



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

Greater London Fostering

**Interiors House
Lynton Road
London
N8 8SL**

Lead Inspector
Peter Allcock

Announced Inspection
10th January 2006 09:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of service	Greater London Fostering
Address	Interiors House Lynton Road London N8 8SL
Telephone number	020 8347 8741
Fax number	
Email address	
Provider Web address	greaterlondonfostering.org
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Greater London Fostering
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Linda Norwood
Type of registration	Fostering Agencies
No. of places registered (if applicable)	0
Category(ies) of registration, with number of places	

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 8th February 2005

Brief Description of the Service:

Greater London Fostering is a private limited company run by four directors and operating as a fostering agency from premises in Crouch End in North London. The agency was set up in August 1998, its first panel was held in January 1999 and the first child was placed in March 1999. The agency is registered by the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

At the time of this inspection, there were a total of 34 families caring for 60 children and young people being supported by the agency. The majority of carers live in North London (28), with a number living in South London (11) and outside London (2). The agency provides social work support to the foster carers, which is facilitated by the fact that social workers live close to carers and work primarily from home.

The agency has its own panel, which meets on a monthly basis, and holds regular monthly. Training is provided on weekdays and Saturdays at a variety of venues to maximise the attendance of foster carers.

The agency provides facilities for contact visits at its office.

SUMMARY

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

This is the fourth inspection of this fostering agency, and has focussed on an assessment of the core national minimum standards applicable to such agencies. The inspection was undertaken by Peter Allcock and took place between the 10th and 31st January 2006. The inspector wishes to acknowledge the courteous and professional response from the directors and staff of the agency, and would also like to thank the foster carers, children and young people who were visited or spoken to for their time and assistance in carrying out this inspection.

The inspector attended a staff meeting, a training session for staff and foster carers and the January meeting of the Panel as part of this inspection, which also included the reading of documents and discussion with foster carers and staff in the agency's offices. The inspector also spoke with the four directors of the agency and visited four families who care for nine of the children and young people currently placed by the agency.

The inspector received written questionnaires from twelve foster carers, ten foster children and ten placing social workers. These questionnaires demonstrated that children and young people generally felt that they were placed in good foster homes, were protected and were listened to. Foster carers questionnaires showed that in general they felt supported by the agency and that the support of individual supervising social workers and the accessibility of senior management were particularly valued. Questionnaires from the placing officers strongly indicated that the agency works very well with placing authorities, that the children and young people for whom they are responsible are in safe placements and that they would place other young people with this agency in the future.

What the service does well:

The inspector continues to be impressed by this organisation, in that it continues to demonstrate an ability to reflect on strengths and weaknesses, and to develop practice accordingly. The directors and staff strive to operate with a public sector ethos, and with a strong focus on the needs of the children and young people that it places.

The agency has robust procedures for the recruitment and selection of foster carers, and the ongoing programme of training and support is commendable. This work is being built on by work with Middlesex University to gain accreditation for the agencies training programme.

The administration of the agency is effective and efficient, with systems in place to monitor the performance of the agency.

The agency employs competent and experienced staff and has effectively deployed the students on placement with a careful consideration of the needs of foster carers and the children and young people placed with them. The work allocated to students in the agencies student unit includes individual work with foster carers, children and young people and project work targeted to meet their individual learning needs and develop practice in the agency in a systematic way.

The agency has an experienced and effective Panel, which performs its quality assurance functions with vigour, and monitors the foster carer reviews which are undertaken to a high standard.

The agency is well regarded by the majority of foster carers, and offers a commendable range of social activities to re-enforce the ethos that the networks supporting a placement are crucial to its success.

Foster carers supplied by the agency are supported by robust systems in safeguarding the welfare of children and young people, and in promoting their health and welfare. Children and young people are able to pursue interests and activities, and are supported through appropriate contact to maintain relationships that are important to them.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were no requirements made at the last inspection, and over the last year, there have been a number of service developments as a response to the previous inspection report.

Consultation with foster carers has become more systematic. Foster carers have been consulted individually via questionnaires and collectively through a foster carers forum, which included time to reflect on the positive areas of practice. Small groups were set up to scope areas identified for development by scoring a 3 at the last inspection. Small groups led by a student have explored the implications for practice. This work where unfinished has been

passed to new students placed with the agency. The inspector commends this self-evaluative response to regulation.

