



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

**Progress Childrens Services Ltd**

**Progress House  
127 Millfields Road  
Bilston  
Wolverhampton  
West Midlands  
WV4 6JG**

*Lead Inspector*  
Janet Manders

*Announced Inspection*  
5th December 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

<b>Reader Information</b>	
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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>	Progress Childrens Services Ltd
<b>Address</b>	Progress House 127 Millfields Road Bilston Wolverhampton West Midlands WV4 6JG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 561066
<b>Fax number</b>	01902 561065
<b>Email address</b>	kpadam@progresschildrensservices.co.uk
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	Progress Childrens Services Ltd
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Kamaljit Kaur Padam
<b>Type of registration</b>	Fostering Agencies
<b>No. of places registered (if applicable)</b>	0
<b>Category(ies) of registration, with number of places</b>	

# SERVICE INFORMATION

## Conditions of registration:

1. Planned long term placements for children
2. Short term placements for children

**Date of last inspection** 10th January 2005

## Brief Description of the Service:

Progress Fostering is part of Progress Children's Services based in the Wolverhampton area. The Fostering service has been established in 2001. The Agency has recently opened two new offices in Birmingham and Hemel Hempstead to enable them to better support their foster carers and provide placements in a wider geographical area. Progress Fostering currently provides placements for 37 children and young people. Placements are provided by 34 approved foster carers, these foster carers represent a varied cultural, religious and linguistic background.

Progress's main focus is to provide planned long term placements. However, they also provide some short term and same day placements if there is information available to allow appropriate matching with the foster carers.

Training is valued by the organisation and on-going courses are available in addition to the four day initial training course attended by all prospective carers.

Staff and foster carers have regular supervision and 24 hour support is available to carers. Specific arrangements have been made to meet the particular requirements of individual children, including structural alterations, aids, adaptations and personal support. Matching is identified as a crucial part of the service offered by Progress in providing supportive placements to a range of children and young people.

# SUMMARY

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

This inspection was undertaken over a period of 5 days by 2 inspectors. 4 foster carers were visited in their homes by inspectors, when the inspectors also had the opportunity to meet with the young people in placement. An inspector visited all three offices used by the Agency. In addition to these visits, carer's files were viewed, as were those of the young people placed with the foster carers and interviews with the supervising social workers. Questionnaires were also sent to all foster carers, young people, aged 8+, placed with foster carers by the agency and their placing social workers.

Common themes found during the inspection were

- Lack of Consistency between the operation of the 2 offices in the Midlands and the Hemel Hempstead Office
- Good policies and procedures
- Need for a Foster Placement Agreement
- Lack of staff

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

The Agency and its foster carers provide a high standard of care for the young people placed ensuring that their diverse needs are met. The Agency takes a pro-active stance in respect of promoting young people's health.

The Agency provides good support to most of its foster carers, providing them with appropriate guidance, policies and training to enable them to undertake their fostering task.

The Agency is well managed, although there are some discrepancies between the offices. As a result of previous inspection findings, where the Agency either met or exceeded most standards, not all standards relating to the management of the Agency have been inspected on this occasion.

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

The Agency has made improvements in respect of the monitoring of the Agency's work undertaken by the manager, with useful reports being provided by the manager, to enable the Agency to improve the service provided to young people.

There have been improvements regarding the training provided to foster carers, so that foster carers receive all required training. Further developments are planned to improve the training for foster carers further.

Whilst not all foster carers had been reviewed in the past year as required, there had been some improvement in this area with the appointment of a new independent reviewing officer. The Agency also ensures that the views of all parties are sought prior to a carer's review being undertaken.

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

The Agency must ensure that there is a clear Foster Placement Agreement in place for all young people placed with foster carers, so that all parties are clear as to what work has to be undertaken and by who.

There is an urgent need for the Agency to review all placements of young people to ensure that these have been made within the approval categories of foster carers. Further attention is required to recording how a young person is matched with foster carers.

Improvements are required to the recruitment and selection of staff and ensuring that all necessary checks are undertaken in respect of staff and foster carers.

