



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## Fostering Services

### **Tameside MBC Fostering Services**

Tameside MBC, Social Services  
Level 2, Council Offices, Wellington Road  
Ashton under Lyne  
Tameside  
OL6 6DL

16th–22nd March 2005

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

Launched in April 2004, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is the single inspectorate for social care in England.

The Commission combines the work formerly done by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI), the SSI/Audit Commission Joint Review Team and the National Care Standards Commission.

### **The role of CSCI is to:**

- Promote improvement in social care
- Inspect all social care - for adults and children - in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Publish annual reports to Parliament on the performance of social care and on the state of the social care market
- Inspect and assess 'Value for Money' of council social services
- Hold performance statistics on social care
- Publish the 'star ratings' for council social services
- Register and inspect services against national standards
- Host the Children's Rights Director role.

## **Inspection Methods & Findings**

SECTION B of this report summarises key findings and evidence from this inspection. The following 4-point scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

### **The 4-point scale ranges from:**

- 4 - Standard Exceeded (Commendable)
- 3 - Standard Met (No Shortfalls)
- 2 - Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)
- 1 - Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

'O' or blank in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

'9' in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not applicable.

'X' is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

**FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION**

**Local Authority Fostering Service?**

YES

**Name of Authority**

Tameside MBC Fostering Services

**Address**

Tameside MBC, Social Services, Level 2, Council Offices,  
Wellington Road, Ashton under Lyne, Lancs, OL6 6DL

**Local Authority Manager**

Jackie Dudley

**Tel No:**

0161 342 8355

**Address**

Tameside MBC, Social Services, Level 2, Council Offices,  
Wellington Road, Ashton under Lyne, Lancs, OL6 6DL

**Fax No:**

**Email Address**

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**Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)**

NO

**Name of Agency**

**Tel No**

**Address**

**Fax No**

**Email Address**

**Registered Number of IFA**

**Name of Registered Provider**

**Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)**

**Date of first registration**

19/02/03

**Date of latest registration certificate**

19/02/03

**Registration Conditions Apply ?**

NA

**Date of last inspection**

2-4/3/04

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		16 <sup>th</sup> –22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2005	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		09:00 am	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Helen Humphreys	138840
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>	NA	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>	NA	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>4</b>	NA	
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.		NA	
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>		NA	
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>		Joy Dunbavin and Jackie Dudley	

**Introduction to Report and Inspection**

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**Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State**

**Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection**

**Statutory Requirements from this Inspection**

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**(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)**

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**2. Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service**

**3. Management of the fostering service**

**4. Securing and promoting welfare**

**5. Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers**

**6. Records**

**7. Fitness of premises**

**8. Financial requirements**

**9. Fostering panels**

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## INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Independent and local authority fostering services which fall within the jurisdiction of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) are subject to inspection, to establish if the service is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the Children Act 1989 as amended.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Tameside MBC Fostering Services. The inspection findings relate to the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services published by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000, for independent and local authority fostering services respectively.

The Fostering Services Regulations 2002 are secondary legislation, with which a service provider must comply. Service providers are expected to comply fully with the National Minimum Standards. The National Minimum standards will form the basis for judgements by the CSCI in relation to independent fostering agencies regarding registration, the imposition and variation of registration conditions and any enforcement action, and in relation to local authority fostering services regarding notices to the local authority and reports to the Secretary of State under section 47 of the Care Standards Act 2000. The report follows the format of the National Minimum Standards and the numbering shown in the report corresponds to that of the standards.

The report will show the following:

- Inspection methods used
- Key findings and evidence
- Overall ratings in relation to the standards
- Compliance with the Regulations
- Notifications to the Local Authority and Reports to the Secretary of State
- Required actions on the part of the provider
- Recommended good practice
- Summary of the findings
- Report of the Lay Assessor (where relevant)
- Providers response and proposed action plan to address findings

This report is a public document.

## INSPECTION VISITS

Inspections will be undertaken in line with the agreed regulatory framework with additional visits as required. This is in accordance with the provisions of the Care Standards Act 2000. The following inspection methods have been used in the production of this report. The report represents the inspector's findings from the evidence found at the specified inspection dates.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

Tameside MBC has a dedicated Family Placement Service which is managed by the Unit Business Manager for Looked After Children. Their main purpose is to provide a diverse range of carers to cater for the needs of looked after children in Tameside and, in partnership with other sectors, to ensure the best outcomes for the young people.

