



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

Credo Care Limited

**12 High Street
Lydd
Romney Marsh
Kent
TN29 9AJ**

Lead Inspector
Alex Turner

Announced Inspection
30th October 2006 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

Reader Information	
Document Purpose	Inspection Report
Author	CSCI
Audience	General Public
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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Fostering Services*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk 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	Credo Care Limited
Address	12 High Street Lydd Romney Marsh Kent TN29 9AJ
Telephone number	0870 241 4285
Fax number	0870 241 4286
Email address	enquiries@credocare.co.uk
Provider Web address	www.credocare.co.uk
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Credo Care Limited
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Mr Gregory Nicholls
Type of registration	Fostering Agencies

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 9th January 2006

Brief Description of the Service:

Credo specialises in foster care to children and young people with disabilities. The service is based in Lydd and works predominantly in Kent though is developing services towards South West London. A small team of qualified and experienced staff works with children, foster carers and significant others to achieve secure and positive placements.

The current fee for the service at the time of the visit was £1305.61. Information on the service and the CSCI reports for prospective service users will be detailed in the Statement of Purpose and Service User Guide. The e-mail address of the service is enquiries@credocare.co.uk

SUMMARY

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

Three days were spent working from the providers' offices. The directors and staff all contributed time and cooperation throughout. A broad range of documentation was referred to in order to evidence practice. Qualitative questionnaires were distributed to foster carers and placing social workers of which a limited sample were returned. Arrangements were made to visit two foster homes. Both were visited though it was possible to spend time only at one due to unforeseen scheduling. It is noted that feedback from children has been limited in part by constraints of the inspection process. As far as it has been possible within these constraints and where considered appropriate children's views have been sought, again through the use of questionnaires.

What the service does well:

The service does well in providing a high quality foster care service to children and young people with disabilities. Examples of good practice were evident from the beginnings of children's contact with Credo Care and throughout. Credo Care makes sure that only suitable people are approved as foster carers and that when they are they get the support they need to foster. Credo Care is delivering good practice in foster care for children with autism. Since the last inspection the provider has continued to work towards achieving specialist accreditation in this area by late spring 2007.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The fostering provider has done well to address each of the shortfalls noted at the time of the last inspection. A number of improvements have been made. These include the development and distribution of written guidance and notes for foster carers. Health and safety matters have been revisited in some specific areas. Requirements and recommendations covering administrative records and other related documentation have been met. Information sharing and consultation has been improved and continues to be developed.

What they could do better:

The fostering provider should reflect on and review practice in relation to following up intelligence gathered during the process of assessing the suitability of prospective foster carers.

There has been inadequate implementation of financial procedures. This has been recognised and the directors of Credo Care were taking action to improve the company's financial standing.

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

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Enjoying and Achieving

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Management

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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:

NMS 12 - Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

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

The fostering service promotes the health and development of children.

EVIDENCE:

From discussion with staff, feedback from social workers and examination of records it was evident that Credo Care have continued to work towards achieving specialist accreditation for the work towards providing high quality foster care to children with autism. Good examples of health promotion were evident in assessment, planning, matching and support in this area and for other children who were fostered.

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):

NMS 3, 6, 8, 9, 15, 30 - Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

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

The persons carrying on and managing the service are suitable to do so.

Credo Care is careful to ensure that those people it employs, and approves, as foster carers are suitable to work with children.

The matching process is a careful one that takes into account children's needs and foster carers skills, knowledge, experience and circumstances.

The fostering service has demonstrated good practice in promoting children's welfare and protecting them from abuse and neglect.

The fostering panel has been operated effectively within a clear procedural framework.

EVIDENCE:

The persons carrying on and managing the service have demonstrated suitability to do so. This is in terms of meeting the requirements of registration and of their ongoing conduct. Recruitment procedures are tight and required checks have been completed prior to persons being employed or their services

otherwise obtained. Thorough assessment and planning were characteristic features of the matching process for which the service is commended. In part this is demonstrated through the notable success of placements measured by the absence of unplanned placement endings, comments of placing social workers and foster carers and evidence of practice documented in written records, reports and correspondence. Credo Care has clear and robust procedures to protect children from neglect and abuse. Practice during the time between this visit and the last indicates that policies have been rigorously implemented in some appropriate circumstance. Panel minutes and other related records were sampled. A conversation with the independent panel chair took place that focussed on the operation of the panel and of Credo Care in general. From these sources it was ascertained Credo Care has done well in constituting a panel that comprises of people that have between them a wealth of diverse knowledge, skills and experience and that the panel has been operated effectively and does so with the benefit of clear procedural and practice guidelines.

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):

NMS 7, 13 & 31 - Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

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

The fostering service values and promotes diversity. Children are supported as appropriate in their education and to develop independence. Short-term breaks are managed with the recognition that the child's parents or guardians remain the main carers.