Improvements are required to the operation and functioning of the Fostering Panel to ensure that it follows the legally determined processes for the approval and review of foster carers.

The Registered Person must also address the inconsistencies in the operation and functioning of the different offices, so that all foster carers receive appropriate support and supervision. This can only be fulfilled if the Agency has sufficient staff to undertake all the tasks required.

Whilst inspectors have made a number of requirements, they are confident that the Agency will address them in an efficient and speedy manner. Inspectors are aware that many of the requirements have already been addressed at the time of writing this report.

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

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

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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 health needs of young people are well met, however, the agency must ensure that appropriate consent for medical treatment is obtained so that young people's health needs can be provided for.

## EVIDENCE:

It is apparent from discussion with foster carers, the young people and from examination of files that the health needs of young people are well met by the foster carers and the agency. Young people's health is discussed at each foster care supervision session. Foster carers ensure that regular health checks are undertaken. Inspectors found that foster carers are regularly recording medication administered to young people, including homely remedies and these records are signed by the supervising social worker. However, it was a concern that the consent for medical treatment was not clearly recorded on any of the files examined, nor had the delegation of responsibility for consent for treatment been recorded in most cases. Nonetheless, inspectors observed that foster carers are generally aware of the issue and ensure they seek consent from the appropriate person prior to a young person receiving treatment.

The Agency should be commended for its work in respect of monitoring and improving the health of young people, with one of the Family Support Workers taking responsibility for the promotion of young people's health. Additional support is accessed for young people where this is required. The inspectors were informed that the agency has employed a psychologist to provide support for those young people who exhibit challenging behaviour. The psychologist is to commence employment in January 2006.

The agency has detailed policies and procedures to support the work of the foster carers and carers are provided with training in first aid.

# 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**

Young people's needs are well met by the foster carers and the Agency, however the Agency must ensure that appropriate matching and appropriate checks on staff and carers takes place to ensure that young people are kept safe.

## **EVIDENCE:**

All the foster homes visited were providing a high standard of accommodation for the young people placed, other than one quite young child who had very little personal space. Health & Safety checklists had been revisited in preparation for the carer's annual reviews, and car insurance, tax and MoT checked. Fire assessments had been carried out by the fire service in some instances, and a fire escape plan drawn up by the household. Foster carers are provided with detailed guidance and training in respect of health and safety.

Risk assessments had been completed for some young people but these were still in the format appropriate to disabled young people, and do not cover all relevant issues such as sexualised behaviour. A new Risk Assessment format had just been developed by the agency, which would provide a good basis for placement, and this should be brought into use as soon as possible.

In general carers considered themselves well matched with the children placed in their care, with very few exceptions. One placing social worker commented 'I think these foster carers have done an amazing job. It is a very unlikely match and it has surprised all of us how well it has gone and how the foster carers have been able to hold on to and care for this young person.'

Nonetheless, inspectors were concerned that a number of young people had been placed with foster carers, even though this was not consistent with the foster carers' approval. A serious concerns letter was issued in respect of this, requiring the Agency to review placements and take appropriate action to rectify this issue.

It was widely agreed that placing authorities often provided inadequate information about young people to be placed, and this was seen to be either because there was little knowledge of the young person at the point of placement, or because there was a belief on the part of placing social workers that the carer would not agree to take the child if they were given full information about the child's needs. Carers were confident that Progress shared with them all the information that the agency had received, and this was borne out by the evidence on files, but the agency must take all possible steps to ensure fullest information is available at the time of placement.

There was no evidence on the current files of the matching process whereby the carer was assessed as able to meet the child's known needs, but the agency had recently developed a revised referral form with a Placement Matching Checklist attached. If well completed, this would provide evidence of the matching process and identify any gaps and how they are to be met. The value of this checklist should be evident by the time of the next inspection of the agency, who are recommended to put it into practise without delay.