The team recruits, assesses, supervises and supports foster carers and is responsible for ensuring that their training needs are met. Services offered by the team include emergency placements, task centred placements, long term or permanent carers, respite care and network care placements, where the aim is to support families before a crisis happens by the provision of day care and respite.

The service is also responsible for kinship care and works with the disability team for respite placements for children with disabilities.

## **PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **Inspector's Summary**

(This is an overview of the inspector's findings, which includes good practice, quality issues, areas to be addressed or developed and any other concerns.)

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council Fostering Service was inspected for the third time against the National Minimum Standards. The Inspection took place over five days and included interviewing, carers, and a group of prospective carers, young people and staff, the inspection of records and policies and procedures and an observation of The Panel and a training session.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This was not assessed on this occasion.

### **Fitness to provide or manage a fostering service**

The Manager is currently undertaking NVQ level 4 in Management.

### **Managing of the Fostering Service**

The Fostering Service has devised systems to monitor the service and the work of staff and carers. There was more evidence that the service is being managed effectively and efficiently, although in some areas the practice did not always match the policy.

### **Securing and promoting welfare**

The carers interviewed were found to be providing safe, healthy and nurturing environments. The arrangements for annual reviews have been revised and it was reported that these are now being undertaken within the specified timescales.

Carers reported that they find it difficult with the turnover of social work staff and their general criticism was at social work staff. Some concerns were raised in relation to matching and a paucity of information given to carers at the start and during the placements.

### **Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers**

The Fostering Service is fully staffed and has increased since the last inspection. The staff presented as loyal and committed to the Service and carers.

The team continue to very pro-active on the recruitment of carers with good results.

Most carers reported that they receive a good service from fostering service and enjoyed fostering for Tameside. The assessments of all carers was found to be satisfactory.



**Records**

The Fostering Service holds all the records required by the Regulations. Further work is required on the records of complaints and allegations. The majority of the children's files inspected contained the key documents, including care plans and placement agreements, however the information relating to why care proceedings had been invoked was not clear on some files. A sample of carer's files were inspected and found to be in good order but not all contained Foster care Agreements.

**Fitness of Premises**

Not assessed on this occasion.

**Financial Requirements**

Not assessed on this occasion

**Fostering Panels**

The constitution of the Panel inspected met with Regulation. However the Panel was not quorate on the day of the inspection. The impact of the Decision Maker was clear on the recommendations made by Panel. An experienced independent social work practitioner chairs the Panel very efficiently and effectively.

**Short Term Breaks**

This service was not assessed on this occasion.

**Family and Friends as Carers**

Tameside Fostering Service has appointed a specific worker to work with the relative carers and a support group has been formed; most carers are receiving regular visits.

**Service User Involvement.**

The homes of four foster carers were visited and the inspector spent time with some of the young people placed and children of the foster carers. The inspector also met with a group of prospective carers who were undertaking pre-approval training.

**Questionnaires**

A random selection of fifty carers were sent a questionnaire and eight were returned. The majority of carers were very satisfied with the support they were receiving.

Questionnaires were received from placing social workers and all, with the exception of one gave positive support for the fostering service and carers. Two questionnaires were received from young people who were also satisfied with the care they were receiving.

## Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

**(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)**

The following statutory Reports or Notifications are to be made under the Care Standards Act as a result of the findings of this inspection:

Report to the Secretary of State under section 47(3) of the Care Standards Act 2000 that the Commission considers the Local Authority's fostering service satisfies the regulatory requirements:

NO

Notice to the Local Authority under section 47(5) of the Care Standards Act 2000 of failure(s) to satisfy regulatory requirements in their fostering service which are not substantial, and specifying the action the Commission considers the Authority should take to remedy the failure(s), informing the Secretary of State of that Notice:

NO

Report to the Secretary of State under section 47(4)(a) of the Care Standards Act of a failure by a Local Authority fostering service to satisfy regulatory requirements which is not considered substantial:

NO

Report to the Secretary of State under section 47(1) of the Care Standards Act 2000 of substantial failure to satisfy regulatory requirements by a Local Authority fostering service:

NO

**The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:**

## Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NO

**If No please list below**

### STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Identified below are areas not addressed from the last inspection report, which indicate a non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000 and Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

**Action is being taken by the Commission for Social Care Inspection to monitor compliance with the above requirements.**

**COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)**

**(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)**

**Providers and managers of registered independent fostering agencies must comply with statutory conditions of their registration. The conditions applying to this registration are listed below, with the inspector's assessment of compliance from the evidence at the time of this inspection.**

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
NA		
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

**Lead Inspector**      Helen Humphreys      **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Second Inspector**      NA      **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Regulation Manager**      Sarah Woods      **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**      \_\_\_\_\_

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The appropriate Officer of the Local Authority or the Registered Person (as applicable) is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how requirements are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

### STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Identified below are areas addressed in the main body of the report which indicate non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children Act 1989, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002, or the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. The Authority or Registered Person(s) is/are required to comply within the given time scales in order to comply with the Regulatory Requirements for fostering services.

