



Making Social Care  
Better for People

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

**London Borough of Hillingdon Fostering  
Service**

**Fostering & Adoption Service  
Civic Centre  
4S/06  
High Street  
Uxbridge  
UB8 1UW**

*Lead Inspector*  
Mr Gavin Thomas

*Key Announced Inspection*  
4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> September 2006 10:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Fostering Services*. They can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

*Every Child Matters*, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life. Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above

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# SERVICE INFORMATION

<b>Name of service</b>	London Borough of Hillingdon Fostering Service
<b>Address</b>	Fostering & Adoption Service Civic Centre 4S/06 High Street Uxbridge UB8 1UW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01895 277852
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<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	London Borough of Hillingdon
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Mrs Marion Rodin
<b>Type of registration</b>	Local Auth Fostering Service

# **SERVICE INFORMATION**

## **Conditions of registration:**

**Date of last inspection**      19th September 2005

## **Brief Description of the Service:**

This is a Local Authority Fostering Service operated by the London Borough of Hillingdon. The service is based at the Civic Centre in Uxbridge. Foster carers live throughout the Greater London area and many provide ethnic care to asylum seeking children. The service has an approved number of family and friends as foster carers. There is also a respite-fostering scheme for children with disabilities. Placements are made by a separate team that is under the same overall management.

# SUMMARY

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

This inspection took place over 3.5 days. In addition, two Inspectors visited four foster homes, including a kinship carer. The following formed the basis of this inspection:

- A pre inspection meeting.
- Meetings and interviews with Supervising Social Workers, Children's Social Workers, Fostering Manager, Service Manager, Placement Service Team Manager, Marketing Officer and Children's Services Development Manager.
- Observation of the fostering panel and an interview with the Vice Chair.
- Discussions with foster carers.
- Discussions with Children/young people.
- Inspection of various records and documents.
- A feedback session with the Service Manager and Fostering Manager.

Questionnaires were distributed for the purpose of this inspection to children/young people, foster carers and children/young peoples Social Workers.

Comments and responses have been included in the appropriate sections of the report. However, a summary of the comments and responses are as follows:

## **Children/young people – Eight surveys were completed and returned.**

The children/young people who completed the surveys indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of care and support they receive from their foster carers and social workers. Children/young people said that foster carers do take notice of their opinions, they receive the right help to be successful in their education, they get support about being healthy and they know how to make a complaint.

## **Foster carers – Five surveys were completed and returned.**

The views of foster carers were very mixed. Some foster carers described the service as being excellent and good which included support for foster carers, involving children/young people in decision making, transitional arrangements for children/young people moving on and addressing equality and diversity issues.

Some foster carers did not rate aspects of the service as being satisfactory. This included poor internal communication systems, not supplying sufficient information about the needs of a child/young person prior to the placement commencing and stopping the support group for children/young people under the age of 12.

Subsequent to this inspection, the Manager gave a written response to explain about internal communication systems and the reasons as to why the “under 12” support group was stopped. The Manager also explained that this group has been replaced with a new group and the attendance rate is now much higher.

### **Social Workers – Two surveys were completed and returned.**

Both social workers described the fostering service as being good or excellent. This included ensuring stability for children/young people, ensuring that children/young people are well cared for, promoting healthy lifestyles for children/young people, addressing issues of equality and diversity and supporting children/young people with their education.

The Fostering Manager was informed of the outcomes given in the surveys. Where appropriate, the manager was required to address the views of foster carers.

The Inspector takes this opportunity in thanking everyone who contributed to this inspection.

The service has done well in maintaining overall consistency during a difficult year when some of the team were made up of temporary staff.

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

Foster carers visited demonstrated confidence, a good understanding about what constitutes good practice and a commitment to ensuring that the children/young people entrusted to their care were accommodated in caring and nurturing environments.

The fostering service is made up of a team of Social Workers who are experienced, knowledgeable about the ethos of the service and professional in their approach. The team demonstrated a commitment to achieving good outcomes for children/young people and foster carers.