Progress Foster Placement Agreements were seen on files but were not signed. These were a mixture of contract and placement agreement, and did not cover risk assessments regarding contact, or matching issues, so the requirement regarding this remains in place. The manager informed the inspectors that the some placing authorities refused to sign the Agency's Foster Placement Agreement. Planning meetings and introductions had taken place where placements were planned, but many placements had been made on an emergency basis, in these cases it is the Agency's policy to hold a planning meeting within 72 hours of placement. Foster carers confirmed that such meeting took place.

Foster carers are provided with training regarding child protection and safe caring, the Agency also has clear policies for staff and foster carers. There has been no child protection referrals made since the last inspection in January 2005.

Some foster carer's files contained Safe Caring Guidelines but these were broad based, with no reference to the foster family's circumstances or the particular child's needs. The guidelines were also not signed by the placing social worker. Three of the four carers visited had no written safe caring rules at all at the time of the inspection but the new supervising social worker had raised this with two of the foster carers, and had undertaken to provide guidance. This had not been undertaken with the third foster family. The recommendation of the last inspection has therefore not been met.

The Managers of this agency are suitable people and all required checks have been carried out. Overall, the recruitment of staff and carers followed good practice, and appropriate checks as to suitability were carried out, with CRB checks and other checks being renewed after three years. All adults who provide substantial care for young people are required to have a CRB check. Inspectors saw evidence of these checks.

Original CRB checks were still being placed on carers' files, despite the good practice recommendation of the last inspection. There was also one on file for a foster carer provided for another agency, not Progress, and another for a support carer provided for a voluntary agency. Progress must always undertake these checks themselves in order to receive full information.

It is the policy for agency staff to be subject to the same interviewing process as permanent staff, including the completion of an application form, and for written references to be sought and followed up by telephone. This process was seen to be in operation for an agency member of staff expected to start work in January 2006. However, permanent members of staff who had been introduced by an agency had not been subject to the full requirements of schedule 1 in that Progress had not undertaken their own CRB before they started work although it had been received within two months.

There was no proof of identity on most files, although this had obviously been seen for the CRB check. There were no photographs on files when first seen, but on enquiry prints of the staff identity photographs were produced for the two files in question but another, earlier file was also seen to be without a photograph.

Inspectors were concerned to note that in respect of one member of staff the Regional Director had provided a reference for this member of staff and had also been part of the interview although inspectors were informed was not part of the appointment process. This conflict of interest should have been noted and alternative arrangements made.

The fostering panel was not observed for this inspection as this standard had been exceeded at the last inspection. However, a number of issues arose during the inspection regarding the operation and functioning of the Panel.

In respect of a carer household, inspectors were informed that the carers' approval had been changed without their agreement. The letter sent by the chair of panel incorrectly stated that this change had been made following a review, and did not give the carers 28 days to make representations, as required by regulation 29(7). In addition, it is the agency decision maker who must write any such letter, since the panel can only make recommendations, not decisions. The panel and the agency had acted illegally in this matter, which must now be revisited, using the legally determined processes. The supervising social worker's report was not entirely factually accurate, and a revised report and a foster home review must be prepared for the consideration of the panel.

The last inspection report stated that "Due to the resignation of one member, there is a vacancy for a social worker member, and the person appointed to this vacancy must have experience in fostering. A review of the membership is scheduled to take place in the next few months, because the Agency feels the membership no longer reflects the Agency's focus and Statement of Purpose."

Inspectors had access to the last 3 minutes of the Fostering Panel and minutes on foster carers files and noted that the Panel was not quorate for a number of meetings as no social worker with fostering experience was present. The recommendations of that Panel are therefore not valid and must be reconsidered by a quorate meeting.

# 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

The Agency promotes equal opportunities and ensures that young people's diverse needs are met. The Agency's plan to employ a teacher will enable young people's educational needs to be better met.

## EVIDENCE:

The Agency and the foster carers spoken to by the inspectors placed a high value on education and supported the young people well in respect of their education. Where one young person had been failing to attend school, the foster carer was seen to liaise well with the school and to take appropriate action to get the young person back into school. Most foster carers attend parent consultation meetings at school with the young people, however, one foster carer reported that she was not aware of any specific meetings being held at the school, nor had she had a Personal Education Plan for either of the young people, who had been in her care for 18 months.