EVIDENCE:

Credo Care has maintained its commitment to provide quality foster care services to children with disabilities. A high level of dedication and skill from both foster carers and staff has been demonstrated in practice. Children have been supported through very difficult times. In addition to needs and preferences being met children's rights have been strongly advocated. Children have been supported to access educational resources that are suited to their individual needs and circumstances. The expectations placed upon foster carers to support children's educational goals are clear and were evidently promoted. Where the service was providing a series of short-term placements for a young person it was evident that matters in relation to health and education were appropriately considered to be within the remit of the young persons parents or guardians.

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):

NMS 10 & 11 - Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**

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

The fostering service has been a strong advocate and driving force in promoting child centred contact arrangements.

The fostering service promotes consultation.

EVIDENCE:

Children were being supported to enjoy positive contact with the people in their lives. Instances where the fostering provider had advocated for children's preferences and rights in relation to contact arrangements were evidenced in practice. Where planned for and agreed Credo Care have provided supervision by suitably experienced staff during contact times.

Credo Care is carrying out a review of the manner in which it seeks to gain the views and opinions of children. This exercise is being carefully implemented and is a demonstration of an ongoing initiative to improve the standard of fostering provided. Within the cycle of quality assurance Credo Care shares with its stakeholder's on a quarterly basis management information about its operation and by the same means takes the opportunity to invite further evaluative feedback. The complaints procedures are in line with the standards and regulations and applied in practice. It should be noted that there have been no complaints made about the service provided by or on behalf of any children or young people.

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):

Neither of the standards have been rated.

EVIDENCE:

Management

The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

- There is a clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and the fostering service ensures that they meet those aims and objectives.(NMS 1)
- The fostering service is managed by those with the appropriate skills and experience. (NMS 2)
- The fostering service is monitored and controlled as specified. (NMS 4)
- The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.(NMS 5)
- Staff are organised and managed effectively.(NMS 16)
- The fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff.(NMS 17)
- The fostering service is a fair and competent employer.(NMS 18)
- There is a good quality training programme. (NMS 19)
- All staff are properly accountable and supported.(NMS 20)
- The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.(NMS 21)
- Foster carers are provided with supervision and support.(NMS 22)
- Foster carers are appropriately trained.(NMS 23)
- Case records for children are comprehensive.(NMS 24)
- The administrative records are maintained as required.(NMS 25)
- The premises used as offices by the fostering service are suitable for the purpose.(NMS 26)
- The fostering service is financially viable. (NMS 27)
- The fostering service has robust financial processes. (NMS 28)
- Local Authority fostering services recognise the contribution made by family and friends as carers.(NMS 32)

The Commission considers Standards 1, 16, 17, 21, 24, 25 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.

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

NMS 1, 16, 17, 21, 24, 28 & 25 - Quality in this outcome area is **good**

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

The fostering provider provides accurate and useful information about the service provided. It is monitored and controlled by the registered provider as specified in the standards and regulations. Staff are organised and managed effectively. The number qualifications and experience of staff working for the

fostering service is such that the statement of purpose can be fulfilled. The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with, training and supporting carers. Case records for children & young people are comprehensive. Administrative records are maintained as required.

EVIDENCE:

The fostering provider works towards meeting its stated aims and objectives and provides prospective and existing service users with written information describing its operation.

There is a cohesive team of staff with a broad range of relevant skills and experience. In addition Credo Care secures sessional and consultative input from a wide range of allied professionals. Some very positive comments have been made by foster carers and social workers regarding the professionalism and quality of support provided by Credo Care indicating that the staffing arrangements and management of the team are leading to positive outcomes for children. The arrangements to provide training for foster carers and staff has contributed towards meeting this objective.

The procedure followed to assess prospective foster carers suitability was considered with reference to examples of practice. Credo Care applies strict requirements on the assessment process, which are in line with the standards and other good practice guidelines. There has been instance in which enquires have led to a complaint. From this lessons need to be learnt in relation to following up intelligence with interested parties.

Records were very well maintained. This applies to children's records, those of foster carers and other administrative details required by the regulations. Requirements and recommendations included in the last inspection report have been met. Credo Care has established good standards in sharing information, one example being the notification of significant events.

Through discussion with Credo Care and records it was evident that financial procedures have been inadequately implemented. Credo Care acknowledged this shortfall and have been acting to improve financial standing with tighter controls and closer monitoring. The directors were confident that the finalised accounts for the year would reflect a stronger position.

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	4

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

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

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	X
29	X

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

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection? NO

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.	FS28	44(1)	The registered provider must ensure that the financial processes/systems of the agency are properly operated and maintained in accordance with sound and appropriate accounting standards and practice.	01/02/07

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 fostering provider should consider ways in which health care events documented by foster carers could be improved in terms of maintaining an easily transferable continuous record.
2.	FS17	The fostering provider should reflect on and review practice in relation to following up intelligence gathered during the process of assessing the suitability of prospective foster carers.

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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