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement	
1	42 and Schedule 7	FS4	Tameside MBC must ensure that all systems to monitor the activity of the service, including complaints is implemented effectively.	30/6/05
2	34	FS8	Tameside MBC must not make placements with carers outside their approval age and number. Tameside MBC must not place children with carers who do not have sufficient experience and skills to meet their needs.	30/6/05
3	17	FS8	Tameside MBC must ensure that placing social workers provide to carers and fostering staff all available information about the young people. (Original timescale of 30/6/04 has not been met)	30/6/05
4	34 and Schedule 6	FS8	Tameside MBC must ensure that all Placements are supported by an effective Placement Agreement.	30/7/05
5	17	FS12	Tameside MBC must ensure that all carers have all available information in relation to health of young people and that where there are gaps this information is accessed. All young people must have a written health care record. (Original timescale of 30/7/04 has not been met)	30/7/05

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Identified below are areas addressed in the main body of the report which indicate non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children Act 1989, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002, or the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. The Authority or Registered Person(s) is/are required to comply within the given time scales in order to comply with the Regulatory Requirements for fostering services.

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement	
6	5	FS15	Tameside MBC must ensure that 'gaps' in employment history are recorded. Tameside MBC must ensure that all staff employed in the service have CRB Disclosures at an Enhanced level.	30/6/05
7	35	FS21	Tameside MBC must ensure that all carers receive regular supervision, in line with the policy.	30/6/05
8	17	FS21	Tameside MBC must improve the service to carers and fostered children from placing social workers.	30/9/05
9	30	FS24	Tameside MBC must ensure that key documents and information is recorded on appropriate files	30/8/05
10	24	FS30	Tameside MBC must ensure that the Panel does not meet when it is inquorate. (Original timescale of 30/7/04 has not been met)	30/6/05

### GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

Identified below are areas addressed in the main body of the report which relate to the National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice issues which should be considered for implementation by the Authority or Registered Person(s).

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	FS8	Tameside MBC should not place a child with carers from an independent Agency without consulting the inspection report.
2	FS9	Tameside MBC should ensure that all carers receive child protection training.
3	FS21	Tameside MBC should ensure that all staff work in line with the policy and procedures.
4	FS30	Tameside MBC should try to encourage better attendance from the medical advisor at the Panel. Tameside MBC should consider appointing an additional independent member.

\* Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix e.g FS10 refers to Standard 10.

**PART B****INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods have been used in the production of this report

Number of Inspector days spent	5
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	YES
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	YES
• Contact with parents	NO
• Contact with supervising social workers	YES
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	NO
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	NO
Interview with panel chair	YES
Observation of foster carer training	YES
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	16/3/05
Time of Inspection	9.30AM
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	55



The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the CSCI assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards have been met. The following scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The scale ranges from:

- |                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 4 - Standard Exceeded   | (Commendable)      |
| 3 - Standard Met        | (No Shortfalls)    |
| 2 - Standard Almost Met | (Minor Shortfalls) |
| 1 - Standard Not Met    | (Major Shortfalls) |

"0" in the "Standard met?" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

"9" in the "Standard met?" box denotes standard not applicable.

"X" is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

## Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- There is clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and the fostering service ensures that they meet those aims and objectives.

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

There is a clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and of what facilities and services they provide.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

0

Not assessed on this occasion

## Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The fostering service is provided and managed by those with the appropriate skills and experience to do so efficiently and effectively and by those who are suitable to work with children.

### Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.4)

The people involved in carrying on and managing the fostering service possess the necessary business and management skills and financial expertise to manage the work efficiently and effectively and have the necessary knowledge and experience of childcare and fostering to do so in a professional manner.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

At the time of the inspection the manager had been in post for 4 weeks, having filled the post, which had been vacant for over 12 months, although there had been interim arrangements in place.

