



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

### **SWIS Foster Care Limited**

**3rd Floor Royal Buildings  
2 Mosley Street  
Piccadilly  
Manchester  
M2 3AN**

*Lead Inspector*  
**Sharon Lloyd**

*Announced Inspection*  
**5th December 2006      10:30**

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](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>	SWIIS Foster Care Limited
<b>Address</b>	3rd Floor Royal Buildings 2 Mosley Street Piccadilly Manchester M2 3AN
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 228 7442
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 236 3606
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	SWIIS Foster Care Ltd
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Christopher David Schofield
<b>Type of registration</b>	Fostering Agencies

# SERVICE INFORMATION

## Conditions of registration:

1. As detailed in the Service`s Statement of Purpose dated January 2004, SWIIS Fostering Service will provide placements to children and young people that meet their personal, social, health, development and education needs including:
  - a) Planned short term, task centred placements for children/young people towards specific goals,for example, assessment placements, bridging, preparation for adoption, permanency or return home,or placements which meet other care plan objectives
  - b) Planned longer term placements for individual children/young people and sibling groups who cannot be rehabilitated home
  - c) Parent and Child Placements
  - d) Sibling placements
  - e) Placements for Children with Disabilities
  - f) Short break and Respite placements
  - g) Uplanned, short notice or emergency placements.
2. The service is managed at all times in accordance with the guidance and regulations issued in respect of fostering services by the Secretary of State Health under Sections 22 and 23(1) of the Care Standards Act 2000.
3. The staff and carers receive relevant and updated training to assist them in their work with children/young people, in particular the management of child protection allegations and safe caring.
4. The organisation must at all times employ a suitably qualified and experienced manager who is registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

**Date of last inspection**            15th March 2006

## Brief Description of the Service:

Swiis Foster Care Ltd. is a national independent provider of foster care services to local authorities. The company currently has offices in Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle and accepts referrals for the placement of children and young people from all areas of the United Kingdom. The service offers a full range of short term, long term or respite placement choice for children and young people.

This registration relates to the Manchester regional office and covers the North West of England. Qualified and experienced professionals form the multi-disciplinary team, including 6 supervising social workers, 2 education caseworkers, a health advisor and 2 placement support workers, one of whom focuses on education support. The team is led by the regional director (responsible individual) with assistance from the registered manager, an office

manager, principal social worker and principal education caseworker.

The service is responsible for the recruitment, assessment, approval, training and support of foster carers.

The Manchester office of Swiis Foster Care is situated in the city centre in an area known as Piccadilly. The fostering service is accommodated on the third floor of the Royal Building with mostly open plan working area, which it shares with the SWIIS recruitment agency.

Charges range from £771 for a child under five to £1679 for a parent and child placement and include all resources available within the service. Additional charges are negotiated for particular needs such as intensive therapy, psychological assessments and additional respite.

# SUMMARY

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

## Methodology:

This is the summary of a proportional key inspection of SWIIS fostering agency, North West. The service was assessed against all the key national minimum standards and the inspector focused on the outcomes for children as measured against the Every Child Matters outcome areas..

Before the site visit to SWIIS, the service provided detailed information about how they look after children, what they think they do well and what they are trying to improve. They also gave the inspector the names and addresses of all the foster carers and all the children looked after by SWIIS in the North West.

Questionnaires were sent to randomly chosen children, their birth families, foster carers and social workers to find out how well they thought SWIIS were looking after children. Eight children, seven social workers, and nine foster carers returned their completed questionnaires.

A briefing meeting took place 6 weeks before the site visit between the inspector, the responsible individual and the manager of the service to plan the inspection. The site visit to SWIIS took place over 2 days, from 5<sup>th</sup> December 2006, with a further half day spent on telephone conversations with foster carers: approximately 20 hours in total.

The extent and remit of the inspection was determined by the information obtained prior to the site visit as well as that provided by SWIIS in the form of notifications to the CSCI since the last inspection.

The inspector case tracked three children and spoke to the health advisor, education staff, supervising social workers, the office manager and the service manager. She visited one foster carer and child at home and inspected a selection of records, some of which were chosen randomly. She spoke to another foster carer of a child being case tracked.

For further information about the quality of care provided by SWIIS, this report should be read in conjunction with the last report, dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 2006.

## What the service does well:

SWIIS places great emphasis on children's health and employs a health advisor who works closely with foster carers, children and supervising social workers to ensure that children's health needs are identified and met. There is evidence of health improvements in a number of children, since SWIIS carers have looked after them.