Another foster carer reported that a young person who had been placed with her in July 2005 after a lengthy introduction had not been found a suitable educational placement to meet his special needs, consequently the young person had missed a full term of education. The foster carer had spent considerable time and energy in an attempt to rectify this matter. Due to staff shortages, the Agency had not provided appropriate support or liaison with the placing authority until just prior to the inspection. The young person informed the inspector that he wanted to attend school and was bored spending every day with the foster carers. Inspectors were informed that this situation had

been satisfactorily resolved and the young person was due to attend the school for a period of introduction after Christmas. Inspectors were also informed that the Agency had decided to employ a teacher who could provide appropriate support to foster carers and young people if a young person was unable to attend school for any reason.

Foster carers also encouraged a wide range of social activities to develop young people's self-esteem.

Foster carers were seen to be pro-active in ensuring that young people's needs are met. A young person with disabilities and needing to use a wheelchair resulted in foster carer's advocating for improved accessibility to the temple, they were also pro-active in extending her cultural links giving her new experiences. The foster carers home had been appropriately adapted to meet the young person's needs.

The Agency has a wide range of carers from different ethnic and racial backgrounds. There was evidence that such issues have been taken into consideration when making placements with most placements being culturally, racially and religiously appropriate, where this is not the case, carers are given support to meet any gaps identified. White Irish children are transracially placed with carers of Indian heritage in one home. The Agency is very aware of this, and has offered a white family placement to the placing authority but this has been turned down by the placing social worker because the children are considered to be well settled with their current carers and the care plan is still rehabilitation home.

The Agency provides foster carers with training in respect of diversity and the foster carers' handbook gives clear guidance as to the agency's expectations.

# **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**

The Agency promotes contact for young people and consultation with all parties, however, this would be assisted by improvements in communication regarding plans for the Agency and especially regarding how a complaint can be made.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Carers were seen to be proactive in promoting family contact. Where appropriate, family members, particularly siblings, were welcomed into the foster home. Carers were concerned in one instance where contact appeared to have been denied by the court without good reason. In general, arrangements for contact were clearly set out in paperwork. However, no risk assessments were seen in respect of contact, and this recommendation of the last inspection will therefore be repeated.

Some carers who attended meetings or completed questionnaires felt well consulted by the agency, particularly regarding training matters. Amongst others there was a strong feeling that 'Nothing changes', that carers put forward ideas and issues, especially around payments to carers but that action is not taken. However, it appeared that these matters were actively being addressed by the agency at the time of the inspection, and it may be that the key need is to improve communication with carers so that they are aware of these processes.

Those children and young people who completed questionnaires said they were consulted by their carers about a range of appropriate matters, and two said that changes in schooling or contact arrangements had been made as a result of what they had said. Most had been asked by the fostering agency for their views on their carers, but not on the operation of the agency as a whole.

None of the placing social workers reported receiving information on how to make a complaint about the agency, and this was also a theme for foster carers and children.

# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- The fostering service prepares young people for adulthood.(NMS 14)
- The fostering service pays carers an allowance and agreed expenses as specified.(NMS 29)

**The Commission considers Standards 29 the key standard to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.**

## JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

### 29

Foster carers receive adequate and timely payments to enable them to appropriately care for young people.

## EVIDENCE:

The agency generally provides placements for younger people and none of the young people seen by inspectors had reached the age where a Pathway Plan is required. One young person will be 16 in the next month and it has been agreed that a leaving care worker will be appointed at his next review. The Agency gives clear guidance to its foster carers regarding preparing young people for adulthood.

The Agency has a written policy in respect of payments made to foster carers, which is reviewed annually. The Commission for Social Care Inspection received complaints from 2 foster carers in June 2005 regarding the payment of holiday allowances in arrears. Inspection of the Agency's policies and procedures confirmed that the Agency pays "an annual holiday allowance for each child in placement. This is payable once per year from the date on which the child was placed" Consequently some foster carers have to subsidise any holiday arrangements until payment is made. The inspector recommended that appropriate changes be made, after the consultation with foster carers, so that foster carers do not have to use their own financial resources to care for a young person placed with them.