The agency has developed its work with students by developing a student unit, within which the learning needs of students, the needs of foster carers and the needs of the agency are carefully considered in allocating both direct and developmental work. Students receive both individual and group supervision whilst placed at the agency. The development of this unit has raised the profile of education and staff development in the minds of all staff working in the agency, and staff are undertaking post qualification training, and a number are qualified social work practice teachers. Discussion with directors of the agency demonstrated that these developments and membership of "making research count" had stimulated a more proactive approach in the incorporation of current research into individual and collective practice.

The development of the student unit, staff interest in training and the application of research to practice have considerably raised the profile of education within the agency, which is currently engaged in a project with Middlesex University and the Fostering Network which is examining how young people's educational achievement can be developed.

The agency's information systems have been further developed to enhance the quality and speed of information available to managers and staff who often work from home, which is of increasing importance in an agency that is growing, but wishes to maintain the high degree of foster carer satisfaction with a telephone response that is up to date and knowledgeable about their particular situation. The system of electronic signatures enables the agency to demonstrate timely management oversight of social workers' activities, and provides useful information to assess the agency's performance.

What they could do better:

There are no requirements or good practice recommendations made as a result of this inspection, and this is reflective of an agency that has well developed internal mechanisms for assessing and developing its practice. Discussion with the directors of the agency and the developments in response to the previous inspection report described above demonstrate a clear commitment to the continued development of the agency's practice.

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

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

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

CONTENTS

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Statutory Requirements Identified During the Inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

12

Children and young people benefit from living in foster homes where their health and development is promoted.

EVIDENCE:

NMS 12

The Greater London Fostering Carer's Handbook sets out the responsibilities of foster carers in promoting the health and development of the children and young people in their care. This information has been supported by the provision of training by the agency in the promotion of children's health.

All the children and young people placed by the agency are registered with a GP, and records seen during this inspection indicated that children and young people had received statutory medicals as appropriate. The foster carers handbook acknowledges that as young people grow and develop, they have the right to make decisions about the medical treatment that they choose to receive, based on an understanding of the consequences of any decisions that they may make. The inspector noted that a number of younger children's questionnaires described the encouragement that they had received from foster carers to eat a healthy diet. The availability of fresh fruit and vegetables was seen in all the four homes visited by the inspector. A number of the children and young people's questionnaires described how their foster carers made sure that they went to the doctor when they were unwell.

Greater London Fostering is involving social work students on placement with them in a number of development projects, one of which is to examine how the agency can develop its work in promoting healthy lifestyles for children and young people. As part of the consultation process undertaken by the agency, foster carers helped to identify the long-term encouragement of a healthy lifestyle as an area for practice development. The agency has held practice workshops involving staff, students, and foster carers which have focussed on how foster carers can help children develop a more healthy lifestyle with regard to elements such as diet, exercise and sport, and avoid lifestyle choices detrimental to health such as the use of drugs.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

3, 6, 8, 9, 15, 30

The safety of children and young people is safeguarded by the agencies recruitment and selection procedures for carers and staff, which ensures that they are cared for by suitable foster carers, who are in turn supported by appropriately trained and experienced staff. Children and young people live in safe foster homes, and benefit from the oversight of an experienced and effective foster panel that monitors the quality of the service that they receive.

EVIDENCE:

NMS 3

Examination of records held in the agency demonstrated that those required under Regulations 5 and 7 Schedule 1 to demonstrate the fitness of the senior staff of the agency are appropriately kept and up to date. The agency has maintained these records to a high standard over a number of years. All the directors of the agency have a current enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau, and commendably all staff, students and foster carers are issued with photo identity cards.

NMS 6

The foster carers who were visited as part of this inspection were aware of the inspection process and were welcoming and very helpful to the inspector. The foster carers confirmed that their homes were given a health and safety inspection as part of their assessment, and then inspected on an annual basis by the agency's health and safety officer as part of the review process. The inspector saw written reports of these inspections, which are detailed and comprehensive, and contain recommendations appropriate to the ages of the children to be placed in the home.

The inspector was told by the administration director that the agency will provide smoke detectors, a fire extinguisher, a fire blanket and first aid kit where required. Health and safety issues are included in the preparation and training of foster carers, and written health and safety advice is included in the foster carers handbook. The health and safety officer is an environmental health officer by profession and regularly attends training to update his health and safety knowledge. Social workers spoken to during this inspection were knowledgeable as to their responsibilities to monitor the health and safety of foster carers homes.

NMS 8

The foster placement agreements seen during this inspection contain specific references to the elements of matching which are taken into consideration in agreeing the placement, and demonstrate that consideration has been given to any additional support that the foster carer may require to support the child or young person placed with them, for example where the foster carer and child are not from the same ethnic community or religious background.

