



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

### **North Somerset Fostering & Family Link**

**North Somerset Council  
Housing & Social Services  
Town Hall, P.O. Box 195  
Weston-Super-Mare  
North Somerset  
BS23 1UF**

*Lead Inspector*

*Announced Inspection*  
26th February 2007      09:00

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](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>	North Somerset Fostering & Family Link
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<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	North Somerset Council
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Post Vacant
<b>Type of registration</b>	Local Auth Fostering Service

# SERVICE INFORMATION

## Conditions of registration:

**Date of last inspection** 17th January 2006

## Brief Description of the Service:

The Family Placement and Family Link teams are both part of the Children and Young Persons' Directorate of North Somerset Council.

In the Autumn of 2004 the Family Placement team was divided into three sections, recruitment, support and adoption.

A full time team manager now manages both the recruitment and support sections. There are two recruitment social work staff and six supervising social workers in total, some of which work part-time and one full time duty social worker. At the time of the inspection the service supported 85 approved foster carer households, looking after around 120 children and young people.

There is a part-time development Manager who undertakes specific implementation and compliance tasks, such as the Placement Strategy, policy writing and implementation.

The service operates a 'payment for skills' scheme as a mechanism of recognising the different levels of foster care provided and as a means to encourage training and skill development. There are three skill levels for foster carers, Level 1 for newly approved carers and those gathering skills and experience, Level 2 for more experienced carers who have undertaken further training and carers at Level 3 who must have achieved NVQ Level 3 in Child Care. There are also specialist Youth Justice Carers and Single Placement Carers for young people with specific areas of need.

The Adoption and Fostering service has appointed a Recruitment and Marketing officer.

The Family Link team is based in a separate office in Weston Court a few miles from the Town Hall. It specifically provides short break and a flexible shared care scheme for disabled children. It is separately managed. The service currently provides care for 18 children, with a waiting list of approximately 10.

The service operates a monthly Fostering Panel which is independently chaired and which makes decisions regarding the approval of foster carers, their annual

reviews and matters concerning changes in their approval conditions.

# SUMMARY

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

The overall quality rating for this fostering service is excellent.

An inspection of the adoption element of this service was not inspected on this occasion.

This inspection was conducted over a five day period by a single inspector.

The methodology applied included the completion and return of pre-inspection materials by the agency and this provided data and information about the running of the service, an Annual Quality Assurance Assessment and a copy of the Statement of Purpose of the service. Additionally, the Council complied with the Commission's request to assist with questionnaire surveys of foster carers and young people placed with the service.

The Council made available to the Inspector all necessary files, documents and records and these were found to meet statutory requirements and were clearly written, comprehensive and well ordered.

A random sample of five young people using various elements of the service were 'case tracked' and the inspector met with the responsible Family Placement Team Social Workers (FPTSW), the Field Social Workers (FSW) and visited and met with the foster carer households.

Additionally, the Inspector interviewed managers and staff of the service, the Education Advisor, the Looked After Children's (LAC) Nurse, the Clinical Psychologist of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) team, the Training Officer, the Development Manager, an officer of the CONSULT team (a multi-disciplinary team of professionals who provide help and guidance), the Personnel Manager (who provided access to personnel staff files which were scrutinized and found to be in line with regulations, clearly written and well ordered) and the Service Manager responsible for the chairing of the Fostering Panel.

The Inspector did not observe the functioning of the Panel on this occasion but carried out checks on its function, process and membership composition.

## What the service does well:

Clearly written policies on safe care are in place, these are supported by high quality training programmes for social workers and foster carers and these are subject to ongoing development carried out by an appointed Development Manager.

Staff and foster carer recruitment and vetting procedures are excellent.

Professional consultation services (eg Mental Health, Psychology and Education) are made easily available to carers and practitioners and are of a high standard.

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

The agency now has two independent chairs of 'Disruption Meetings' which take place whenever a placement is in danger of breaking down and which will offer additional support to enable a placement to continue.

Foster carers have now been instructed not to accept a placement without a written placement agreement being in place.

Medical consent must now be clarified and in place for all children placed with foster carers.

Evidence of the matching process between young person and foster carer now appears within the individual child and foster carer file.

All personal details of a young person are now accurately detailed in their case files.

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

Although the agency has produced a draft policy for foster carers on the safe administration of medication this is not yet in place and this will be a focus of the next inspection.