Good practices and procedures are in place to safeguard children and promote their welfare. The following are quotes from children who participated in the inspection:

*"I feel safe and happy – my carers always look after me"*

*"My carers are kind and I feel safe and secure and enjoy playing with other children in the family".*

The high quality support that is provided by experienced and qualified education workers and well trained foster carers results in children reaching their potential and achieving educational success. Several social workers commented on the "excellent" educational support provided to children and said the "Education social worker is an invaluable service to Young People and carers".

All the children who participated in the inspection said they are listened to and are able to contribute to decisions made about their own lives. Typical comments include: " my carers always listen to me and help me" and "I am made to feel part of the family and have my say about hair, clothes, food school, money, contacts, play". Foster carers and social workers unanimously stated that children are encouraged to participate in decisions made about their care and their futures.

Staff turnover is low and staff members said they feel valued and supported to provide a good and worthwhile service to children. They feel that the multidisciplinary team works well together to meet children's needs and to support foster carers so that children make good progress in all areas.

Feedback from foster carers includes:

- *"They are always there for me – 24 hrs a day".*
- *"I would recommend this agency to anyone thinking of becoming a carer"*
- *"We feel very much part of a team with everyone pulling in the same direction. The children's best interests are always at the forefront of discussions."*
- *"SWIIS are the best – we have achieved good outcomes for all the children placed with us."*

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

Although no requirements were made following the last inspection, the service has continued to develop and improve. It has developed a new support group for looked after children approaching independence and there has been good feedback from the children about the usefulness of this group.



SWIIS has conducted a "Life Appreciation day" for a child who experienced a placement breakdown and has now introduced these multi disciplinary meetings where all information is explored and shared with potential carers wherever a child is matched long term with a SWIIS carer. This ensures that permanent carers receive full and accurate information about a child's history and previous experiences.

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

No requirements for improvement have been made following this inspection; however, the registered person may wish to review the management arrangements so that the responsible individual who monitors the effectiveness of the service is not directly involved in its management and operation.

In addition, the registered person should consider seeking alternative premises that offer more appropriate accommodation and facilities.

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**

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Scoring of Outcomes

Statutory Requirements Identified During the Inspection

# 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 excellent. This judgement has been made using all available evidence including the site visit. Children's health is protected and promoted by the high priority given to their health.

## EVIDENCE:

All of the children who participated in the inspection said they are well looked after and receive good health advice.

Foster carers said they receive excellent support and advice from the health advisor. Some gave examples, including being accompanied on hospital visits, receiving advice about nutrition, advice to young people about smoking cessation, sexual health and particular medical conditions. The health advisor was able to support one foster carer in the care of premature baby twins and another in looking after a baby withdrawing from methadone.

The health advisor makes sure that all children are brought up to date with vaccinations and have an initial medical examination. In the year April2005-March2006, 91% of children received annual Looked After Children (LAC) health checks. She has established good working relationships with the LAC nurses for the areas where SWIIS operates and this enables her to obtain relevant health information and to ensure that children get the services they need more quickly.

There is evidence on the children's files of the health advisor seeking missing health information from local authorities. Whilst some local authorities appreciate the need for foster carers to have full health information on a child they are caring for, others can be less forthcoming and reluctant to share

information. The health advisor sometimes finds it necessary to remind these authorities of the fostering regulations. SWIIS may wish to consider reviewing the terms of its contract with local authorities to ensure the contract includes the provision of health information where this is available.

An example of good practice is the immediate basic health checks that children have when they are admitted to a SWIIS carer, including initial visits to the G.P., dentist and ophthalmic optician. One child who had been in foster care for some time before moving to a SWIIS foster carer, was found to have been previously assessed as needing spectacles that he had not been wearing. Nor had he been taken for regular eye tests. As a result, the child's sight had deteriorated substantially. However, with diligent care and support from his carers he now wears his spectacles regularly and this has made a tremendous difference to his progress in school as well as preventing further damage to his eyes.

Another child, with cerebral palsy, was admitted to a SWIIS carer unable to walk or even to sit up in his wheelchair. He can now walk unaided except for wearing splints and has made tremendous progress in all areas of development.

The health advisor carries out regular height and weight checks on children and has provided evidence for care proceedings of substantial growth by a child who was admitted to a SWIIS carer having been previously neglected. She also prepares a detailed summary and history of a child's health and development for future carers and this is passed on when a child moves on from SWIIS.