NMS 9

The agency has a written policy and systems in place to collate and evaluate information on the circumstances, number and outcome of all allegations of neglect or abuse as set out in national minimum standard 9.5. Safe caring guidelines are included in both foster carer training and in the foster carers handbook. All young people placed have a safe caring plan. There is a clear written procedure in place to guide foster carers on the appropriate action to take if a child goes missing from the placement, and foster carers spoken to as part of this inspection were aware of what action they were required to take if this was to occur.

The inspector saw the records of the three child protection concerns raised during the last year. The response to these concerns by the agency has been prompt and in accordance with local child protection procedures. One of the concerns raised was unsubstantiated, one was a repeat of an old concern without any new evidence, and the third resolved as a matter to be dealt with through foster carer training and support.

Foster children and young people spoken to as part of this inspection told the inspector that they were not being bullied, and all seven children and young people's questionnaires stated the same. Six of the seven returned children's questionnaires stated that foster carers give advice on staying safe, and questionnaires from placing social workers stated that they felt that the children and young people they are responsible for are in safe placements.

NMS 15

The agency has clearly set out policies and procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff. Staff files contain evidence of interview, two references (one from the previous employer), and a medical information form. The registered manager told the inspector that offers of employment are only made following receipt by the agency of satisfactory checks.

The inspector discussed the issue of CRB checks for social work students with the director responsible for administration. The current process is that the placing university maintains a record of discussion with students, including details of the decision making process in accordance with Department of Health guidance.

All social work staff employed by the agency are well qualified and experienced practitioners. Discussion with social workers over the course of this inspection demonstrated this practical experience and knowledge of professional social work with children and families.

NMS 30

The inspector read the minutes of three previous panel meetings, interviewed the chair of the panel and attended the meeting of the panel held on 10/01/06.

The Greater London Fostering panel operates under clearly set out policies and procedures with respect to its function, and operation, which includes the minimum number and make up of the panel, and the procedure for decision making when all the members of the panel are not in agreement. There is a clear person specification for panel membership, which includes a statement that all panel members must undergo an appropriate Criminal Records Bureau check, and cannot sit on the panel until it is received. A clear enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau was seen at the last announced inspection in respect of each current member of the panel. The current membership of the panel includes both employees of the agency, and independent members with expertise in education, child health and personal experience of foster caring and being placed with a foster carer. The manager does not sit on the panel, as she is the agency decision maker.

Examination of records showed appropriate recording of panel discussions and decisions, with a clear record of the exercise of the panel's quality assurance role, with records showing appropriate comment on the quality of assessment, the consultation process with children and the frequency of support worker visits and reviews. The inspector was impressed with the sensitive manner in which the panel addressed foster carers who attended, as part of their assessment or following their review.

The agency has appointed the existing panel chair as the fourth director of the company and responsible person. The panel chair described how the panel has in place systems to ensure an appropriate division between her responsibilities as a director and as the chair of the panel. These systems are satisfactory.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

7, 13, 31

Children and young people feel that their heritage is promoted and valued, and that their carers and the fostering agency promote their educational achievement.

EVIDENCE:

NMS 7

Children and young people placed by the agency come from a great variety of backgrounds, and discussion with the manager, staff and foster carers supported the impression that issues of diversity and equal opportunities are treated with importance by the agency. The agency provides training in promoting heritage and identity as part of their induction programme and there is a requirement that all foster carers attend within their first six months of fostering. The training includes nurturing the heritage of children and young people, addressing children and young people's needs, challenging foster carers attitudes, and supporting children and young people to deal with all forms of discrimination

Discussion with foster carers showed understanding of the ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the children and young people who are placed with them. Three of the eight children and young people's questionnaires described how their religious needs were met in their placement.

The agency recently held a day to celebrate Asian culture and food, and this followed on from a Caribbean Day which gave an opportunity to celebrate the diverse backgrounds of the agency's foster carers and the children and young people they care for.

Following issues raised by the panel at a foster carers review, the agency have worked hard to develop practice with regard to issues of gender and sexuality, and the assessment of prospective foster carers now includes a more detailed examination of issues of gender and sexual identity.

NMS 13

All the foster children spoken to as part of this inspection were receiving education where appropriate, and records of reviews demonstrated a contribution in this area from foster carers. All the children of school age seen by the inspector had a quiet place to do their homework, and records seen demonstrated that foster carers attended meetings at their foster children's school.