The manager has relevant qualification and experience to carry out the task and has managed a fostering service previously. She was aware of the task in hand and staff when interviewed indicated that in their opinion the manager was providing appropriate leadership skills and providing good support to them. A complete assessment of the management skills of the manager could not be undertaken due to the short period of time she had been in post, however early indications were positive.

### Standard 3 (3.1 - 3.4)

Any persons carrying on or managing the fostering service are suitable people to run a business concerned with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Personnel File of the Manager and Unit Business Manager were found to be satisfactory.

## Management of the Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The fostering service is managed ethically and efficiently, delivering a good quality foster care service and avoiding confusion and conflicts of role.

Standard 4 (4.1 – 4.5)

There are clear procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the fostering service and ensuring quality performance.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

2

The manager had created a system for monitoring and controlling the service and was beginning to implement this. She reported that she would be undertaking an audit of all Foster Carer's files to gain a clear understanding of the status and placement situation and an audit of the caseloads of the staff.

The record of statutory notifications was in place, however it was not clear if all notifications had been made to CSCI and the manager again confirmed that she intended to monitor these in future.

The record of complaints and allegations had prior to the inspection been re-organised. However records relating to investigations were not complete and some records were missing. The manager had created in draft form a policy and procedural document relating to complaints and allegations in an attempt to bring some order to the situation.

Tameside MBC must ensure that all systems to monitor the activity of the service effectively implemented.

**Number of statutory notifications made to CSCI in last 12 months:**

13

**Death of a child placed with foster parents.**

0

**Referral to Secretary of State of a person working for the service as unsuitable to work with children.**

0

**Serious illness or accident of a child.**

5

**Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.**

0

**Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.**

0

**Serious incident relating to a foster child involving calling the police to a foster home.**

3

**Serious complaint about a foster parent.**

4

**Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.**

1

**Number of complaints made to CSCI about the agency in the past 12 months:**

0

**Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:**

0

**Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)**

**The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.**

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

0

Not assessed on this occasion

## Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The fostering service promotes and safeguards the child/young person's physical, mental and emotional welfare.

### Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

The fostering service makes available foster carers who provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The homes of four foster carers were visited and found to be satisfactory with good standards of furnishings, fittings and cleanliness found. All young people who were interviewed reported that they were satisfied with their care situations. Their comments included, 'It's good here', 'Everything is great', '.....love us lots' 'I want to stay here for ever'.

The bedrooms inspected were found to be satisfactory and provided appropriate accommodation.

All carers had on file a 'safe caring' policy and carers who were interviewed were aware of health and safety matters and took appropriate action with people not known to the fostered children.

Unannounced inspections of the carers are carried out annually and records of this could be found on some files.

With the exception of one all placing social workers were satisfied with care provided and reported that in their opinion the placements were appropriate. One social worker raised some concerns, which were passed to the manager of the service.

### Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

The fostering service ensures that children and young people, and their families, are provided with foster care services which value diversity and promote equality.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The Fostering Service has developed a number of strategies to recruit carers from members of the various and diverse communities in the Borough.

The Family Link Service is able to provide a range of carers who can offer placements to children with disabilities. Carers who are not part of this service who care for young people with disabilities are provided with additional equipment and support. The Family Link carers are offered specific training to meet their needs.

Carers who were caring for young people with a disability reported that they had access to additional support should they require it.

Carers are encouraged to support young people to be involved in activities and maintain interests and hobbies and this information is contained with the Foster Carer's Handbook.

The foster carers could outline the range of activities the young people are involved with and the additional help they had provided to maintain young people's places at an activity. For example one Carer takes her fostered child to Beavers and stays to help the leaders due the behavioural difficulty of the child.

It was reported that promoting diversity and ADP is promoted through all aspects of the service including recruitment material, Statement of Purpose, training during the preparation groups and other training.

#### **Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)**

**Local authority fostering services, and voluntary agencies placing children in their own right, ensure that each child or young person placed in foster care is carefully matched with a carer capable of meeting her/his assessed needs. For agencies providing foster carers to local authorities, those agencies ensure that they offer carers only if they represent appropriate matches for a child for whom a local authority is seeking a carer.**

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>
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<b>Standard met?</b>
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<b>2</b>
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There was evidence from discussions with the manager, staff and from inspection of records and observations during this inspection and at previous inspections that a high priority is given to making appropriate matching. All staff were aware of the need to make an appropriate match and the difficulties encountered if an inappropriate match is made.