# 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):**

3,6,8,9,15,30

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Children are kept safe because staff and carers adhere to good practices and procedures.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The following are quotes from children who participated in the inspection:

“I feel safe and happy – my carers always look after me”

“My carers are kind and I feel safe and secure and enjoy playing with other children in the family”.

All the children who responded said they know how to make a complaint and carers confirmed that children are issued with the children’s guide, which includes information about how to complain or how to get help.

The supervising social workers meet with children regularly to ascertain their views, and their safety and wellbeing is considered at these and at supervision meetings with carers.

All carers have safe caring policies that they review annually. Carers who attended recent refresher training in safe care said it was valuable. Foster carers are encouraged to update their written safe care policy whenever they look after a new child to ensure that they have considered the safety measures needed to look after the new child and how these might impact on other children already in placement. Foster Carers said they don't routinely update their safe care policy with each new child despite being advised to think about it and some said they review it without recording it. Supervising social workers should check that foster carers are following the SWIIS guidance on this.

There was evidence of the panel commenting and advising on practice issues in line with their quality assurance role.

The sample file inspected showed that a foster carer had been taken to panel on 22/06/2006 and had signed a foster care agreement on 30/06/2006 even though the agency decision maker had not given consent for approval until a week later (06/07/2006). A note on the file stated, "approved 22/06/06". A sample of recent panel minutes was inspected and recorded under each "Recommendation" heading was, "The panel agreed to approve...".

Letters are sent to foster carers stating, "At the SWIIS foster care panel...you were appointed as a foster carer..." It was difficult to locate these letters on files.

It is not the role of the panel to approve foster carers, but to recommend approval. It is for the agency decision maker to consider their recommendations and approve as he thinks fit.

Children's safety is protected by robust recruitment procedures, which extend to panel members. Up to date CRB checks at the enhanced level are held on staff and panel member files. References, C.V.s and records of interviews are also held on panel members along with confidentiality agreements. However, there was only one reference available on a sampled file of a sessional worker. SWIIS may wish to consider reviewing their employee checklist to include space for 2 references and to indicate that these references have been verified.

Some panel members have served on the SWIIS panel since 2000; however, since the agency was not registered until 2002, they may continue to serve as panel members for a further 2 years. The manager is aware of this and plans to introduce new panel members over an extended period to ensure a smooth transition.

Where children with special or particular needs are matched with carers, training is made available for any carers who do not have relevant knowledge or experience to help them to meet the needs of the individual child. For example, a child was diagnosed with an attachment disorder in November

2004. The carer was provided with training in attachment and completed this in April 2005. A respite carer was provided to help sustain the placement and this was a carer with experience in looking after children with attachment difficulties.

There was evidence of one disruption since the last inspection and the report of the disruption meeting shows a thorough investigation of the placement and what went wrong. As a result of the recommendations of this meeting, SWIIS have introduced "Life Appreciation Days" as a way of sharing as much information as possible with long-term carers. Further recommendations for improved practice have been addressed.

# 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):**

7,13,31

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The high quality support that is provided by experienced and qualified education workers and well trained foster carers results in children reaching their potential and achieving educational success.

## **EVIDENCE:**

All carers have received training in valuing diversity. A child with special needs receives a short break service to support his main placement. He has received excellent support from his foster carer and the SWIIS multidisciplinary team resulting in massive improvements to his health and development in all areas, including education. As a result, he has now outgrown his special school and has begun integration into a mainstream school on a part time basis in accordance with his needs.

A Voice Activated Communication Aid (VOCA) has been procured for a child with cerebral palsy and average intelligence and this will facilitate entry into a mainstream school as well as enable the child to communicate with others in all aspects of his life in the future. The education case worker, class teacher and foster carer have all received training in the use of the VOCA so that they can teach the child how to get the best use from it.



Three children placed in transracial placements were case tracked during the inspection. Their cultural and ethnic needs had been considered and there was evidence of the carers promoting a healthy interest in their cultural identity and history as well as meeting their skin and health care needs.

All of the children who participated in the inspection said they receive good support with their education and many commented on the additional help they get from the teacher and support workers who go into school. Similarly, several social workers commented on the "excellent" educational support provided to children and said the "Education social worker is an invaluable service to Young People and carers".

Two support workers provide children with additional support according to their needs. There is evidence of them working flexibly to provide the best possible care to the child. For example, a support worker cared for a foster child in the foster carers home while she took a much-needed holiday. This was deemed to be the best way to care for the child without causing disruption and anxiety. Support workers have completed the BAAF training in life story work which they have used to successfully help children achieve greater understanding of their lives; one discussed training that had been given in positive parenting skills, attachment disorders and caring for the carers. Along side their previous experience, this has equipped both support workers with the skills necessary to provide children and carers with high quality support both socially and educationally.