The agency could be more proactive in supporting those foster carers who smoke, to give up.

The agency could produce a 'user-friendly' health record for young people to keep.

Foster carers could be given specific advice on how soon young people should be registered with a GP, Dentist and Optician.



The agency provides an advocacy service for young people by means of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with a responsible provider. A change of provider is about to take place and this will be the subject of focus at the next inspection.

The Fostering Panel should continue its efforts to recruit a member from a minority ethnic background.

The foster carer mentoring support service should be extended to provide support for foster carers post approval.

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. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

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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.

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at the outcome for Standard:

12

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The agency provides a range of support services which promote the health and development of young people using the service and the agency is active in ensuring that young people's health needs are met.

## EVIDENCE:

A paediatrician conducts an initial health assessment of young people at the time of placement. Foster carers must ensure that young people are registered with a GP, Dentist and Optician and this is checked at the time of the first review. However, the Foster Carers handbook does not specify a time that this registration must be done within and it is recommended that this information be given in the handbook.

Foster carers stated that they have easy access to the LAC Nurse for guidance and support with health related matters.

First aid training is provided as a mandatory course within the initial foster carers training and induction and this skill must be updated every three years. Details of the health training being offered demonstrated good practice with subjects such as communicable diseases and sexual health being addressed.

Child health records were in place with the majority of foster carers visited by the inspector during this visit. Foster carers are expected to keep a record of a child's health history in a separate log, known as the 'Red Health Book' and this is passed onto the next placement. However, it is recommended that the agency consider the additional provision of a 'user-friendly', health record for young people themselves to keep. This might include records of accidents and illnesses, inoculations, allergies and adverse reactions etc.

Foster care households must have a lockable facility for the safekeeping of medication. The Family Link carers visited had been provided with written permission from parents to administer homely remedies if required. The agency is about to introduce a new policy for foster carers and family link carers in the administration of medication and this will be a focus of the next inspection.

The agency has a written 'Smoking Policy' that states that children under 3 must not be placed with foster carers who smoke. Foster carers must not smoke around young people. Whilst support for assisting foster carers to give up smoking is available from the Primary Care Trust it is recommended that the Fostering Service is more proactive in offering this support.

The agency has a written 'Safe Care of Young People and Dogs' policy which offers good advice around the risk assessments of dogs as pets in foster households.

Where appropriate, foster households have been provided with children's car seats.

A Health and Safety Checklist of foster care households was seen and an assessment of the safety of households must be carried out at the time of approval and at each subsequent annual review. Entries on foster carers files indicated that this is being done.

A number of external support mechanisms existed for foster carers, for example mental health support from organisations such as CONSULT and the CAMHS teams in the North and South of County.

# 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.

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

3,6,8,9, & 30

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Suitably qualified and experienced managers and practitioners deliver the fostering service.

Safeguards are in place to ensure that foster carers provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for the children placed in their care.

In matching of placements for children account is taken of the individual needs of the child and the skills of the foster carer.

Through training and information sharing the fostering service provide proper protection for children.

Staff recruitment procedures were satisfactory.

The fostering panel membership had a range of policies and procedures for guidance and application. Policies and terms of reference existed to safeguard the welfare of children.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The agency provides an advocacy service for young people by means of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with a responsible provider. A change of provider is about to take place and this will be the subject of focus at the next inspection.

North Somerset Foster Service Manager has the relevant management qualifications and experience in working with children.

The Fostering Team Manager, who manages the recruitment and supervising support social workers and the Team Manager of the Family link Service both hold professional qualifications in Social Work and have several years relevant experience in Child Care.

The FPTSWs are suitably qualified and experienced social workers. There is clear managerial structure with staff line managed and supervised in their work by the fostering team manager.

A random number of staff personnel files were checked by the inspector and were seen to contain evidence that Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks had been undertaken and that there is a system in place to ensure that these are rechecked every three years.

Each file reviewed contained evidence that appropriate references and health checks had been carried out and that application forms had been submitted and that staff had received information on their job description and the staff contracts, post probationary period.

Satisfactory safeguarding of children was demonstrated with foster carers receiving preparation training and robust staff recruitment. Staff ensure that regular home visits are undertaken and that they liaise with the childcare social workers. They complete foster carer reviews ensuring that they consult with children and parents.

