



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

Derby City Council - Fostering Service

**Derby City Social Services
Norman House
Friar Gate
Derby
DE1 1NU**

Lead Inspector

Jenny Thornton and Nancy Bradley

Announced Inspection

31st October 2005

09:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

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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 Derby City Council - Fostering Service

Address Derby City Social Services
Norman House
Friar Gate
Derby
DE1 1NU

Telephone number 01332 717777

Fax number

Email address

Provider Web address

Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable) Margaret McGlade

Name of registered manager (if applicable)

Type of registration Local Auth Fostering Service

No. of places registered (if applicable) 0

Category(ies) of registration, with number of places

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 18th October 2004

Brief Description of the Service:

The fostering service is part of Derby City Council Social Services Department, and provides the following services for children and young people aged between 0 to 18 years in the Derby city and boundary areas:

- Time limited placements, which includes emergency and ongoing placements
- Respite placements, which offers short term breaks to children who would benefit from short breaks away from the family.
- Support foster carers, which provides link respite carers to foster carers.
- Link carers, which offers short term break for children with a disability.
- Long term placements, where adoption is considered not to be a viable option.
- Children First placements, which applies to children with significant disabilities. These placements tend to be long term.
- Project placements, which applies to children with emotional or behavioural problems, who require additional time and carers with appropriate skills.

The fostering service recruits, registers, and provides ongoing support to new and existing carers. The service had 166 approved foster carers. A total of 230 children and young people were placed with the fostering service. In addition 41 children and young people were placed in Independent Fostering Agency placements.

SUMMARY

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

The service provided a good level of information in advance of this inspection. The announced inspection was carried out over four days by two inspectors with an additional visit to observe the fostering panel. Nine members of staff, the responsible individual and managers of the service were interviewed. Various records were examined and questionnaires were received from foster carer's, young people and their social workers. As part of the inspection 5 foster carers and 7 children and young people were visited and their records were reviewed, which helps determine how well the service is meeting their needs.

The fostering service has made significant progress towards meeting the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection report.

What the service does well:

Staff work well together as a team and in partnership with other agencies. The service is well managed and has an established and experienced team, which provides a good level of support to foster carers and young people. Staff receives a good level of training.

Staff and foster carers felt valued and well supported by the fostering service. The recording of information by staff was of a consistent high standard.

Clear procedures are in place relating to the assessment of new foster carers, which ensures that appropriate people are recruited. The standard of assessments for new foster carers was comprehensive. The service has a clear pre-approval-training programme to ensure that newly approved foster carer's have the appropriate skills to care for young people.

The service promotes young people's safety and contact with family and friends. The service supports young peoples achievements in education.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The statement of purpose and fostering procedures have been reviewed to include all essential information.

Procedures for monitoring the quality and performance of the service and the work of the fostering panel have been strengthened.

Vacancies within the fostering team have been filled, which has enabled staff to develop the service. All three managers had achieved or were undertaking further management training to develop their skills.

The Authority continues to improve the ways in which it consults with young people and foster carers. The Authority has produced an appropriate complaints procedure for children and young people, and the new complaint forms were due to be sent out to all children in foster homes.

The Authority has reviewed and increased the allowances and payments made to foster carers, and intends to further increase the allowances in the forthcoming year to bring these further in line with national recommended allowances.

The pre-approval training programme and initial enquiry and assessment process for potential foster carers has been strengthened. The number of pre-approval training events has increased, to enable more potential foster carers to attend this. Training opportunities for staff and foster carers have increased and a training officer specifically for adoption and fostering has been appointed to further develop post approval training for carers. Various support groups were being established to provide support and training to foster carers.

Further improvements have been made to the standard of recording by staff within the family placement and children's teams. The I.T system and access to computers within the fostering team has significantly improved, which has benefited staff.

What they could do better:

The children's guide requires developing to meet the age range and needs of children in foster homes.

The service needs to further recruit a range of foster carers from different backgrounds to meet the needs of children young people requiring placement.

Procedures require strengthening to ensure that foster carers receive all essential information from children's social workers to ensure that young people's needs are appropriately met.

The post-approval training programme needs developing to enhance foster knowledge and skills, and procedures require strengthening to ensure that all foster carers attend ongoing training.

The service needs to develop the level of respite support available to foster carers.

The Authority needs to further increase the allowances paid to foster carers to meet the full costs of caring for a child.

Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure consistency in recording of essential information by foster carers, and that confidential records are kept secure.

Contract and monitoring arrangements require developing in regards to placements with Independent Fostering Agencies.

Please contact the provider for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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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 service promotes young people's health needs, and improvements have been made to ensure that foster carers receive essential information relating to a child's health needs to enable them to meet individual needs.

EVIDENCE:

Young people said that their health needs were being met and records supported this. Foster carer's had a clear understanding of their role in promoting young peoples' health needs. Procedures have been strengthened to ensure that foster carers receive essential information relating to the young peoples' health needs. Although some carers reported delays in obtaining all essential information relating to young people's immunisations details and health needs. One foster carer visited had limited information relating to immunisation details and health needs of two children in her care. Signed consent to receive emergency treatment had been obtained for all 7-children/young people visited on this inspection.

Foster carers said that they had received basic training on health issues as part of the pre-approval training. The designated nurse for Looked After Children was working closely with staff, foster carers and young people to promote health needs. There were plans for the Looked After Children's nurse to provide training health care issues and basic first aid and as part of the post approval-training programme for carers. Some foster carers had completed first aid training in other employment.

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 and 30

Procedures have been strengthened to promote young peoples safety and welfare, and staff working in the fostering team have extensive experience and skills, which safeguards young people’s interests.

EVIDENCE:

Staff working in the fostering team have extensive experience and skills in the field of social care and fostering to support foster carers and young people. The Authority follows appropriate procedures when recruiting new staff, to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Files examined relating to five members showed that all necessary checks and information had been obtained except for the following:

- Three files contained a gap in the applicant’s employment history. The managers said that they followed this up at interview, but a written explanation for the gap/s in employment was not recorded on their application form or file.
- A record of staff interviews was not kept on the personnel files. The managers said that they now record a summary of staff interviews but this had only recently been introduced. A standard form was not used to record staff interviews.

- The H.R. department procedures require that C.R.B disclosures are kept separate to staff personnel files. The form used to record evidence of the CRB check did not include the person's C.R.B disclosure number and the date in which it was obtained. Three out of five files checked referred to police check and did not state the level of C.R.B. check carried out i.e. enhanced level.
- Two different forms were used to request references; one form did not include the statement 'whether the referee knows of any concerns regarding the suitability of the applicant to work with children, and if so to explain what these are'.

The above issues were highlighted on the previous inspection report.

Foster carers homes visited were safe and homely. Young people said that they were felt part of the family and were encouraged to personalise their bedroom. Staff had made good progress in completing a written health and safety risk assessment of a foster carers home, and re-assessment of the carer's home now forms part of their annual review. Any health and safety issues identified from the risk assessment were recorded on the foster carers annual-approval report presented at fostering panel.

Initial information received from social workers about young people was often brief, and forms used to provide pre-placement information about matching considerations did not detail all needs. However it was clear from discussions with foster carers and staff that considerable work goes into ensuring that young people are appropriately placed with fosters carers capable of meeting their needs, given the limited resources available. Foster carers said that they had a say as to who is placed with them, as to whether they felt they have the skills to meet the young persons needs. Where possible young people and foster carers meet and to get to know each other, prior to making a decision about whether they consider the placement is in their best interest. Newly approved foster carers were being encouraged to complete an information book about their family and home, for young people's consideration.

The Authority has clear procedures in place to promote young peoples' safety and welfare. Discussions with young people and returned questionnaires indicated that young people felt safe in their foster home. Foster carers confirmed that they had received training on safe caring prior to their approval. Good progress had been made in assisting foster carers to complete a safe caring policy for their home; staff and foster carers said that all relevant persons were involved in completing this. Some carers had still to complete this. A copy of the safe caring policy is now attached to the foster carers annual-approval report presented at fostering panel, and is made available to the children's social worker. Not all safe caring policies were dated and signed.

In consultation with young people the Authority had produced an appropriate complaints procedure for children, on how to complain and how to access the complaints officer and an advocate. The new complaints procedure and forms were due to be circulated to all children and young people in foster homes. The children's guide included the phone number of the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

The service has its own fostering panel. The panel had the required composition of panel members, except for independent members with expertise in education and child health, and a person who has been in care or has had a child placed with foster carers. The head of service was endeavouring to recruit additional panel members but was experiencing difficulties in recruiting people with the appropriate experience.