The Agency has reviewed this policy after consultation with foster carers and inspectors were informed that as from April 2006, foster carers will receive a

weekly amount of money, which will enable them to budget for holiday arrangements for the young people placed.

Inspectors were also informed that a review is taking place to consider the payment of retainers to foster carers and the payment of allowances when a young person is receiving respite care. Both these issues are issues raised by foster carers with the Agency.

Foster carers informed inspectors that they received payments in a timely fashion.

# 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, 2, 4, 5, 17, 21, 22, 23 and 24**

The Agency is managed well with a focus on ensuring that foster carers are well supported and ensuring the well being of young people, however, the Agency must ensure there is consistency across all offices.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Inspectors were provided with Progress Children's Services Statement of Purpose for the fostering service. It had been approved by the Directors of Progress in March 2005 and is scheduled to be reviewed in March 2006. The Statement of Purpose has been updated in line with the requirements of the last inspection.

Inspectors were informed that the Children's Guide has not been provided to young people in recent months as the Agency have been updating their Guide so that it is relevant to the young people placed. They have developed a guide for young people 0-10 and are also developing a guide for young people 11-18. The guide produced does not meet the requirement made at the last inspection, as it does not give any information as to who a young person can speak to if they are unhappy or wish to make a complaint nor does it include the full contact details of the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

Evidence gained at this and previous inspections indicate that the Agency is well managed. The Manager is due to commence a Diploma in Management Studies in January. She had hoped to commence the course in September but due to shortages of staff she felt that this was not a credible option.

The Registered Manager undertakes regular reviews of the service and has also produced an annual report which looks at the work the agency has undertaken, any gaps and how these can be rectified. The documents are useful and have been sent to the Commission for Social Care Inspection for information purposes.

Nonetheless, inspectors noted gaps in the service provided by the Agency, especially in the Hemel Hempstead office, which had not been addressed fully by this monitoring. This situation is further exacerbated by that office being managed by the Regional Director to whom the Registered Manager is responsible. Inspectors believe that clarification of these roles is required to allow an efficient service. The service has a Conflicts of Interest policy for staff, however, as previously reported this has not been fully followed and the policy has still not been developed to cover carers as recommended at the last inspection.

Staff are well supported by the manager with regular supervisions sessions, team meetings and detailed policies and procedures.

Whilst the agency has a wide range of foster carers from different ethnic, racial and religious groups, the agency has identified that it required additional foster carers from different groups to accurately reflect society and to provide racially appropriate placements for young people referred to the Agency. The manager informed the inspectors that the main gap was that the Agency did

not have sufficient carers from white and Caribbean backgrounds. Work has been undertaken to address this issue, however, progress is limited due to the lack of qualified and experienced staff to undertake this work. Again the agency has identified this as an issue for its development, nonetheless, numerous attempts to recruit staff have been unsuccessful. The agency has relied on a high level of agency workers to fill these gaps, which has had a detrimental effect on the support offered to foster carers.

Due to the lack of social workers within the agency, the agency has recruited independent social workers to undertake the assessment of foster carers. Whilst inspectors were informed that these workers are supervised on a regular basis, an assessment undertaken by an independent social worker examined by inspectors did not meet the required standard, with important omissions in the report. This had not been picked up by either the supervisor or the Panel. Nonetheless, other assessments seen on carers' files, undertaken by social workers employed by the Agency, were detailed and contained robust analysis of the foster carers skills and any gaps and how these could be met. Not all staff had received training in respect of assessing foster carers and these staff must undertake appropriate training.

The Agency provides a high level of support to foster carers, including training, encouragement for self help groups, out of hours support, respite placements where this is appropriate and in the young person's best interest and comprehensive policies and procedures. However the role of the family support worker needs to be clarified as information given to inspectors suggests that she has been undertaking duties relevant to a qualified worker.