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

At the last inspection, 14 requirements and 4 recommendations were made. Twelve requirements were met and four recommendations were implemented.

The service has made good progress in recruiting to vacant posts.

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

The fostering service must fully implement the two requirements outstanding from the previous inspection.

The fostering service must ensure that foster carers address safety matters within reasonable timescales.

The fostering service could improve upon quality assurance and monitoring systems.

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 outcome for this Standard is:**

- The fostering service promotes the health and development of children.(NMS 12)

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

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

12

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The service has established partnerships and links with key professionals and other departments to further develop health care planning for children/young people placed by the service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The Inspector examined three files for children/young people. The files contained all relevant details, which related to children/young peoples health needs. This included LAC information and health assessments. Copies of health assessment action plans were also included on children/young peoples files.

The Inspector met with the LAC Nurse. The LAC Nurse has joint responsibilities and is accountable to the London Borough of Hillingdon PCT and Social Services. The LAC Nurse confirmed that she is registered with the NMC.

The LAC Nurse explained the protocols used to encourage children/young people to attend health assessments. Health assessments are carried out at children/young people's school, in their foster homes or at a clinic. A Community Paediatrician or GP contribute to health assessments for children under the age of 5 who are in adoption or foster placements. Procedural guidance was in place for undertaking health assessments with unaccompanied asylum seekers.

The London Borough of Hillingdon had devised a programme for training social work staff on how to implement and promote the "Healthy Hillingdon" project. The LAC Nurse facilitates this training.

Specialist health needs and resources are identified in health assessments. These include sexual health, emotional well-being and drugs/alcohol. Specific requirements are recorded on the child/young person's health assessment action plan. The LAC Nurse explained that feedback from foster carers indicated that on occasions, they are not provided with a copy of the health assessment action plan. As a result, they are unable to fully support the child/young person to meet their health needs. Although the Manager reported that every effort is made by the Fostering Team to ensure that Foster Carers respond appropriately to children/young people's health needs, the relevant department/s must ensure that health related records are passed to Foster Cares within a reasonable timescale.

Children/young people spoken to confirmed that they were registered with a GP and had access to primary health care treatments. One young person confirmed that their foster carer accompanied them on health care appointments.

Foster carers spoken to gave examples on how they are supported by their Supervising Social Workers to access health resources for children/young people.

Foster carers are encouraged to attend training on health related topics. The LAC Nurse facilitates this training. The LAC Nurse said that she would be attending the foster carers support group in October 2006 to speak with foster carers about their training needs.

Eight children/young people who completed questionnaires stated that they get support and advice about being healthy.

# Staying Safe

## **The intended outcomes for these Standards are:**

- Any persons carrying on or managing the service are suitable. (NMS 3)
- The fostering service provides suitable foster carers.(NMS 6)
- The service matches children to carers appropriately.(NMS 8)
- The fostering service protects each child or young person from abuse and neglect.(NMS 9)
- The people who work in or for the fostering service are suitable to work with children and young people.(NMS 15)
- Fostering panels are organised efficiently and effectively.(NMS 30)

**The Commission considers Standards 3, 6, 8, 9, 15 and 30 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.**

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

3, 6, 8, 9, 15, 30

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Managers, staff and carers are demonstrably safe and suitable to work with children/young people. Safe recruitment practices are comprehensive and thorough.

The service must make progress to fully comply with the requirement outstanding, which relates to the responsibilities of the fostering panel.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The manager of this service has demonstrable experience in both social work and management. Thorough recruitment checks were carried out on the manager prior to her appointment. Records examined confirmed this.

Two Inspectors visited four foster homes. Overall, the foster homes were well maintained, pleasantly decorated and homely. Three young people in one foster home informed the Inspectors' that the furniture and facilities provided were comfortable. Observations indicated that children/young people were very much "at home" and had settled well with their foster families.

Two safety matters were identified on one visit. These were in relation to an electrical trailing flex in different parts of the home and a disused door. Both matters were brought to the attention of the foster carers who acknowledged this. The fostering service must ensure that these matters are addressed within a reasonable timescale.