A 'mentor' scheme is part of the recruitment and selection process for foster carers. However, several foster carers told the inspector that after approval there was no mentoring service available. They also told the inspector that out of hours support is not always as readily available as they would like it to be. For example, the Emergency Duty Service often had an answer phone service and responses to telephone messages that foster carers left were often slow in coming back. Additionally, a telephone support service (called 'Next Step') had only limited availability at the time of this inspection. It is recommended that the foster carer mentoring support service is extended to provide support for foster carers post approval.

A new Policy and Development Manager post has been created to address and ensure that the fostering service best practice is reflected in its policies and procedures.

A Recruitment and Marketing officer has been appointed to assist in the recruitment of foster carers and people wishing to adopt. This is in line with the Authority's recruitment strategy. This role will include identifying areas in which specific carers are needed and how to meet this need.

Foster homes are assessed as part of the recruitment social workers' role to ensure that they can provide a safe, clean and comfortable environment ensuring privacy for the child looked after and others within the household. As part of the foster carers initial training aspects of health and safety are covered.

An approved carer linked to the Family Link Service was visited as part of the 'Case Tracking' inspection process. The child receiving this service had accommodation provided that was considered as suitable to meet their assessed need. The carer was familiar with the specialist needs of the child in their care and had taken steps to minimise any risks within the home and immediate environment. Essential information about the child had been obtained from parents and had been provided to the family link carer. The parent of the child receiving this service spoke extremely positively of the quality of this service and described the Family Link Service as her 'lifeline'.

Records examined by the inspector confirmed that careful matching processes had been undertaken for all children case tracked as part of the inspection of both the mainstream and the family link services.

The Fostering Network preparation course includes topics such as child protection, safe caring skills and anti-discrimination. The foster carers also attend eight sessions run by the fostering recruitment team covering their local procedures, health and safety, education and health. Further training and development needs are identified during the assessment process and at annual reviews.

The foster carers handbook contains the agency's policies on 'Bullying', 'Allegations' 'Whistle blowing' and 'complaints'. Several of these policies had been devised by 'working groups', which included carers and various professionals. Foster carers are aware that corporal punishments are not permitted and the foster agreement states this explicitly. Carers were able to verbalise their understanding of this when they met with inspectors.

Good practice was demonstrated with regard to the manager collating and evaluating information on any allegations or complaints made. Allegations of abuse or neglect of a child would be primarily the responsibility of the commissioning childcare social workers.

The team manager (family link) confirmed that carers and staff are offered training opportunities. The inspector also met with the training officer who provided a full appraisal of the staff and foster carers annual training programme. This appeared to be comprehensive and of a high standard.

The inspector confirmed during visits to foster carers and a family link carer that they had been provided with information and training about child protection. Foster carers were aware of the procedure to follow should a child make a disclosure to them whilst in their care.

There is an agreed multi-agency protocol for any child absent or missing from placement.

The agency has two independent chairs of 'Disruption Meetings' which take place whenever a placement is in danger of breaking down and which will offer additional support to enable a placement to continue.

The inspector did not attend the Foster Panel during this inspection visit. However, the inspector met with the chair of the foster panel and was satisfied that the foster panel's written 'Terms of Reference' are appropriate and that the panel members receive training and an induction.

The panel's membership composition contained expertise in child health and education and there was a member who had personal experience of foster care. However, it is recommended that the panel continue its efforts to recruit a member from a minority ethnic background.



# 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.

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

7,13 & 31

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Young people's educational needs are being met by the provision of support services.

The fostering service works to provide placements that recognise the children's individual skills, talents and abilities, along with valuing diversity and promoting equality.

The Family Link service for disabled children is working well in supporting young people and their parents in a flexible and personalised way.

### EVIDENCE:

North Somerset Council provides a Family Link service for disabled children. All foster carers are vetted using the same protocols as mainstream foster carers. There are a range of policies and procedures in place to support this service. The responsibility for the children's education remains with their parents, and does not directly involve family link foster carers.

Parents of young people using the Family Link Service were very happy with the measures in place to ensure that individuals, who provided care for their child, had been thoroughly vetted and appropriately trained. Parents had

remained very involved in the care package and had been instrumental in training carers where applicable, to care for their child. This shared care approach was considered to be fundamental to maintaining stability and consistency for the child.

Family Link carers are provided with training opportunities. All carers are advised by post and in regular newsletters about forthcoming training opportunities.