Improvements have been made to how the fostering panel operates, and to ensure that the panel members work more effectively and maintain an appropriate level of independence. The panel chair and vice chair had undertaken national training on chairing fostering panels, and a panel protocol had been produced, which has brought about consistency in the way in which the panel works. The decision maker does not attend the fostering panel. Information given to foster carers at the fostering panel was misleading, in that the panel chair said that the panel intended to approve/re-approve their position. The panel chair needs to be reminded that the panel members' role is to recommend that a foster carer be approved/refused to the 'decision maker'. Procedures underpinning how the panel operates, did not detail the decision process when all members of the panel are not in agreement, or how confidential reports and minutes are despatched to panel members.

The new layout of reports presented at fostering panel has brought about consistency in the level of information provided. The managers acknowledged that foster carers training and development needs were not robustly linked and evaluated through the annual review process. The managers intend to strengthen this, on development of the post approval training programme and introduction of new criteria for fostering allowances.

Discussions with panel members and previous panel minutes confirmed that annual reviews of all carers, requests for deferment of annual reviews, all exemptions to carer's approval, child protection issues and significant incidents, de-registration of carers and financial requests are routinely presented at panel. This is to be commended as good practice.

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 and 13

Priority was being given to recruiting additional foster carers from a variety of backgrounds to meet the demand for placements and young people's diverse needs.

Importance is given to young peoples' educational needs to help them achieve their potential.

EVIDENCE:

Policies and procedures covered short-term breaks. Discussions with staff and carers and returned questionnaires maintained that the needs of children/young persons receiving short-term breaks were being met. Foster carers providing short-term breaks were generally satisfied with the level of support they received from the fostering team.

Staff and carers reported that the matching process takes into account a child's cultural, religious, language, and disability needs, and that the service promotes diversity and equality. However the service acknowledges that there is a shortage of appropriate placements, in particular for teenagers and children from ethnic minority or large sibling groups. This results in a number of young people been placed in homes, which are not entirely appropriate in terms of meeting their individual diverse needs. Where there was a recognised shortfall in a placement, measures were put in place to promote the child's heritage and identity. The Authority had recently carried out a consultation exercise with foster carers and young people of black and ethnic minority origin, which highlighted a shortfall of culturally appropriate placements.

Information obtained from the consultation exercise, was being used to assist the service to recruit a range of foster carers to meet young peoples' needs.

Young people said that they are encouraged to follow their personal interest and hobbies. Foster carers showed a commitment to enhancing children's confidence and self worth. Carers reported that the pre-approval training covered the need to promote diversity and respect other cultures and religions.

The young peoples' educational needs and achievements were well documented, and young people had a personal educational plan. Young people said that foster carer's gave them help and support with their schoolwork and education. Foster carer's had developed good relationship with local schools and attend parent evenings and events.

The managers confirmed that over 90 foster carers homes had been provided with a computer for children and young people to access.

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 and 11

Contact with family and friends is promoted and supported ensuring young people maintain links with family and friends.

The fostering service consults and works closely with children and foster carers enabling them to have a say on matters affecting their daily lives.

EVIDENCE:

Young people said that they have regular contact with family and friends where there are no restrictions on contact. Young peoples' files clearly set out their contact arrangements. Foster carer's showed a commitment to supporting young peoples' contact with family and friends.

The Authority has produced a comprehensive policy on how it consults and works with children and young people. The Inspectors found positive examples of children's views being heard and acted upon in placement. Several consultation exercises had been carried out, asking children/young people and foster carers about the service and matters affecting their daily lives, and various changes had been made in response to comments received. The Authority has a children's participation officer, who was involved in various projects involving Looked After Children. Reference groups continue to provide a good forum for young people's views to be heard. The service circulates a regular newsletter to all foster carers homes, which contained a good level of information and was well set out.

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

14 and 29

Importance is given to helping young people to develop daily living skills in preparation for adulthood and independent living.

Significant improvements have been made to the fee structure and allowances paid to foster carers bringing payments more in line with National recommended allowances.

EVIDENCE:

Policies and procedures were in place relating to young people moving onto semi or independent living. Foster carers showed a commitment to helping young people to develop daily living skills, and gave examples on how this was being achieved. Two young people case tracked had left school, and had an after care worker and a pathway plan in place preparing them for adulthood.