Matching processes in place were thorough and took into account the needs of the individual child/young person in relation to foster carers' skills and capabilities. The London Borough of Hillingdon has an on going demand for placing unaccompanied children/young people from neighbouring airports. One foster carer visited, was very experienced in meeting the needs of these children/young people. The foster carer gave good examples on how she and her household support the children/young people to integrate into the western society whilst meeting their cultural needs at the same time.

One foster carer was of the opinion that the process for one child moving on to a permanent placement was taking far too long. The foster carer did not believe that this was in the best interest of the child/young person.

The Placement Service Team Manager explained that weekly meetings are held to discuss and review all new referrals and foster carer availability. The Fostering Service and the Placement Team have joint responsibilities for ensuring that protocols for matching processes are implemented and monitored.

Child protection procedures were in place. All child protection matters are coordinated by the Area Teams. Foster carers receive training in child protection and safe caring practices. Additional training is also provided when required. There were no known child protection issues at the time of this inspection.

The Social Work Team said there were no known issues regarding bullying at the time of this inspection. One young person who completed a questionnaire stated that they are bullied in school at lunch times.

Two foster carers gave examples of how they were supported by the fostering service when they experienced behavioural difficulties with one child/young person. The foster carers said that the support they received enabled them to work with the child/young person to avoid further disruption to their placement.

A policy and procedural guidance was in place if a child/young person was absent from their foster placement without authority.

Recruitment policies and procedures were in place. Two staff files were examined. Recruitment checks met the criteria as set out in Schedule 1 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

All Supervising Social Workers were appropriately qualified and registered with the General Social Care Council. The two Social Service Officers (unqualified Social Workers) were not responsible for undertaking assessments and approval for foster carers. One Social Service Officer was working towards a Degree in Social Work.

All staff spoken to were professional in their approach and demonstrated that they had the skills and knowledge to fulfil the aims and objectives of the fostering service.

The Inspector observed a fostering panel on 24 August 2006 followed by an interview with the vice chair. The panel was represented by nine out of the twelve members. The panel was well conducted and the cases heard were thoroughly examined.

The Vice Chair was of the opinion that the quality of reports presented to the panel was of a good standard. The Vice Chair said that the fostering service was very organised in preparing for each panel including the distribution of minutes and collating details for the agenda.

The panel had one vacancy for a foster carer. The fostering manager was in the process of appointing a foster carer to this vacancy. The Vice Chair was not aware of any immediate changes to the constitution of the panel.

The fostering service has now produced a panel member's handbook. The handbook includes relevant policies and procedures about the functions of the fostering panel as required under Regulation 26 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

The fostering manager explained that the fostering panel has dispersed the responsibility of approving requests for exemptions of foster carer approval status to the Service Manager. Although approved exemptions are discussed at the panels, these are not recorded. It was recommended that all exemptions discussed and/or approved by the panel are recorded in the minutes.

In accordance with Standard 30.7 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, a Local Authority panel is required to monitor the range and type of carers available to the Authority in comparison with the needs of children. This requirement had not been met from the previous inspection and must be fully implemented.

# Enjoying and Achieving

## **The intended outcomes for these Standards are:**

- The fostering service values diversity.(NMS 7)
- The fostering service promotes educational achievement.(NMS 13)
- When foster care is provided as a short-term break for a child, the arrangements recognise that the parents remain the main carers for the child.(NMS 31)

**The Commission considers Standards 7, 13, and 31 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.**

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

7, 13, 31

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The fostering service ensures that all children are supported to do well and to reach their potential. It uses available resources for encouraging the educational achievement of children/young people and provides guidance to its carers on supporting educational achievement.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The fostering service promotes equality and diversity in accordance with the Local Authority's corporate plan. Examples given were in relation to the recruitment processes for staff and foster carers. Foster carers and children/young people are supported by the service in particular, for children/young people in transracial and transcultural placements. The Social Work Officers have established links with foster carers to provide advice, support and where possible, resources to meet the needs of children/young people with special needs or to address their needs in terms of gender, religion, ethnicity, language, culture, disability and sexuality.