Whilst recognising that Tameside MBC have a duty of care and on occasion have to make a less than 'perfect match', consideration should still be given to placements which become long term following a placement made in an emergency, without due consideration to the original matching considerations. This has been a recommendation of all previous inspections.

During this inspection a number of concerns were raised in relation to matching.

Some carers had children placed outside their approval range, relating to number and age. There was some evidence that young people with difficult and challenging behaviours had been placed with new carers and in most situations this had been their initial placement. Panel papers and annual review reports reported on this and acknowledged that carers had been placed in difficult situations. Some carers reported that they had found this difficult and had considered resigning as carers.

The Panel were asked to agree a 'long term' match for three boys from the same family. The carers had been caring for two of the boys for some months. No consideration had been given to the health care needs of the carers despite the fact that the carers were aged over 60 and were to provide a home for young people for at least the next 8-10 years and that within the next five years the carers would be come homeless due to the housing situation.

The Panel were asked to agree a long- term match for one boy, being placed with an

Independent Fostering Agency. The Placement's Manager confirmed that he had not read the inspection report prior to making the placement.

Whilst recognising the demand on the service for carers and the drive to place as many young people as possible 'in house' and the increase in the 'Looked After' Population in Tameside, these are not examples of good practice and affect the outcomes for young people in relation to placement break down.

Tameside MBC must not make placements with carers outside their approval age and number. Tameside MBC must take greater Carer when placing young people with difficult behaviour with new and inexperienced carers. Tameside MBC should not place children with Independent Agencies without prior consulting the Inspection report.

Additionally carers via interview and questionnaire indicated a lack of information at the time of placement. One Carer reported that she had incorrect information given to her including the wrong dates of birth and an omission that the children placed had 'middle' names. This has implications for issues relation to identity, particularly as one young person had his birthday celebrated on the wrong day. The files of the young people placed who were interviewed as part of the inspection contained a considerable amount of information including in most cases detailed chronologies. Carers did not have access to this information and yet in some cases the carers were long- term carers and in one, the carers had been approved as adopters.

Tameside MBC must continue to obtain as much information as possible about the young people placed and ensure that this is passed into the carers. This has been a requirement at all previous inspections.

Since the last inspection the Service has revised the Placement Agreement and more recent placements have been made using the new agreement and this was evidenced on file. However not all of the files inspected had Agreements in place of either style. The manager reported that all existing placements will be reviewed and new Placement Agreements will be issued. Few carers had Placement Agreements in their homes.

Tameside MBC must ensure that all placements are made using a Placement Agreement which sets out the expectation of the carers and indicates how any additional resources, if required will be provided.

#### **Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)**

**The fostering service protects each child or young person from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.**

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
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All young people who were interviewed reported that they felt safe in their placement and that carers gave them strategies to keep themselves safe. No young people reported that they were or had been bullied.

Carers could outline strategies for keeping young people safe and what they would do if they encountered instances of bullying at school or in the community.

Carers have access to child protection training and safe caring issues are covered on the pre-approval training in depth and included as part of the assessment process. However not



all carers have received child protection training and Tameside MBC should continue to encourage carers to attend. Those who had attended reported that they had found this useful.

**Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:**

100

%

**Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)**

The fostering service makes sure that each child or young person in foster care is encouraged to maintain and develop family contacts and friendships as set out in her/his care plan and/or foster placement agreement.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

3

The fostering service has a policy on contact, which was known to staff. The fostering service guidelines for carers include suggestions for encouraging young people to maintain contact and outlines the need for foster carers to record details of contact. Carers were clear about their roles and responsibilities in regard to contact. The staff reported that they discuss contact arrangements during supervision.

The carers who were interviewed or returned questionnaires were clear about their responsibilities in relation to contact and there was strong commitment to this, particularly by carers with younger children and babies, who were supporting daily contact.

Good practice was described in that one young person had been able to say he did not want to attend contact with siblings and this had been supported by his Carer.

A placing social worker raised a concern in relation to contact arrangements being held on Christmas Day. A similar view was not shared by the Fostering Service. However with legislative changes to Children's Services and the focus on outcomes for children and young people, there may have to be a shift in attitude in relation to this from the Fostering Service.

**Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.5)**

The fostering service ensures that children's opinions, and those of their families and others significant to the child, are sought over all issues that are likely to affect their daily life and their future.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

3

The young people who were interviewed reported that they were regularly consulted about their daily lives by their carers, including matters relating to daily living and practical matters for example bedroom decoration.