Children new to SWIIS have an educational assessment with one of the education case workers (all of whom are qualified and experienced teachers). This helps to determine what, if any, additional support they may need. The education case workers work closely with school staff to ensure that children who have statements of special educational needs receive all the support they are entitled to. They also work to ensure that children attend the school that is best for them. Of 42 school-aged children, 93% have achieved over 90% attendance. 31 children have achieved 100% attendance.

One child was correctly identified by the education case worker as being a potential high achiever and was helped to prepare for an entrance exam to a top grammar school. His class teacher had recognised his ability but did not have time to nurture it in school. With regular tuition, the case worker was able to address the gaps in the child's knowledge and give him the encouragement and the skills to believe in himself. He successfully obtained a place at the grammar school and the education case worker successfully applied for a full bursary to support him throughout his time there.

In 2006, one child sat GCSEs. His predicted GCSE grades were all at foundation level and for some years he had presented behavioural problems in school. He was given extra tuition for 3 months in English, maths and ICT by the SWIIS education team. He achieved 6 GCSE's grade A-C and 6 further

passes at grade D-F. He also received a school prize for the most improved behaviour. The trophy is displayed in the foster carers' home and the child has begun a training course with the Prince's trust.

Children at key stage 2 and 3 performed at or above the national average in their Standard Assessment Tests (SATs). Three children sat key stage 1 SATs, and only one was below the national average.

Prospective foster carers receive pre-approval training from the education case workers so that they recognise the importance of supporting children with their education. Many children said they receive support with their homework from their foster carers. All of the children who were case tracked had made excellent educational progress since being with their SWIIS foster carers.

# 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 excellent. This judgement has been made using all available evidence including a visit to this service. Children are encouraged and enabled to contribute to decisions made about their lives and the lives of others in the care of SWIIS.

### **EVIDENCE:**

All the children who participated in the inspection said they are listened to and are able to contribute to decisions made about their own lives. Typical comments include: " my carers always listen tome and help me" and "I am made to feel part of the family and have my say about hair, clothes, food school, money, contacts, play".

Foster carers and social workers unanimously stated that children are encouraged to participate in decisions made about their care and their futures. The children's views are always sought about the fostering service and their own lives and they take an active part in their reviews. Supervising social workers meet regularly with children and discuss their placement with them. Children said they knew who to consult if they were not happy about anything.

Children said they are consulted about the amount of contact they have with their families and receive support to keep in touch with parents, siblings and friends. Wherever possible, children from the same family are placed together, and SWIIS have a number of foster families willing to look after up to five children from the same family.

A child who had been placed with a SWIIS carer for 3 years became very distressed when the placing authority planned to separate him from his sibling. His emotional distress was reflected in a deterioration in his schoolwork. SWIIS workers supported the child to contact the children's rights officer, who negotiated with the placing authority on his behalf. The child has settled again and is happy with the change of plans that mean he will remain with the carer and with his sibling.

SWIIS have begun a support / consultation group for looked after children over the age of 14. They have met regularly once a month since June 2006. The focus of the group is to help children prepare for moving on to independent living. A young person aged 19 who has moved on from SWIIS to semi-independent supported living has helped to set up the support group for looked after children and has contributed much of the artwork to designing logos and children's newsletters.

There is also a well-established support group for the children of foster carers, which provides a forum for them to express their views and to discuss all manner of issues relating to sharing their family life with a fostered child.

Each of the above meetings is planned in advance to include a topic for discussion and a fun activity. Children's written comments on the value of the session are sought and used to inform future forums.

Two children aged over 14 attended a conference with one of the supervising social workers focusing on children's rights and "Care Matters".

# 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 excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Children live in households that have sufficient income to meet their needs. They receive support and advice to prepare them for future independent living.

### EVIDENCE:

Foster Carers confirmed that they are paid regularly and promptly. This enables them to meet children's needs effectively and to ensure that children have a good standard of living and participate in activities of their choosing.

Allowances and fees are reviewed annually and carers receive written financial information that clearly sets out the rates of all fees and allowances. These documents are signed by the carers to indicate that they have been read and understood. Allowances vary according to the age and complexity of children's needs. Additional allowances are paid for individual special needs. Carers' views about any revision of fees and allowances are sought through the carer focus group and are taken into account.

Carer retention is good and this enables children to have stable placements. Carers commented that they feel valued. One said, "We feel very much part of a team with everyone pulling in the same direction. The children's best interests are always at the forefront of discussions."

