



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

**The Adolescent and Children`s Trust**

**32-34 Hotwells Road  
Hotwells  
Bristol  
BS8 4UD**

*Lead Inspector*  
Sam Chisholm

*Key Unannounced Inspection*  
30th October 2006      09:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# SERVICE INFORMATION

<b>Name of service</b>	The Adolescent and Children`s Trust
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<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	The Adolescent and Children`s Trust
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Ms Elaine Graham
<b>Type of registration</b>	Fostering Agencies

# **SERVICE INFORMATION**

## **Conditions of registration:**

**Date of last inspection**      22nd August 2005

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

The Adolescent and Children's Trust is an independent national charity providing fostering services. The Bristol branch comes under the charity's Wales Region. The branch provides a fostering service in the Bristol and South West area for children aged 0-17 and is now housed in its own city centre premises.

# **SUMMARY**

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

This inspection was carried out through discussions with the manager, staff, carers and children, questionnaire feedback, visits to carers and scrutiny of records.

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

The service has good systems in place for promoting the health and education needs of children and for caring for them safely.

Carers receive a good level of support.

Staff and carers are commended for their excellent practice in valuing diversity by meeting children's specific needs.

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

The number of exemptions being agreed prior to panel meetings has been decreased.

Social workers now ensure that all children receive the Children's Guide and Complaints procedure.

Staff receive an analysis of their training needs as part of their induction and through supervision.

The manager has been able to reduce her hours during the past year whilst consolidating the service.

The service currently has enough staff for the carers recruited.

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

The manager needs to ensure that there is clearer understanding between the service, placing authorities and carers regarding financial matters for placements. This needs to be included in written agreements.

The manager needs to ensure that information about financial matters regarding placements is passed on when there is a change of social worker.

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

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

## **CONTENTS**

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

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# Being Healthy

## The intended outcome for this Standard is:

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

## The Commission considers Standard 12 the key standard to be inspected.

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

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 satisfactory methods for assessing and meeting the health and development needs of children.

## EVIDENCE:

Six children's files were seen. These showed that the children's health needs had been assessed and plans created to meet them. The running records showed that action had been taken in accordance with the plans, to meet the children's health and development needs.

The carers' files showed that they had attended first aid training and that health and safety issues are included in their supervision sessions.

# Staying Safe

## The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

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

## The Commission considers Standards 3, 6, 8, 9, 15 and 30 the key standards to be inspected.

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

3, 6, 8, 9, 15

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

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

The service has appropriate recruitment, vetting and supervision procedures in place. Background and identification information for staff is recorded appropriately.

The service provides suitable carers with appropriate facilities for caring for children. Appropriate procedures are followed for matching children with suitable carers.

Suitable procedures, recording and training are in place to protect children from abuse and neglect.

### EVIDENCE:

Staff records were seen. These showed that appropriate information (in accordance with Schedule 1 of the regulations) had been sought and recorded, including CRB checks and references. They also showed that satisfactory recruitment procedures had been followed. Copies of staff qualifications were

seen which showed social work staff are appropriately qualified. Supervision records showed that both qualified and unqualified staff are appropriately supervised.

Two carers' homes were visited. They were seen to be appropriately decorated and furnished and children confirmed that they had the equipment, facilities and leisure provisions that they needed.

Carers' preparation and training covers health and safety issues.

The children's files showed that the service had obtained sufficient information from placing authorities to make well informed matches with carers. Referral forms and Looked After Children (LAC) paperwork were seen to be completed to a good standard.

Where placements are planned, introductory meetings between staff, carers and children are arranged.

When emergency placements are made a social worker is present at the time of placement for two hours, followed by a phone call to carers later the same day.

Additional support is provided to carers to meet the needs of children where required. Evidence of this was seen through one of the placements that was casetracked.

The service keeps satisfactory records of allegations and child protection referrals. The records showed that one allegation had been made since the last inspection. This had been dealt with appropriately in liaison with a previous inspector. The service has appropriate Child Protection procedures in place, which staff and carers are trained to follow.

Carers' files showed that they had received training in Child Protection and Safe Caring. Safe Care policies for each household were also seen.

Foster Carer Agreements were seen to include a section about corporal punishment.

# Enjoying and Achieving

## The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

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

## The Commission considers Standards 7, 13 and 31 the key standards to be inspected.

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

7, 13

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

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

The service staff and carers are commended for their excellent practice in valuing diversity and meeting children's needs in this area.

The service has good systems in place to promote the educational achievement of children.

### EVIDENCE:

The files seen showed a good level of information about the children's cultural, religious and language needs in the LAC forms and reviews.

The Carers' handbook was seen to contain clear and detailed information about equal opportunities and valuing diversity. This guidance was seen being put into practice in one of the families that was casetracked. Inspection of the records relating to the family and a visit to them showed that the carers had made a great effort to meet the needs of foster children of a different ethnicity and religion to themselves. This had included cooking appropriate food, providing home visits by a religious teacher and supporting the children to learn their parents' language. The children confirmed this and added that the carers had also followed cultural and religious guidelines for the children's

conduct that had been given to them. They are commended for their excellent practice in this area.