The service has introduced a Foster Carer Forum to consult more formally and regularly with carers. The Forum has met once and the Service has plans to develop this and recruit an independent chair.

On this occasion the young people who were interviewed knew how to make a complaint and that they could contact inspectors from CSCI. The Young People's Guide has been

revised and the information is available within this.

**Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)**

The fostering service ensures that it provides foster care services which help each child or young person in foster care to receive health care which meets her/his needs for physical, emotional and social development, together with information and training appropriate to her/his age and understanding to enable informed participation in decisions about her/his health needs.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

2

Tameside MBC have launched over the last twelve months a number of health care initiatives, which including better systems to detect when young people have attended health care assessments and the 'bylife' programme, encouraging better health awareness.

Supervision records available indicated that carers are regularly asked about health care matters.

Young people reported that carers look after them when they are ill, take them to GPs, dentists and other health care professionals and some had an insight into emotional and mental health issues.

However some carers did not have full health care information, including immunisation records, and Parental Held Child Care Records ('red books') for babies. One Carer was looking after a baby with 'foetal alcohol syndrome' and had been given no information about the syndrome to help her. Health visitors and school nurses hold the health care information which is easily obtainable if there is a commitment to accessing this.

Tameside MBC must ensure that every effort is made to obtain health care information to enable carers to provide appropriate care to children placed. This matter has been required at all previous inspections.

<b>Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.8)</b>		
The fostering service gives a high priority to meeting the educational needs of each child or young person in foster care and ensures that she/he is encouraged to attain her/his full potential.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	4
<p>Supervising Social Workers and Foster Carers could give examples of good practice in relation to meeting the education needs of young people in foster care.</p> <p>Records indicated that staff routinely ask carers about the education of the young people in placement and that they are aware of homework, school attendance, school events and open days. One Carer could outline the work she had undertaken to ensure that fostered children attended a school, which would best meet their needs.</p> <p>The young people reported that they are supported in their education and help them with homework and attend school events.</p> <p>The fostering service has strong links with the LAC Education Resource Team and the multi-agency LAC Education Steering Group.</p> <p>All carers have access to computers for their own homes for the use of the young people.</p> <p>One of the members of the Panel is from the Education Department and educational needs were highlighted during the discussion. It was clear from the discussion that school attendance of Looked after Children was a priority as was ensuring that they attended the school most suited to their needs.</p> <p>As from April 1<sup>st</sup> Children's Services and the Education Department will be one service, which will strengthen the links and ensure that education is promoted, even more effectively.</p>		

<b>Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)</b>		
The fostering service ensures that their foster care services help to develop skills, competence and knowledge necessary for adult living.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	0
Not assessed on this occasion		

## Recruiting, Checking, Managing, Supporting and Training Staff and Foster Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The people who work in or for the fostering service are suitable to work with children and young people and they are managed, trained and supported in such a way as to ensure the best possible outcomes for children in foster care. The number of staff and carers and their range of qualifications and experience are sufficient to achieve the purposes and functions of the organisation.

### Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

Any people working in or for the fostering service are suitable people to work with children and young people and to safeguard and promote their welfare.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

One member of staff has been appointed since the last inspection and her personnel file was inspected. There were gaps in her employment record and there was no evidence on file that this had been checked at interview. The Unit Business Manager reported that this had been checked at interview.

Tameside MBC must ensure that this information is recorded, in the event it is required at a later date.

The manager reported that three existing members of staff do not have CRB Disclosures, although these were applied for in December 2004. As staff should have had Disclosures in place since April 2003 this work should have been undertaken prior to December 2004. Tameside MBC must make plans to 'chase' outstanding Disclosures and ensure that they are in place.

Total number of staff of the agency:

14

Number of staff who have left the agency in the past 12 months:

0

### Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

Staff are organised and managed in a way that delivers an efficient and effective foster care service.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