In response to the best value review and consultation with foster carers, the Authority has significantly increased the allowances and remunerations paid to carers in the last year. The allowances had increased by 15% in October 2005, and the Authority intends to further increase the allowances in the coming year to cover the cost of caring for a child. The Authority continues to recognise foster carers length of service and commitment by way of an annual bonus payment. Taking into account the recent increase in the allowances and the annual bonus payment the overall allowances paid to foster carers were reported to be in line with national recommended allowances. Staff and carers welcomed the increases in allowances and remunerations, but expressed the need for further increases to cover the full cost of caring for each child.

Foster carer's confirmed that they had received clear information as to what allowances included, and that the allowances are paid promptly. Following consultation with foster carers, a revised clearer payment scheme was being introduced which will set out criteria for the various allowances.

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

1, 4, 5, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 26

The managers provide clear leadership and a good level of support to staff and foster carers to enable them to undertake their roles and responsibilities.

Procedures require strengthening to ensure that all foster carers attend appropriate training to care for young people.

EVIDENCE:

The statement of purpose clearly sets out the services provided and was reviewed in May to update the information. A children's guide was provided although this was brief and not altogether suitable. The children's guide was being updated with involvement of young people, to further meet the age range and needs of children and young people in foster homes.

Procedures relating to the monitoring of the service have been strengthened to ensure that the service is well managed. The managers had produced clear objectives for the service, which set out priorities for the year. The fostering procedures have been reviewed and updated and were clearly set out, and staff had received a copy of the procedures.

Improvements had been made to the recording and monitoring of complaints received about the service and allegations of abuse or neglect of a child in foster care. As part of the monitoring arrangements the managers completed a summary report for the Authority on the number of complaints and allegations received; in some cases the outcome of a complaint or allegation was not clearly recorded. The information on complaints and allegations was not collated and kept separately.

Procedures were in place to ensure that the fostering service is well managed. The fostering service has a committed and established staff team, which provides consistency for foster carers and young people. The retention of social workers within the children's teams impacted on the fostering team, in that staff were required to undertake some of the social workers duties. The fostering team are experienced and knowledgeable about fostering, which enables them to provide a good level of support to foster carers. Foster carers spoke with high regard for the team. The head of service and service managers have extensive experience and skills and manage the team effectively in an open and positive way. All three managers had completed or were undertaking a further management course to develop their skills. Staff worked well together and valued the level of support and supervision they received from their managers. All staff received monthly planned supervision. Staff had taken on responsibilities for specific areas of work and interests, which worked well. Systems were in place to prioritise and monitor the work within the team.

The service worked closely with other agencies, such as education and health. Regular staff meetings continue to be held the agenda and minutes of meetings were well set out. Staff reported that training opportunities had increased and that their training and development needs were well supported. Staff had attended various training in the last year. Staff had a Personal Development Plan although an appraisal system was not in place.

The premises are shared facilities with the adoption team and children's disability team. The children's disability team are relocating to another office in January 2006, which will provide additional space for the fostering team. The premises are due to be extensively refurbished to create a training room, and a room for meetings and direct work with young people. The I.T system and access to computers has significantly improved in the last year, which has benefited staff.

The initial enquiry and assessment process for potential foster carers has been strengthened. Additional support had been provided to ensure that initial visits and assessment of potential foster carers are duly completed. Records showed that necessary checks had been carried out to ensure that foster carer's are suitable to work with children. One foster carer's criminal record disclosure certificate did not contain all the required information such as a check against the Protection of Children's list. The managers agreed to address this issue. Completed assessments of prospective foster carers were comprehensive and of a consistent high standard.

It is acknowledged that there is a national shortage of foster carers, and that the Authority does not have sufficient carers to enable choice of placement and fully meet the demands on the service. The Authority has a clear recruitment strategy and was endeavouring to address the shortfall of carers through the ongoing recruitment campaign, although the number of carers recruited in the last year fell short of the targets set. At the time of the inspection 41 children were placed with Independent Fostering Agencies, which is not a significant change to the number of children placed last year. Despite the pressures on Local Authority placements, only a few carers had more than three foster children in placement. The Authority is determined to remain the major provider of fostering services in Derby, but faces considerable challenges to recruit and retain sufficient carers to improve it's current standing

Feedback from foster carers and records examined showed that carers received a good level of support from the fostering team. The majority of foster carers felt valued by the team. Foster carer's said that the out of hour's service worked well. Foster carers reported variations in the level of support young people received from their social worker. Several foster carers and young people described the biggest disappointment was the changes in children's social workers and lack of direct contact. Several foster carers reported difficulties in contacting the child's social worker.