One foster carer who completed a survey was of the opinion that the fostering service did not apply the principles of equality and diversity for transracial placements, which took into account the needs of the child/young person. The foster carer gave examples of books and resources, which were not always, appropriate for the child/young person.

The Children's Services Development Manager spoke about recent developments in the London Borough of Hillingdon to develop the education system and resources as required under the Children Act 2004, including provisions for Looked After Children.

The Children's Services Development Manager was responsible for setting up a new project for Looked After Children. This project is funded by the Vulnerable Children's Grant. The team facilitating the educational needs of Looked After Children will consist of five caseworkers, one of whom will have a senior role. The team will have input from an Educational Psychologist and Connexions. The Children's Services Development Manager explained that the project would be publicised via the Corporate Communications Team. This project is expected to be launched in October 2006. Foster carers will be invited to attend training about this project and the availability of resources and support for children/young people in foster care.

The London Borough of Hillingdon has recently reviewed and updated the methodology for Personal Education Plans (PEP's). These are divided into three categories:

Nursery.

Primary.

Secondary.

A PEP format for young people in College/Further Education was under review. Details relating to children/young people's educational arrangements were on the files examined.

One foster carer was of the opinion that the school could do more to support a foster child/young person with their academic work. The foster carer said that they had raised this with the school but felt that the child/young person still required extra tuition. This was reported to the fostering manager. It was suggested that this is discussed further with the foster carer.

An established Family Link Scheme was in place. This service is provided for children/young people who have high dependencies. At the time of this inspection, the service had approved five people to provide short break foster care. Foster carers are monitored, supervised and their approval status reviewed in the same way as for long term foster carers. At the time of this inspection, six children/young people were receiving this service.

Recruitment for this scheme is advertised in the same way as for long-term foster carers. A minimum rate of £21.20 is paid for all placements followed by a fixed hourly rate.

The fostering manager explained that the "skills to foster" training is currently under review. A training programme is being tailored specifically for foster carers providing short-term breaks.



The Children with Disabilities Team is responsible for assessing and providing adaptations required for children/young people with disabilities. This is done in conjunction with the Resource Panel.

# **Making a Positive Contribution**

## **The intended outcomes for these Standards are:**

- The fostering service promotes contact arrangements for the child or young person. (NMS 10)
- The fostering service promotes consultation.(NMS 11)

**The Commission considers Standards 10 and 11 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.**

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

10 & 11

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Maintaining and developing family contacts and friendships are integral to the service provided. This is emphasised through the training and support given to foster carers. Children's views and wishes are sought with regard to contact with their family and friends and inform the arrangements.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The Inspector met with two Social Workers from one of the Area Teams who explained the procedures for children/young people maintaining contact with their birth parents and families. The Area Team have overall responsibility for initiating and monitoring contact arrangements.

Emphasis is placed on maximising contact as much as possible. Risk assessments are carried out to determine the appropriateness of contact and the type of contact required. Foster carers accompany children on contact visits. When necessary, Social Services Officers or Social Workers will accompany children/young people on contact visits.

Contact arrangements take into account the circumstances of the placement. The Social Workers explained that contact arrangements are managed sensitively and reviewed regularly.

Local Authority premises are used for contact. Other venues are negotiated for unsupervised contact. One young person confirmed that they have regular contact with their family.

A range of consultation processes with children/young people were in place. These included:

Telephone calls to children/young people.

Visits to children/young people.

Emails.

Statutory reviews.

Children/young people are encouraged to contribute to their reviews.

Assistance is given for completing any necessary documents.

Children/young people may request to see or speak with the Children's Rights Officer and the Children's Advocate.

Children/young people are made aware of social groups such as youth club and invited to annual events. The London Borough of Hillingdon hosts an annual Award Ceremony for all Looked After Children. Staff said that this event is always a success and a positive experience for children/young people.

The complaints procedure is included in the Children's Guide. Children/young people can also make a complaint via the Local Authority's website.