Whilst the agency has recruited an independent reviewing officer to undertake foster carers reviews, examination of files suggests that not all foster carers have been reviewed in the past 12months. The agency has identified this gap and has taken some action to remedy this, but the situation is still not satisfactory. The annual reviews undertaken showed an improvement in the agency actively seeking the views of all relevant parties prior to the review taking place.

Whilst most of the foster carers in the West Midlands area had received regular supervision, the foster carers within the Hemel Hempstead area had not received any supervision, as there had been no qualified worker in post. In addition, the foster carers spoken to do not understand the meaning of supervision and work must be undertaken to ensure that all carers understand the requirement for supervision.

There was evidence of unannounced visits on files read by the inspectors, and a useful format had been developed to provide a focus for these visits. The Foster Care Agreement had been updated since the last inspection and is now compliant with Schedule 5, however these had not yet been signed and placed on foster carers files.

The agency has developed their pre-approval training to enable experienced foster carers to partake in the training to enable prospective carers to have the opportunity to benefit from their experience and knowledge. The agency has also developed its post-approval training programme so that a rolling programme of training is provided, which covers all areas required by the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. The manager informed the inspector that it is hoped that further work will be undertaken by a private agency to develop foster carer training further. Carers training needs are discussed regularly during supervision sessions and at the carer annual review and a pro-forma has been developed to record training undertaken.

Both foster carers and young people's are well maintained and stored securely. The manager undertakes regular audits of young people's files to ensure that all required documentation is available, and takes appropriate action if information has not been received. Records are generally of a high quality, however, in one of the offices the contact sheets are not consistently signed by the worker making the recording, consequently it is not always clear who has made the recording.

Examination of files and in discussion with foster carers it was evident that not all young people had a Foster Placement Agreement, which complied with Schedule 6 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. Evidence on file and in discussion with the manager indicated that the Agency had actively pursued this issue with the placing authority. The Agency had developed their own Foster Placement Agreement but had been informed that the West Midlands Consortium had reached an agreement that Authorities would only use the standard Foster Placement Agreement. This does not comply with Schedule 6 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. Examination of the Foster Placement Agreement developed by the Agency also does not comply with these Regulations.

Inspectors did not inspect the financial activity of the Agency as these standards were met at the last inspection and no information has come to light since which indicated in a change in this 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

<b>BEING HEALTHY</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>12</b>	2

<b>STAYING SAFE</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>3</b>	3
<b>6</b>	3
<b>8</b>	1
<b>9</b>	3
<b>15</b>	2
<b>30</b>	2

<b>ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>7</b>	4
<b>13</b>	2
<b>31</b>	N/A

<b>MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>10</b>	3
<b>11</b>	2

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

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

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	34 (3) Sch 6	The Registered Person must ensure that as part of the Foster Placement Agreement arrangements for the consent to treatment and delegation of consent are clearly recorded.	06/03/06
2	FS8	34 (3) Sch 6	The Registered Manager must ensure that before making a placement, the responsible authority enters into a written agreement (foster placement agreement), which covers all matters specified in Schedule 6 including elements of matching.  Timescale of 14.03.05 not met	06/03/06
3	FS8	34 (b)	The Registered Person must ensure that all young people are placed with foster carers whose approval is consistent with the age and needs of the young person.	12/02/06
4	FS15	27 (1)	The Registered Person must ensure that the Agency rather than previous employers or agencies undertakes CRB checks for staff employed by Progress and foster carers.	12/02/06
5	FS15	22 (1)	The Registered Person must	12/02/06