Discussion with foster carer's and records showed that carer's received regular supervision visits from their support worker, which carers found beneficial. Visits tended to be planned; occasional un-announced visits were not carried out. Records of supervision visits clearly set out issues discussed, and the foster carer and support worker had signed the majority of the records. The

relevant headings on the supervision sheets showing the purpose of the visit were not completed.

The pre-approval training programme for foster carers had been strengthened; experienced foster carers were more involved in this. Pre-approval training events are now held four times a year, to enable potential carers to attend the training. Training opportunities for staff and foster carers have increased and a training officer specifically for adoption and fostering had recently taken up post to develop the post approval training for carers. Foster carers were encouraged to undertake a national vocational training qualification (N.V.Q.) in childcare, and several carers had achieved this. Although not all foster carers had attended ongoing training to further develop their knowledge and skills. Foster carer support groups were being established to provide support and training to foster carers.

Further improvements have been made to the standard of recording by staff within the family placement and children's teams. Records looked at on this inspection were of a high standard and were clearly set out and indexed. However there were inconsistencies in where foster carers recorded and kept confidential information relating to young people. The managers of the service acknowledged that further training and work was required to bring about consistencies in the recording of essential information by foster carers. A number of foster carers had recently received training on the importance of keeping good records, and further training was planned.

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	3
30	3

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

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

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

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

Yes

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	FS12	17	All foster carers must be given essential information about a child's health needs to enable them to appropriately care for the child.	31/03/06
2	FS3	20 Schedule 1	Staff personnel files must contain a satisfactory written explanation of any gaps in employment.	31/03/06
3.	FS17	3	The Authority must continue to recruit sufficient foster carers to meet children/young people's needs in line with its statement of purpose.	31/03/06
4.	FS23	17	All foster carers must receive essential training to meet the needs of a child/young people placed in their care.	31/05/06

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	FS12	All foster carers should receive training on health care issues and basic first aid.
2.	FS3	Staff personnel files should clearly show the date and level of C.R.B. check carried out, and the person's disclosure number.
3	FS3	All reference request forms should include the statement 'whether the referee knows of any concerns regarding the suitability of the applicant to work with children, and if so to explain what these are'.
4.	FS3	A record of staff interviews should be kept on the personnel files. Records of interviews should be to a consistent and adequate standard, and recorded on a standard form.
5.	FS8	All foster carers should complete an information book about their family and home. This should be made available to young people prior to them moving in.
6.	FS8	Staff should ensure that children and carers files clearly show matching considerations. Forms used to provide pre-placement information about matching considerations should cover all needs.
7.	FS9	All children and young people should be made aware of the new complaints procedure.
8.	FS9	All foster carers should complete a safe caring policy for their home, which is signed and dated.
9.	FS1	The children's guide should include the address and the phone number of the Commission for Social Care Inspection.
10.	FS30	The independent members of the fostering panel should include expertise in education and child health, and a

		person who has been in care or has had a child placed with foster carers.
11.	FS30	Panel members' should make clear to applicants that their role is to recommend that a foster carer be approved/refused.
12.	FS30	Procedures underpinning how the fostering panel operates should detail the decision process when all members of the panel are not in agreement, or how confidential reports and minutes are despatched to panel members.
13.	FS30	Foster carers training and development needs should be robustly linked and reviewed through the annual review process.
14.	FS29	The Authority should continue to increase the allowances and remunerations paid to foster carers to cover the full cost of caring for each child.
15.	FS1	The children's guide should be developed to further meet the age range and needs of children and young people in foster homes.
16.	FS9	Information on complaints and allegations should be kept separately to collate and evaluate information.
17.	FS20	Staff should receive regular planned appraisals from their line manager.
18.	FS23	The Authority should continue to promote that children/young people receive a good level of direct contact with their social worker.
19.	FS22	Supervising social workers should carry out occasional un-announced visits to foster carer's homes.
20.	FS22	Supervising social workers should complete the relevant headings on the supervision sheets, showing the purpose of a visit to the foster carer.
21.	FS23	The service should further develop the post-approval training programme for foster carers.
22.	FS24	The service should provide further training for foster carers on the requirements of record keeping. Ensure all foster carers keep essential records of children

		in their care, and keep confidential information in a suitable secure place.
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