All the children and young people's questionnaires with one exception were positive about the support for studying given by foster carers. The agency provides training for foster carers on how they can support children's education. One foster carer described to the inspector how she had worked closely with a school on behalf of a foster child whose behaviour was placing him at risk of exclusion.

NMS 31

This national minimum standard is not applicable, as Greater London Fostering does not provide a short-term break service.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

10, 11

Children and young people know that they will be consulted on matters that affect their lives, and benefit from the maintenance of their important relationships through appropriate contact.

EVIDENCE:

NMS 10

Foster carers responsibilities for maintaining children and young people's contact with their families are set out in the foster carers handbook, and contact arrangements are recorded in the foster placement agreements. The agency has provided training in working in partnership with parents and families, and also in sharing skills in work with parents and families. A number of foster children told the inspector that they had regular contact with members of their family, and foster carers spoken to, and who submitted questionnaires, understood the importance of contact, which they had supported in sometimes-difficult circumstances. Arrangements for contact have been further enhanced by the provision of a contact centre in the agency's offices, and the service has been further developed following consultation with users of the service to provide a more intimate area for contact with parents and babies. This service exceeds this national minimum standard.

All of the children and young people who responded to the questionnaire said that they could visit their friends, and all but one indicated that their friends could visit them at the foster carers. A number of children and young people indicated that their foster carers support their attendance at clubs, which offer the opportunity to enjoy a variety of activities and to make new friends.

NMS 11

The general impression gained from children and young people spoken to during this inspection and from returned questionnaires was that children and young people felt listened to, and that foster carers actively sought their opinions on matters that they felt were important or affected their everyday lives. The majority of children and young people were aware of somebody they could speak to if they were unhappy. The complaints procedure is included in the children's guide. Children and young people spoken to during this inspection also stated that the agency's supervising social workers regularly make time to talk to them on their own.

The agency has developed consultation systems with foster carers from which have developed a number of focus groups of staff and foster carers to develop aspects of the operation of the agency identified during the consultation process. Training has been provided in listening to children and young people, focussing on effective listening skills, listening to children in the context of establishing a relationship, and the application of effective listening to key situations such as welcoming a new child to a foster home.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

29

Children and young people benefit from the stability created by the timely payment of allowances and agreed expenses to their carers.

EVIDENCE:

NMS 29

Foster carers allowances and expenses are set out in the foster carers guide, and payments are made directly into foster carers accounts by bank transfer. Foster carers spoken to during this inspection indicated that allowances are paid correctly and at the agreed time.

One carer described a delay in payment over the Christmas period but acknowledged that this was a very unusual and isolated occurrence.

Management

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

2, 16, 17, 21, 23, 24

Children and young people benefit from being placed by an agency with a sustained track record of effective leadership and management, which provides foster carers who are well trained and supported by sufficient qualified and experienced social workers.

EVIDENCE:

NMS 2

Greater London Fostering is a private company with four directors, who have experience in excess of that required under this standard. The recently appointed fourth director is also the chair of the panel.

One director is responsible for the financial, health and safety and general administration of the agency, and has a background in local authority housing in which he supervised a number of staff.

A second director is responsible for training, quality assurance and is also advisor to the panel. This person has experience as an assistant director of Children Services and has responsibility for a number of childcare and education services. The person has an MBA qualification, is a qualified social worker and has applied to the Commission for Social Care Inspection to be registered as the manager of the agency.

The third director is responsible for recruitment and referrals, and is the former registered manager, who has since 1970 worked in a number of local authorities as a childcare social worker and team manager. This person also has experience of work in family placement and child protection social work teams, and has a childcare qualification, which is equivalent to the Certificate in Qualification in Social Work, and a management qualification.

The newly appointed fourth director holds a doctorate in social work, and has considerable practice experience of work with children and families, and as a social work academic has published in the field of foster care. This person, who has responsibility for the development of practice in the agency, the Education Project and the student unit, has applied to the Commission for Social Care Inspection for registration as the responsible person.

The agency has a comprehensive database to monitor its activities, which gives the senior staff of the agency up to date information from which to assess the performance of the agency, for example the completion of visits to foster carers by supervising social workers. This system requires an electronic signature from managers, which can demonstrate the occurrence of management oversight in a timely and effective manner. This enables a proactive management approach both in terms of developing the service, and identifying any shortfalls in performance, which can be speedily addressed.

NMS16

Greater London Fostering has a clear management structure with all four directors having responsibility for particular areas of the agencies work. The management of the agency also consists of two senior social workers who have responsibilities for the agencies activities in North London and South London.