			ensure that the record of persons working for the Agency includes all elements required by Schedule 2.  Timescale of 01.05.05 not met	
6	FS15	20	The Registered Person must ensure that the recruitment process is fair and equitable. Staff who provide a reference for an applicant must declare an interest during the recruitment process.	12/02/06
7	FS30	29(2)	The Registered Person must ensure that the legally determined processes are followed, including that the views of foster carers are taken into consideration. Carers' must be informed of the representation procedure if they disagree with the Panel's recommendation.	12/02/06
8	FS30	29	The Registered Person must ensure that the Agency decision maker signs the notice of foster carers approval.	12/02/06
8	FS30	24 (3)	The Registered Person must ensure that the Fostering Panel is properly constituted as required by the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.	12/02/06
9	FS30	25 (1)	The Registered Person must ensure that any recommendation made by the Fostering Panel when the Panel was not quorate are re-considered by the a quorate Panel.	12/02/06
10	FS13	16 (3)	The Registered Person must ensure in liaison with the placing authority that all young people receive suitable education provision.	01/03/06
11	FS11	18 (2)	The Registered Person must ensure that all young people, their foster carers and placing social workers are aware of the Agency's complaints procedure.	01/03/06

12	FS1	3 (3)	The Registered Person must ensure that the Children's Guide is updated so that it includes full details of the complaint's procedure and the full contact details for the Commission for Social Care Inspection.  Timescale of 01.04.05 not met.	01/03/06
13	FS1	3 (4)	The Registered Person must ensure that the updated Children's Guide is distributed as required by Regulation 3 (4) of the Fostering Services Regulation 2002.  Timescale of 01.04.05 not met.	01/03/06
14	FS5	44	The Registered Person must ensure that there is clarity about the management structure, and the lines of accountability.	01/03/06
15	FS17	19	The Registered Person must renew the Agency's efforts to recruit sufficient qualified and experienced staff to enable the Agency to function effectively.	01/04/06
16	FS17	27	The Registered Person must ensure a thorough and rigorous assessment process is undertaken for all prospective foster carers and that such assessments consider all aspects identified in Standard 17.7.	01/03/06
17	FS21	29 (1)	The Registered Person must ensure that all foster carers are reviewed annually.  Timescale of 01.04.05 not met	01/03/06
18	FS22	19	The Registered Person must ensure that all foster carers are provided with regular supervision by a qualified social worker.	12/02/06
19	FS22	28(5)(b)	The Registered Person must ensure that all the foster Care Agreements in place on carers' files comply with Schedule 5 of the Regulations.	12/02/06

			Timescale of 01.04.05 not met.	
20	FS24	34(3)	The Registered Person must ensure that all young people have a Foster Placement Agreement, which complies with the Regulations.	01/03/06

## 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	FS6	The Registered Person should ensure that the updated risk assessments format is used for all placements.
2	FS8	The Registered Person must take all possible steps to ensure that all information is available at the time of placement.
3	FS9	Safe caring guidelines should be written, for each foster home, in consultation with the carer and everyone else in the household. A copy should be kept on file and the guidelines should be cleared with the child's social worker and are explained clearly and appropriately to the child.
4	FS15	The Registered Person should ensure that CRB checks are securely stored (not on foster carers' files) and should be destroyed once viewed by an inspector from the Commission for Social Care Inspection.
5	FS15	The Fostering Service must ensure that all staff undertaking assessments of foster carers have received appropriate training in this area.
6	FS13	The Registered Person should ensure that foster carers are aware of and fulfil their role in supporting young people regarding the preparation of Personal Education Plans and at consultation meetings.
7	FS10	The Registered Person should ensure that a risk assessment as required by Standard 10.6 is undertaken prior to contact taking place and that this is recorded in writing and placed on file.
8	FS11	The Registered Person should ensure that young people's views are sought when developing the Agency.
9	FS4	The Registered Person should ensure that a policy for foster carers is developed, informing them of their responsibility to declare any possible conflicts of interest.

10	FS22	The Registered Person should ensure that the family support worker only undertakes the task as required by the job description.
11	FS22	The Registered Person must ensure that all staff and foster carers understand the requirement for supervision.
12	FS24	The Registered Person should ensure that all records are adequately completed and signed.

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

Shrewsbury Local Office

1st Floor, Chapter House South

Abbey Lawn

Abbey Foregate

SHREWSBURY

SY2 5DE

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120

Email: [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk)

Web: [www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)

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