The SWIIS policy document "Preparing Children and Young People for Independence and Adult Life" sets out guidance for carers to help them encourage independence for all children and to prepare older children in

placement for independence. Four of the six children aged over 14 have pathway plans in place and carers are encouraged and supported to contribute to their implementation.

Education Case Workers have worked with a number of young people to help them identify appropriate further education or employment options as they have approached school leaving age, including providing training on interview techniques etc. They have also assisted and encouraged five young people to apply for Educational Maintenance Allowance to provide them with some independent financial support as they continue their training.

Post approval training is available to carers about the issues involved in preparing children for independence, however, SWIIS has plans to provide carers with further training in preparing children for independent living and in working with pathway plans. A new panel member who manages a local authority leaving care team is able to contribute particular expertise to panel discussions and focus on the needs of older children when considering foster carer assessments and reviews. Plans are in place to provide an annual workshop, toward the end of the academic year, for young people of school-leaving age to look at job applications, interview techniques, C.V.s, Further Education options, Educational Maintenance Allowance etc .

The focus of the looked after children's support group is preparation for independence.

# 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 excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Children make good progress because they receive high quality care from carers and staff who are well managed, trained, highly skilled and dedicated.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The registered manager is appropriately qualified and experienced and is responsible for the day-to-day management of the service. He is aided by the responsible individual who manages the principal social worker responsible for foster carer assessments by sessional workers, the office manager responsible for the overall administration of the service and the principal education case worker with responsibility for children's education and support. This arrangement should be reviewed so that the responsible individual who monitors the effectiveness of the service is not directly involved in its management and operation.

All SWIIS staff are qualified and experienced professionals. They receive regular training and many are involved in the delivery of training to foster carers and to each other, as they have expertise in a number of areas. Staff and carers have training profiles. These were not kept completely up to date even though there was evidence that staff and carers had undertaken relevant and specific training.

Social workers confirmed that SWIIS staff communicate well with them and deliver a high quality service to the children placed. The following quote was typical of comments made: "I have had a lot of involvement with fostering agencies and I believe SWIIS offers the best service. They provide excellent communication between all parties, support foster carers and the services of the education case worker are invaluable."

Staff turnover is low and several staff members said they feel valued and supported to provide a good and worthwhile service to children. They feel that the multidisciplinary team works well together to meet children's needs and to support foster carers so that children make good progress in all areas. Staff members said that this is definitely not a "heads on beds" service and that children are only accommodated if they can be matched to an available carer. They commented that matching is good because the manager, responsible individual and principal social worker are all skilled and experienced professionals in the field of fostering who are extremely child focused and whose aim is always to provide the best possible care for children.

Foster carers said they value the high level of support they receive from SWIIS. This includes fortnightly visits from their supervising social worker, regular telephone calls, an out of hours service, foster carer support groups, regular training opportunities and additional support from education case workers, the health advisor and children's support workers. A respite service is provided where needed.

Many positive comments were received from the foster carers who participated in the inspection. The following quotes are but a few:



"SWIIS offers a fantastic standard of care and support, I have no complaints whatsoever. I couldn't wish to work alongside a better team."

"Their help was invaluable in moving our 2<sup>nd</sup> child on to adoption as we were very concerned about the 2 weeks programme. With their support everything went very smoothly both for the children and us."

"SWIIS are the best – we have achieved good outcomes for all the children placed with us."

"They are always there for me – 24 hrs a day".

Administrative and children's records are maintained in accordance with the regulations although some information was difficult to find. Foster placement agreements are in place and further reports are provided following children's reviews to ensure that up to date plans for individual children are recorded and made known to the foster carer and all professionals involved.

The SWIIS office is based in the centre of Manchester and is shared with the SWIIS staff recruitment agency. It is an open plan office and space is limited. No separate meeting rooms are available other than managers' offices. The manager and responsible individual are looking into alternative premises so that more suitable provision can be made for staff and visiting 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>	4

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 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.	FS26	The registered person should consider seeking alternative premises that offer more appropriate accommodation and facilities as well as better access.
2.	FS30	The registered person should ensure that the recommendations of panel are recorded as such and that panel members are clear about their role. Foster carers should not be informed of their approval until the agency decision maker has agreed it. (Fostering Service regulations 2002: 28 (4,5)).
3.	FS4	The registered person should review the management arrangements so that the responsible individual who monitors the effectiveness of the service is not directly involved in its management and operation. (Fostering Service regulations 2002: 6.(a))

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