Equality and diversity is reflected in the Statement of Purpose which outlines the Council's duties to children fostered. The assessments ask questions of all parties to ascertain the racial, gender, religious and cultural needs of the child. Carer's are asked if they will facilitate a child's attendance at their place of worship during their stay.

Where children from minority ethnic groups are placed there was evidence seen in review meeting records that all efforts are made to ensure that their individual cultural identity is valued and maintained.

Information is available for carers/young people in the form of advice/leaflets from specialist sources on issues of sexual orientation and there is a 'No Worries Clinic' which they can contact for confidential advice.

Children are encouraged to participate in a range of initiatives currently happening in North Somerset. Children and young people are also being asked their views about the service by using questionnaires. The Council provides a reduction in costs for LAC to access their leisure facilities.

Foster carers have access to a number of support services to support a young person's education. These include the CONSULT team which is a Looked After Children Support Team of related professionals. There is also the LIFT group which provides educational support and which includes Education Welfare Officers, Educational Psychologist and a specialist teacher. The group meets monthly to consider ways to support LAC with such services as extra tuition, leisure activities etc. There is a weekly Helpline (every Wednesday 9am-1pm) where foster carers can seek advice about supporting a young person's education. All these are examples of an excellent service provision.

All foster care households have been provided with computers to assist educational achievements and older children are able to apply for lap tops for educational purposes.

# 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.

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

11

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Children are being supported in maintaining family contact as agreed by the placing authority.

The fostering service makes significant efforts to secure the views of the children in their care.

## EVIDENCE:

From questionnaire returns from young people and in interviews with foster carers it was established that all efforts are made to maintain agreed contact arrangements for children and young people and most children felt consulted about important matters in their life such as contact visits and other matters about their care.

Supervised contact arrangements are available at the Council's Family Centre.

Children looked after are given the opportunity to provide written and verbal feedback at their review. They have the opportunity to attend their review or be seen separately by an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). Parents and Social Workers also contribute to this.

There are individual children's guides for each child looked after. For children with disabilities a specific guide for the Family Link scheme can be used as a tool for children with limited communication skills.

Currently an older young person who is looked after assists with planning the preparation training of foster carers. Similarly young people assist with post approval training for foster carers and professionals.

Foster carer's children receive an annual certificate and £20 voucher as a 'thank you', for their contribution to fostering. This takes place as part of an annual awards ceremony. The service has introduced a scheme to provide better financial support for emergency placements.

# 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)

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

14,29

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Foster carers are supported to help children preparing to leave care develop the competence and skills required to achieve independent or semi-independent living.

Foster carers received agreed allowances and additional funding support where appropriate for the children in their care.

## EVIDENCE:

Where age appropriate, young people have a 'Pathway Plan' which outlines their future needs in terms of placement, training, employment etc; foster carers form part of the consultation on the formation of these plans. There are clear policies and financial arrangements to support young people remaining with their foster carers beyond both 16 and 18.

The Fostering Network training course dedicated to the subject of moving on, preparation and independent living is now provided for foster carers.

'Next Step' which is part of North Somerset Children and Young People Services assist with Independent Living skills/issues and work alongside other agencies such as Connexions and Housing.

All foster carers are paid for the service they provide in the form of an allowance. North Somerset have a skills based payment scheme. There are three levels to the payment for skills scheme. To be at Level 3 carers must

have achieved NVQ Level 3 in Child Care. Additionally, separate payment levels are given to carers who are identified as providing Youth Remand and Single Placements. This represents an excellent commitment to the skills development of foster carers.

There are identified age related Christmas/Birthday allowances which were seen as fair and proportionate.

Foster carer allowances as stated are subject to annual review.

# 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 1, 16, 17, 21, 24, 25 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.**

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

1,16,17,21,24,25 & 32

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The statement of purpose identified the aims of the mainstream fostering service and there is a clearly written statement for the Family Link service.

The fostering service is managed by suitably experienced and qualified staff.

An appointed manager is in place to monitor and develop quality.

Staff are provided with suitable terms and conditions of employment, management support, training and development opportunities.

The training opportunities and range of training topics provided for foster carers was considered to be commendable.

The Family Link service has adequate premises but their level of administrative support needs to be increased.

Financial management systems exist to ensure the viability of the service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Both the Family Link service and the mainstream fostering service have a statement of purpose compliant with National Minimum Standards and the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

There are appropriately formatted children's guides and a wealth of well produced information leaflets and documents for all elements of the service and which meet the needs of a range of young people using the services. These are subject to period revision and development which has been carried out in consultation with children and young people.