Eight children/young people, who completed surveys, stated that they were aware of the complaints procedure.

Foster carers and children/young people are made aware of special events via the fostering newsletter.

# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

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

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

14 & 29

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Carers are usually enabled through allowances and training to continue to offer good support to young people approaching adulthood in their transition towards independent living.

## EVIDENCE:

Procedures were in place for preparing young people moving on to semi or independent living. One foster carer explained how they engage young people in different tasks to teach them about life skills and safe practices. The foster carer had identified practical ways, which enables the young person to learn about responsibility. Tasks include cooking, shopping, budgeting, laundering of their clothes and cleaning.

Social workers said that they monitor young people's progress during monthly visits to foster carers.

The Social Workers from the Area Teams confirmed that Pathway Plans were in place or pending for all young people in foster care who were preparing to move on to semi or independent living.

Foster carers spoken to confirmed that they had no issues about their allowances. Foster carers confirmed that their allowances are paid on time. An electronic record is kept of all foster carer allowances. This was viewed for inspection purposes.

The Allowance Scheme document for the period 2006 – 2007 was comprehensive and included:

- The objectives for the scheme.
- Administration of the scheme.
- Different types of allowances.
- Tax payments.
- Financial record keeping.

The fostering manager said that all foster carers had been issued a copy of this document.

# Management

## **The intended outcomes for these Standards are:**

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

**The Commission considers Standards 17, 21, 24 and 32 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.**

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

1, 4, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25 & 32

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The fostering service has made good progress in recruiting to vacant posts and stabilising the staff team.

There is a commitment to regular structured supervision for staff and carers, which combines management and developmental aspects, and this is evidenced in records.

## **EVIDENCE:**

A Statement of Purpose was in place. This document was dated July 2006. The contents of this document were in keeping with the criteria as set out in standard 1.4 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services.

The Children's Guide was very informative and included sections for children/young people to record personal information. The fostering manager was advised to remove NCSC from the Children's Guide and for this to be updated with Commission for Social Care Inspection. Children/young people are issued with a separate complaints leaflet.

The fostering manager explained that informal quality monitoring processes were in place. A more formal quality assurance system must be devised and implemented to evidence adherence to all of the criteria as set out under Schedule 7 of the Fostering Regulations 2002.

The management structure has been reviewed. As a result, one of the Deputy Manager posts has been deleted. An Assistant Team Manager has been appointed to co ordinate the Duty System. This now enables the fostering manager to focus more on her responsibilities in managing the fostering service.

One Supervising Social Worker is responsible for the supervision, reviews and support for Kinship carers. This has improved the procedures in place for supporting kinship carers. One kinship carer made very positive remarks about the support they receive.

The Deputy Manager is responsible for ensuring that all annual household reviews are carried out.

A recruitment and retention strategy was in place. Although there have been changes to the way in which staff are recruited due to a financial deficit within the London Borough of Hillingdon, good progress has been made in recruiting to vacant posts within the fostering team. There was one vacancy for a full time Social Worker at the time of this inspection. The service is dependent on agency staff to cover shortfalls in staffing levels. However, there has been a reduction in the use of agency staff since the last inspection.

The criteria as set out in Standard 17.6 and 17.7 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services was incorporated in the "Skills to foster training". These sections of the standard sets out the criteria to be considered when assessing the qualities, competences and aptitudes of potential foster carers.

The Marketing Officer who is now part of the Corporate Communications Team plays a key role with regards to promoting the fostering service and recruitment strategies. All staff spoken to explained that the Marketing Officer has made a positive impact on the recruitment strategy.

The Marketing Officer was in the process of identifying recruitment strategies for foster carers within the vicinity of the airports. A range of resources are used for advertising for foster carers. These include: High street marketing, local journals and magazines and display boards in appropriate venues.

The Marketing Officer is actively involved in promoting the fostering service and hosts a recruitment campaign at local events and functions such as Carnival Day and attends meetings with the Hillingdon Foster Carers Association.