Not assessed on this occasion

<b>Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.7)</b>		
The fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff and recruits a range of carers to meet the needs of children and young people for whom it aims to provide a service.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	4
<p>The service has an adequate number of staff with appropriate qualification and experience to undertake the task. They presented as loyal, committed, enthusiastic and competent to carry out the task. There was evidence of strong team working within a supportive environment.</p> <p>Administrative staff who were well aware of the needs of the service and presented as efficient and competent, support the team.</p> <p>Over the last three years the team has developed very effective recruitment campaigns and it was reported that other local authorities have consulted with them regarding this. The campaigns have a strong 'brand' image and prospective carers reported that the banners placed around the borough, in particular had encouraged them to contact the service.</p> <p>There remains a need to continue to recruit more carers to meet the demands of the service and as this continues to grow and to provide even greater placement choice. The manager reported that a number of carers recruited over the last 12 months have become long-term carers. Although this provides better outcomes for children it means that in reality the demand for carers always exceeds supply. However the Service is aware of this and continues to recruit effectively.</p> <p>The assessment of carers was inspected in detail at the last inspection and found to be sound. The Panel Chair reported that in his opinion the standard of the assessments remains high and the carers who attend at Panel present as capable people who wish to care for children.</p> <p>With the exception of one, all carers who were interviewed or returned questionnaires indicated that they were satisfied with the assessment process they had undertaken.</p>		

<b>Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)</b>		
The fostering service is a fair and competent employer, with sound employment practices and good support for its staff and carers.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	0
Not assessed on this occasion		

**Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)**

There is a good quality training programme to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

0

Not assessed on this occasion

**Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)**

All staff are properly accountable and supported.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

0

Not assessed on this occasion

**Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6)****The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

All carers with the exception of one Relative Carer reported that they felt supported by staff in family placement.

The records indicated that most carers seen were receiving regular Supervision. However one Carer had not been visited by her supervising social worker in December, January and February and had received a visit the day prior to the visit of the inspector. Two carers who were visited had no copies of supervision notes which is not in line with the supervision policy. Tameside MBC must ensure that all carers receive regular supervision and that they receive copies of notes. Tameside MBC should ensure that all staff work in line with the policies and procedures created by the department.

It was reported that a new system for Annual Reviews of carers has been created and that all reviews were up to date. This was evidenced on the carer's files which were inspected.

Tameside MBC has devised a new system for an out of hour's service for carers which will be managed by the fostering service and supported by the Emergency Duty Team. This was to be implemented shortly.

The majority of carers either by interview or questionnaire complained about the impact of the high turnover of placing social workers on foster carers and case management issues. The Panel Chair and fostering service staff also supported this view. It was reported that managers within Children's Services were aware of this and that at the time of the inspection there were no social work vacancies and new management arrangements were in place.

Tameside MBC must improve the overall service to carers from placing social workers.

**Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)****The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****0**

Not assessed on this occasion

**Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)**

The fostering service ensures that foster carers are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care and meet the needs of each child/young person placed in their care.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

0

Not assessed on this occasion



## Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- All appropriate records are kept and are accessible in relation to the fostering services and the individual foster carers and foster children.

### Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

The fostering service ensures that an up-to-date, comprehensive case record is maintained for each child or young person in foster care which details the nature and quality of care provided and contributes to an understanding of her/his life events. Relevant information from the case records is made available to the child and to anyone involved in her/his care.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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A number of case records for children placed were inspected and the standard of these varied, with good information and chronology on some and poor on others. On one there was no record on how and why and when children were taken into care. All LAC Documentation was in place	
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All of the children 'case tracked' were in care proceedings and the legal information was contained in an additional file.

A number of carers' files were also inspected and these also varied with some key documents missing and there was evidence of an audit of files in January. However what was not clear was what action was taken as result of the audit.

With the exception of the record of complaints and allegations the remaining administrative records inspected were found to be satisfactory.

Tameside MBC must ensure that key documents are on appropriate files.

### Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

The fostering service's administrative records contain all significant information relevant to the running of the foster care service and as required by regulations.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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See NMS 24	
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<b>Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:</b>			X
<b>Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:</b>			260
<b>Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:</b>			128
<b>Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:</b>			34
<b>Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:</b>			X
<b>Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £</b>	65.09	<b>Maximum £</b>	240.00

## Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- The premises used as offices by the fostering service are suitable for the purpose.

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

Premises used as offices by the fostering service are appropriate for the purpose.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

0

Not assessed on this occasion

## Financial Requirements

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The agency fostering services are financially viable and appropriate and timely payments are made to foster carers.

### Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.3)

The agency ensures it is financially viable at all times and has sufficient financial resources to fulfil its obligations.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	9
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Not applicable in Local Authority Fostering Service

### Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.7)

The financial processes/systems of the agency are properly operated and maintained in accordance with sound and appropriate accounting standards and practice.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	9
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Not applicable in Local Authority Fostering Services.

**Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)**

Each foster carer receives an allowance and agreed expenses, which cover the full cost of caring for each child or young person placed with him or her. Payments are made promptly and at the agreed time. Allowances and fees are reviewed annually.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

0

Not assessed on this occasion

## Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- **Fostering panels are organised efficiently and effectively so as to ensure that good quality decisions are made about the approval of foster carers, in line with the overriding objective to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in foster care.**

### Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

Fostering panels have clear written policies and procedures, which are implemented in practice, about the handling of their functions.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

A meeting of the Fostering panel was observed, the minutes of the previous Panels were inspected and an interview was conducted with the Panel Chair. The newly appointed manager acts as Panel advisor.

The Panel has access to medical advice and education. One of the members had previously been in care as a child.

The Panel Chair is a well-experienced, independent social work practitioner who also chairs the Adoption Panel. He demonstrated his appropriate skills and experience on the day of the inspection. The Panel chair was aware of the needs of the service and the range of carers required to meet the needs.

The Panel has appropriate policies and procedures which include information on decision making when all members of the Panel are not in agreement.

The Head of Service is the Decision Maker and her comments are included on the minutes. There was evidence that the minutes are thoroughly read and that not all recommendations are observed and there was evidence of the Decision Maker asking for additional information. This is a good example of a quality assurance process.

Carers are invited to attend Panel and are seen prior to and after their attendance by the Panel Chair who discusses the process and outcomes. Panel members treated carers sensitively.

However the Panel met on the day of the inspection when it was not quorate, in that there was an insufficient number of independent members present.

The minutes and the Panel chair indicated that attendance by the medical advisor was sporadic

Tameside MBC must ensure that the Panel does not meet when it is inquorate. All business submitted to the March Panel must be re-submitted. This was a requirement of the last inspection when this matter was raised then.

Tameside MBC should try to encourage the Medical Advisor to attend more regularly. In relation to the matter of quoracy the situation would be eased if Tameside MBC appointed an additional independent member.

## Short-Term Breaks

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- When foster care is provided as a short-term break for a child, the arrangement recognises that the parents remain the main carers for the child.

### Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.2)

Where a fostering service provides short-term breaks for children in foster care, they have policies and procedures, implemented in practice, to meet the particular needs of children receiving short-term breaks.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Not assessed on this occasion, no issues were raised at the last inspection.	
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## Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- **Local authority fostering services' policies and procedures for assessing, approving, supporting and training foster carers recognise the particular contribution that can be made by and the particular needs of family and friends as carers.**

### Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

These standards are all relevant to carers who are family and friends of the child, but there is recognition of the particular relationship and position of family and friend carers.

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
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Since the last inspection a member of the fostering team has been re-appointed to work specifically with the Relative Carers. The worker reported on the various initiatives which have been developed. This includes the creation of a support group, regular visits and access to training, although none had taken up the opportunity. There still remains some discrepancies in relation to payments, which hopefully can be resolved in the future.

The assessment of relative carers was inspected at the last inspection and no discrepancies were noted. The manager reported that if a relative Carer is identified as suitable, a viability assessment is undertaken and taken to Panel, prior to the full assessment being completed.

Tameside MBC should continue with the work in relation to relative carers.

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

A Lay Assessor was not used on this occasion.

**Lay Assessor**      NA                      **Signature**      \_\_\_\_\_

**Date**                      NA                      \_\_\_\_\_

**D.1 Registered Person's or Responsible Local Authority Manager's comments/confirmation relating to the content and accuracy of the report for the above inspection.**

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on <enter date(s) of inspection here> and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

We are working on the best way to include provider responses in the published report. In the meantime responses received are available on request.

**Action taken by the CSCI in response to the provider's comments:**

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

Provider comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report

YES

Provider comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate

**Note:**

In instances where there is a major difference of view between the Inspector and the Registered Provider responsible Local Authority fostering service Manager both views will be made available on request to the Area Office.

**D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 16/05/05, which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.**

**Status of the Provider's Action Plan at time of publication of the final inspection report:**

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

**Public reports**

It should be noted that all CSCI inspection reports are public documents. Reports on children's homes are only obtainable on personal application to CSCI offices.

**D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT**

**Registered Person's or responsible Local Authority Manager's statement of agreement/comments: Please complete the relevant section that applies.**

**D.3.1 I \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that I agree with the statutory requirements made and will seek to comply with these.**

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Designation** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Or**

**D.3.2 I \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:**

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Designation** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Note: In instance where there is a profound difference of view between the Inspector and the Registered Provider both views will be reported. Please attach any extra pages, as applicable.

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