The North Somerset Foster Service Manager (Provider Services) has the relevant management qualifications and experience in working with children.

Deputising arrangements exist for the Fostering Team Manager and the service has been advised that the Commission's Central Registration Team need to be advised in writing of the current position.

The person who is managing the recruitment and supervising support social workers, holds a Diploma in Social Work and is suitably experienced in child care. The Team Manager (family link) has a social work qualification and commenced an Open University management course in February 2006.

Clear roles exist for the monitoring and supervision of the service. There is 1:1 monthly supervision for social workers and monthly team meetings.



The 'out of hours' support service is provided to foster carers from the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) and 'Next Step' team. 'Next Step' provides emergency advice to foster carers and care leavers, which may include visits if necessary.

The 'Next step' service was only operating between 9.00 and 5.00, Monday to Friday, at the time of this inspection, due to staff vacancies. Also, the level of response from the EDT was said by foster carers to be inadequate and a recommendation has been made with regard to extending the foster carers mentoring service.

Carers complete a supervision contract agreed with their social worker and copies are held on file and with the carers. Home visits are planned each month and should other correspondence occur in the interim, such as phone calls or letters these are dated and written into the foster carer files. On the files reviewed an unannounced visit by the supervising social worker was noted each year. Annual foster carer reviews are designed to appraise the carers and evaluations of the 'payment for skills' is training and competency based.

A 'whistle blowing policy' is in place.

The staff are very experienced qualified social workers the majority of whom have worked for the service for several years. Staff felt that they had access to a range of training opportunities 'in-house'. Training which is outsourced and of benefit to the service and professional development is agreed by the manager, these are usually identified via regular supervision sessions or at appraisal. Staff attend section meetings the minutes of which are circulated via email.

There are 'corporate' policies and procedures in place with regard to staff duties and responsibilities.

Foster carers have a 'handbook' containing details of the services policies and procedures and which also offers guidance on many areas of the service. Foster carers receive training and have policies on record keeping and maintain diaries and logs provided to them from the service to ensure that significant events are recorded. Those carers visited were aware of the need to store information securely. Foster carers encourage children to reflect on and understand their life history by keeping 'life story' books, photographs and other memorabilia. However, it is recommended that the agency consider the identification/appointment of a dedicated 'life story' worker to carry out this specialised level of work.

There are appropriate administration systems in place. Records are stored securely, with computer records password protected. However, it was noted that the administrative support provision of 18.5 hours per week for the Family Link Service was inadequate and might result in Supervising Social Workers being drawn away from their defined tasks to undertake administrative tasks.

It is therefore required that the level of administrative support for the Family Link Service be increased appropriately.

A Kinship Care policy and guidance is in place; one social worker has responsibility for kinship carers. A kinship carer spoken with was happy with the level of care and support offered.

# 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>	3

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

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

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>10</b>	4
<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>	4
<b>2</b>	3
<b>4</b>	3
<b>5</b>	3
<b>16</b>	3
<b>17</b>	3
<b>18</b>	3
<b>19</b>	4
<b>20</b>	3
<b>21</b>	3
<b>22</b>	3
<b>23</b>	3
<b>24</b>	3
<b>25</b>	3
<b>26</b>	3
<b>27</b>	3
<b>28</b>	3
<b>32</b>	3

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.	FS17	19	It is required that the level of administrative support for the Family Link Service be increased appropriately.	01/06/07

### 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.	FS12	The Foster Carer's Handbook does not specify a time that young people must be registered with a GP, Dentist and Optician by and it is recommended that this information be given in the handbook.
2.	FS12	It is recommended that the agency consider the provision of a 'user-friendly', health record for young people themselves to keep. This might include records of accidents and illnesses, inoculations, allergies and adverse reactions etc.
3.		Whilst support for assisting foster carers to give up

	FS12	smoking is available from the Primary Care Trust it is recommended that the Fostering Service is more proactive in offering this support.
4.	FS15	It is recommended that the foster carer mentoring support service be extended to provide support for foster carers post approval.
5.	FS30	It is recommended that the Foster Panel continue its efforts to recruit a member from a minority ethnic background.
6.	FS17	It is recommended that the agency consider the identification/appointment of a dedicated 'life story' worker to carry out this specialised level of work.

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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