The children's files were seen to contain a section for education. The children had Personal Education Plans detailing how their educational needs would be met. Some also had school reports detailing their progress. Their care plans and reviews also contained appropriate information relating to their educational needs and progress. The children confirmed that they enjoyed the schools they were placed at. Both sets of carers visited, had good relationships with the schools and attended parents' evenings.

## **Making a Positive Contribution**

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

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

### **The Commission considers Standards 10 and 11 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

10, 11

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

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

The service has good systems in place to facilitate contact for children.

Satisfactory methods are used to consult children about the service and their placements.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Plans and records of contact were seen on LAC forms and reviews, carer supervision records and running records. This was well organised and supported by carers and TACT staff.

The children's review records included consultation about their views, likes and dislikes. These showed a good level of consultation. The children are also visited every nine weeks by TACT staff to check their views on their placement. Records of this were seen. The service keeps satisfactory records of complaints. These showed that no complaints had been made since the last inspection. Previous records showed that an appropriate procedure had been followed in dealing with a complaint.

Children and carers have written guidance about how to complain and the procedure that will be followed.



# 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):

29

Quality in this outcome area is **adequate**.

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

Although the service has clear written guidelines for allowances, the carers visited were not entirely clear about what they were expected to pay for. Also the carers had paid for and were expecting to pay for services that are the responsibility of the placing authority.

The service needs to ensure that financial arrangements are clearly detailed in the placement agreement prior to a placement being made.

The service needs to have a clear agreement with placing authorities that those authorities will pay for support worker time and therapy. It is not acceptable for carers to pay for this.

It is recommended that the manager ensures that she discusses any outstanding financial issues with staff and carers if there is a change of social worker.

## EVIDENCE:

The service has clear and detailed written information about carer allowances. Information about this is included in the carers' handbook.

One set of carers visited said they had paid for therapy and taxis to school for their foster child and were not sure whether the service would reimburse them.



This was discussed with the manager at the time of the inspection and resolved by her visiting the carers to discuss it.

Another set of carers visited reported that they were being expected to pay for some of the additional support that one of their foster children received from a TACT support worker. This was discussed with the manager, who confirmed that although this had been the original expectation, the carers had not yet been charged for this and would now not be charged.

# Management

## The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

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

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

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

1, 16, 17, 21, 24, 25

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

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

The service has a satisfactory statement of its aims and objectives.

Although the service continues to experience problems with staff recruitment and retention, it is currently adequately staffed, with appropriate measures in place to encourage retention.

There is a clear management structure in place and staff receive good levels of supervision and training.

Appropriate methods are used to assess potential carers.

Satisfactory written strategies are in place for the support of carers. The service offers a good level of support and training for carers.

Children's case records contain appropriate information about them and all records are kept securely.

### **EVIDENCE:**

The service has a clear statement of its aims and objectives.

The Bristol branch of TACT is part of a larger organisation with a clear management structure. The branch manager supervises the social work and support staff.

Two staff records were seen. These showed that staff received a clear and detailed induction, regular supervision that is well recorded and a good level of ongoing training. A staff member confirmed that they received very good supervision and training.

At the time of the inspection, the service was staffed by the manager, two part-time social workers, one part-time resource worker and five locum resource workers. The manager reported that she had just about enough staff, but that recruitment and retention of staff continues to be an ongoing problem. At the time of the inspection one social worker was due to leave their post and another had been recruited. Evidence from staff records showed that the service has the correct systems in place to encourage staff retention.

Due to the staffing problems experienced by the service, the manager had chosen to spend the past year consolidating the current service rather than recruiting new carers. The carers visited had been appropriately matched with their foster children.

The carers' files contained Form F assessments, which were satisfactorily completed and included appropriate checks and references. Carers confirmed that they had found the assessment process to be thorough.

The carers' handbook contained clear written policies and strategies regarding how carers would be supported. These were seen to meet Standard 21. Evidence was also seen of these strategies being practised in the records of calls and visits made to carers, supervision records and the carers' training records. Carers confirmed that they receive a good level of support and training.

The children's case records were seen to comply with Schedule 2 of the regulations. A training course in Life Story work was seen on the carers' training programme.

The service's records were kept securely and appropriate procedures were followed to protect the confidentiality of records.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

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

<b>BEING HEALTHY</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>12</b>	3

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

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

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

<b>ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>14</b>	X
<b>29</b>	2

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

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

NO

**STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

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

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action
1.	FS29	34(3)	Ensure financial arrangements are clearly detailed in the placement agreement prior to a placement being made.	30/10/06

**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.	FS29	Ensure that information about outstanding financial issues relating to placements is transferred when there is a change of social worker.

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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