There are systems in place to ensure the effective assessment and approval of foster carers. Records of monthly staff supervision were seen at this inspection, and observation of practice in the office showed an appropriate level of clerical and administrative support.

The agency has continued to follow comprehensive review procedures over the last year, and has moved away from the use of independent reviewing officers to a system of reviews undertaken by the directors of the agency.

The review documentation provided to panel is comprehensive and detailed. The review format includes significant information on the family, a checklist of placements, assessments of individual placements by the placing social worker, supervising social worker, foster carer and where appropriate birth family. There is a health and safety audit, a written record of appropriate checks, an appraisal of the last years fostering by the foster carer and supervising social worker, a detailed report from the reviewing officer and identified targets for the next year. The reviews seen by the inspector, which followed this format, were of a quality that exceeds this national minimum standard.

NMS 17

The inspector noted the development over the last year of a greater emphasis on the training and development of staff and foster carers to create a learning organisation which develops and values individual staff and foster carers skills and knowledge, and seeks a continuous cycle of assessment and development of its practice. Social work staff receive half a days training per month, twelve and a half development days and ten days per year training with foster carers. The majority of staff are act as social work practice assessors and three are pursuing post-qualifying awards, and one member of staff has a qualification at this level. The agencies administrator is currently studying for a degree in the administration of fostering, and by next year the agency will have a totally graduate workforce.

New carers are recruited by positive recommendation and a clearly written assessment process, which includes all the areas as set out in national minimum standard 17.7. There is a written policy on and a strategy for the assessment of carers using the British Association of Adoption and Fostering Form F.

NMS 21

The written policies of the agency include all the matters relating to the support of foster carers as set out in national minimum standard 21.2. The agency has encouraged and supported the development of self-help groups, and encourages foster carers to seek the support of more experienced carers in particular matters. The agency holds two residential trips a year, day trips, parties and other social activities for staff, foster carers, birth children and foster children. Where appropriate, participation in these activities has been extended to birth families. This commendable range of activities support the agencies philosophy that values the whole network of relationships that support foster placements. All the returned questionnaires from foster carers were generally positive about the support given to them by the agency.

The agency does not provide paid respite care, but carers are supported in setting up support networks consisting of other foster carers, family and friends who are assessed by the agency, so that children have respite or support from carers with whom they are familiar.

NMS 23

The agency provides a comprehensive programme of training for foster carers. The pre-approval and induction training provided by the agency ensures that there are opportunities for new carers to benefit from the experience and knowledge of existing foster carers. Examination of foster carers records showed that annual reviews include an appraisal of foster carers training needs. The registered manager and director responsible for training stated that the effectiveness of training offered to foster carers is evaluated and reviewed on a regular basis. Training is offered at a number of venues and at different times to enable the attendance of as many foster carers as possible.

The inspector attended one training session during this inspection on the subject of taxation for foster carers. A number of foster carers spoken to during this training day spoke positively about the training that they received from the agency, and the opportunity it gave for them to network with other foster carers.

The agency is currently working towards accreditation of their learning and development programme with Middlesex University. During the past year, areas covered by training sessions, focus groups and practice workshops have included:

- Education
- Partnership with Parents and Families
- Sharing Skills in work with Parents and Families
- Safer Caring

- Induction workshop for new carers
- Making a permanent commitment to a foster child
- Listening to Children and Young People
- Safer Caring
- Promoting Children's Health
- Working with other professionals
- Planning for events and trips
- Consulting with Children and their Families
- Promoting Heritage and Identity
- Improving Support Groups
- Promoting Education
- The impact of abuse and neglect
- Fostering Allowance

NMS 24

The agency has a written policy on case recording, and the children's guide explains that children have a right to see their files, and how they can access this right. Examinations of records kept by the agency show information as set out in Regulation 22 Schedule 2(2) in respect of each person working in the agency, and as set out in Schedule 2(3) in respect of accidents are appropriately kept. The information recorded in the register as set out in Schedule 2(1)(e) with regard to the address that a placed child moves to on leaving the placement is recorded along with all the other information required under this regulation.

The registered manager told the inspector that case records are regularly audited and a list of missing Looked After Children documentation compiled. Records seen during this inspection demonstrated that written requests from the agency to placing authorities for missing Looked After Children documentation is retained in children and young people's files. There are procedures in place to monitor the quality of recording, and any shortfalls are addressed via the supervision process or team meetings.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion
 "N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	4

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

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

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
10	4
11	3

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	X
29	4

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

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection? No

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action

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

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