Staff confirmed that they have access to the corporate training programme. Staff also confirmed that they receive regular supervision and management support.

In addition to staff having access to the corporate training programme, one member of staff was working towards PQ2. A relevant management qualification had been identified for the Deputy Manager.

Team meetings take place weekly and annual "Away Day's" are arranged for the staff team.

Foster carers spoken to confirmed that their Supervising Social Workers visited them monthly. Foster carers said they were fully supported and one foster carer gave examples about increased support they received during a difficult period.

Foster carers had no concerns about the Out of Hours duty system. This system was described as being prompt and satisfactory.

Two foster carers who completed surveys did not rate the support systems well. Some of the comments made were as follows:

- The service no longer facilitates the monthly support group for "under 12's".



- The new office is inaccessible and carers are unable to visit as they did at the previous premises.
- Communication is poor with regards to transitional procedures when a child moves to a permanent placement.
- One foster carer stated that the fostering service should listen to foster carers more. Foster carers should be acknowledged more with regards to their capabilities and decision-making.
- One foster carer rated the service as being "poor" with regards to support systems such as support for providing healthy lifestyles, achieving an education, providing information prior to the placement and involving children/young people in decision-making. The foster carer stated that support is inconsistent.

One foster carer rated the support systems as being excellent and good.

The fostering service was in the process of introducing a quality control system whereby all reports for visits to foster carer's homes must be typed. The service will no longer accept hand written reports once this system is fully implemented. This is good practice as it was difficult trying to read some of hand written reports for the purpose of this inspection.

One Social Service Officer is responsible for coordinating the foster carers training programme. The Social Service Officer was of the opinion that the training offered is varied and delivered within an equal opportunities framework.

The training programmes inspected were detailed. This included the training programme for the period 2006 – 2007 and the "skills to foster" programme. The course contents examined were well written including the aims and objectives for each course. This is good practice. An evaluation is written for all carers attending training. This is also good practice for monitoring the effectiveness of the training or further training, which foster carers, may require.

A training profile is retained for each foster carer. On examining foster carers files, it was noted that the upkeep of these profiles was inconsistent and should improve.

The fostering manager explained that the service is continuously encouraging foster carers to attend training to keep abreast of current practice.

Children/young peoples files examined were in good order. Some of the information required under Standard 24 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services is held electronically. This was viewed for inspection purposes.

Policies and procedures relating to the storage and retention of files were in place. Foster carers files and staff files examined were in keeping with the criteria as set out in Schedules 1 and 3 of the Fostering Regulations 2002. However, it was noted that some of the records were not signed or dated. This should be done at all times. The detail of information recorded was also inconsistent. This should be improved upon.

A considerable amount of work has been done with regards to establishing a support system for family and friends as carers. As previously mentioned, one of the Supervising Social Workers is responsible for coordinating the training, supervision and support for these carers. The Supervising Social Worker responsible for managing family and friends as carers confirmed that all household reviews were up to date. The Supervising Social Worker spoke very positively about her role and the achievements she has made with family and friends as carers.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services have been met and uses the following scale.

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

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

"N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.	FS4	Reg 42 (1) Sch 7	A more formal quality assurance system must be devised and implemented to evidence adherence to all of the criteria as set out under Schedule 7 of the Fostering Regulations 2002.	31/01/07
2.	FS6	Reg 28(5)(b) Sch 5 – 10,11	The fostering service must ensure that two safety matters identified in one foster home are addressed within a reasonable timescale.	11/10/06
3.	FS12	Reg 34(3) Sch 6(c)	A system must be implemented to ensure that foster carers are given a copy of child/young person's health assessment action plan.	31/10/06
4.	FS30	Reg 26(2)(c)	The panel must monitor the range and type of carers available to the Authority in comparison with the needs of children. (Timescale of 01/01/06 Not Met).	31/12/06

## 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.	FS24	Staff should ensure that records kept on foster carers files are signed and dated at all times.
2.	FS24	The fostering service should devise a system to maximise consistency for the way in which information is recorded and retained on foster carers files. In particular, the training portfolios.

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