changing legislative and 'good practice' guidance and updates its own written guidance whenever necessary.

Management systems are a particular strength of the agency. The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She 'leads', using a calm, measured style and pays particular attention to supporting her staff and carers; this ensures regular supervision and team meetings, good deployment of staff and resources and ongoing access to relevant good quality training.

Through regular support visits, the training needs of carers are routinely reviewed and the agency produces an annual programme of training to meet identified needs. These are again monitored through the annual review process and carers are required to attend a specified amount of training courses each year. Recent consultation with carers resulted in the provision of a particular course, 'Men Who Foster' and this was partially observed during the course of the inspection. Attendees commented upon its value, relevance and all were required to complete written evaluations.

Supervising social workers maintain written records of support visits and copies of these are now being forwarded to carers, to keep for their own reference. It is recommended that the written record be reviewed to include greater clarity, in terms of recording 'actions and outcomes', including timescales and responsibilities for the completion of necessary tasks. It is further recommended that the agency consider the value of conducting unannounced visits more frequently than once a year.

Case records for children are securely stored and hold relevant sections. The quality of the information held would benefit from further review, to include greater monitoring evidence in ensuring that all of the information requested from placing authorities is received and inserted and it is required that 'Placement Agreements', as described under Schedule 6 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002, be obtained for all of the children / young people placed by the agency.

The registered manager and responsible individual continue to revise and amend the monitoring systems in use. They meet regularly and ensure the matters as listed under Schedule 7 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 continue to be monitored. Quality assurance systems are improving and the

manager has recently begun to produce reports in accordance with Regulation 42 requirements. Copies are being forwarded to the Commission and it is recommended that they be made available to carers and placing authorities as well.

Other administrative records and documents were in good order and being securely held and it is recommended that a clear 'case recording' policy be written and implemented, for the benefit of all staff and carers.

The office is situated near to Maidstone town centre; it has ample parking facilities and offers good security. It is spacious, well furnished and equipped to meet the needs of the team; however, a recommendation includes the provision of separate email addresses for each staff member, given the expedience of this facility and its use within all other associated departments and organisations.

Clear and robust financial policies and procedures ensure continued financial viability. Within a climate of 'change' and a fall in referrals, particularly from London Boroughs, the agency protects those who are dependant upon it. There are no current plans in terms of making additional savings, such as redundancies or other cost – cutting measures and the company accounts continue to be regularly and appropriately audited.

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	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
3	3
6	3
8	3
9	3
15	2
30	2

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	4
11	4

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

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

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	FS20	21(2)(a)(b)	<p>The fostering provider shall operate a disciplinary procedure which, in particular –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) provides for the suspension of an employee where necessary in the interests of the safety or welfare of children placed with foster parents; (b) provides that the failure on the part of an employee to report an incident of abuse, or suspected abuse of a child placed with foster parents to an appropriate person is a ground on which disciplinary proceedings may be instituted. <p>An action plan, detailing how this shortfall will be addressed is required to be received by the Commission by the date shown opposite.</p>	11/05/06
2	FS22	28(5)(b)	If a fostering service provider	11/05/06

		Schedule 5	<p>decides to approve a person as a foster parent it shall –</p> <p>(b) enter into a written agreement with him covering the matters specified in Schedule 5.</p> <p>This requirement is made within the context of the agency ensuring that its Foster carer Agreement be amended to include all of the elements as listed under Schedule 5 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.</p> <p>An action plan, detailing how this shortfall will be addressed is required to be received by the Commission by the date shown opposite.</p>	
3	FS24	34(3), Schedule 6.	<p>Before making a placement, the responsible authority shall enter into a written agreement with the foster parent, which covers the matters as outlined under Schedule 6.</p> <p>This requirement is made within the context of the absence of such agreements, upon children's files being inspected.</p> <p>An action plan, detailing how this shortfall will be addressed is required to be received by the Commission by the date shown opposite.</p>	11/05/06
4	FS25	20 & 22, Schedules 1 & 2.	<p>The fostering service provider shall not employ a person to work for the purposes of the fostering service unless that person is fit to work, and;</p> <p>The fostering service provider shall maintain and keep up to date the records as specified in Schedule 2.</p> <p>This requirement is made within the context of the shortfalls</p>	11/05/06

			<p>identified pertaining to the personnel records of sessional workers / drivers employed by the agency.</p> <p>An action plan, detailing how this shortfall will be addressed is required to be received by the Commission by the date shown opposite.</p>	
5	FS30	28 & 29	<p>A fostering service provider shall not approve a person as a foster parent unless its fostering panel has considered the application, and;</p> <p>The fostering service provider shall review the approval of each foster parent in accordance with this regulation.</p> <p>This requirement is made within the context of independent panel members being provided with in sufficient written information, upon which to make their judgements and recommendations.</p>	11/05/06

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	FS4	It is recommended that the monitoring / quality assurance review reports now being produced, be shared with all relevant stakeholders, including placing authorities and carers.
2	FS8	It is recommended that the agency seek to improve and expand upon the written information held with regards 'matching considerations', upon the making of placements.
3	FS9	It is recommended that greater attention be paid towards reviewing and monitoring the content of carer's own 'safe

		care' policies, through their support visits and annual reviews.
4	FS12	It is recommended that greater evidence be shown to demonstrate that placing authorities are being 'chased' for relevant health information about children / young people placed, and that the agency gives due consideration to developing a clear written health record for each individual in its care.
5	FS13	It is recommended that the registered manager increase and expand upon the monitoring systems currently in place, pertaining to the educational attainment of children / young people placed within the agency; to include exclusions, attainment and instances of bullying.
6	FS22	It is recommended that the regularity of unannounced visits to carers be increased to more than once per year.
7	FS24	It is recommended that case records for sibling groups be divided into stand alone files for each individual child / young person.
8	FS25	It is recommended that personnel records for sessional staff / drivers be divided into stand - alone records for each individual member. It is further recommended that consideration be given to the development of a 'case recording' policy and procedure and that all agency staff be provided with their own 'email' addresses.
9	FS30	It is recommended that due consideration be given to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The recruitment of an Independent Chairperson 2. The use of a separate decision maker 3. A review of the current process used, whereby a consensus decision cannot be reached 4. Using the registered manager as a non - voting panel advisor.

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