



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

**Plymouth City Council Local Authority  
Fostering Agency**

**Douglass House,  
Douglass Road,  
Efford,  
Plymouth  
PL3 6NP**

*Lead Inspector*  
Michelle Oxley

*Announced Inspection*  
7th November 2005      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>	Plymouth City Council Local Authority Fostering Agency
<b>Address</b>	Douglass House, Douglass Road, Efford, Plymouth PL3 6NP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 668000
<b>Fax number</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	Plymouth City Council
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Type of registration</b>	Local Auth Fostering Service
<b>No. of places registered (if applicable)</b>	0
<b>Category(ies) of registration, with number of places</b>	

# **SERVICE INFORMATION**

## **Conditions of registration:**

**Date of last inspection**      14/3/05

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

Plymouth City Council is a Unitary Authority in Devon. The Foster Care Service is a part of Children's service provision within the city. At the time of the inspection the Plymouth Foster service was managed by three Managers, two were in temporary positions. The Service was overseen by the head of Children's services who took up post just prior to the start of this inspection. The team had responsibility for recruitment selection, training and support of all the cities foster carers

# **SUMMARY**

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

This inspection was conducted over a period of 1 month and was carried out by 2 inspectors. As part of the inspection, foster carers, were surveyed and survey responses were high. A selection of foster carers and were children interviewed. Selected staff and Managers working for the service were interviewed and policy documents, documentation to support the care systems and files for carers and children and staff were examined, 1 inspector observed a panel meeting.

We would like to acknowledge the assistance provided in undertaking this inspection particularly from foster carers who gave up valuable time to speak with us and whose views have been reflected in this report.

This inspection was disappointing in that Plymouth city fostering service failed to carry through planned changes to improve its service as stated following inspection in March of this year. The service was assessed against a total of 28 National Minimum standard, from these 28, only 5 were assessed as being met, 18 had been identified as Required or Recommend action following the last two inspections of this service dated 14/03/05 and 16/03/04.

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

Foster care Link workers were supportive and foster carers felt they could depend on them.

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

Evidence to prove that Foster Care Link workers are monitoring the work that foster carers do for children had improved

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

Appoint a permanent Manger  
Monitor and review care more effectively  
Improve communication and joint working practices between the foster service and the child's social worker  
Ensure that carers receive the information, practical and financial support they need to care effectively  
Design systems to protect children  
Ensure foster carers receive proper training  
Ensure children receive good support when they are leaving foster care  
Improve complaints processes  
Plan placements more effectively  
Match carers and children in a more considered way  
Improve and manage records and files

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

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

## **CONTENTS**

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

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# 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**

We looked at standard 12

The process in place to promote good health were insufficient

## **EVIDENCE:**

In the 10 cases examined, carers told inspectors that they were providing good health care for the children placed with them and that foster carers had ensured that children were in receipt of essential medical services and were registered with GP, dentist and optician where required. Link workers had started to make some recordings of the matters relating to health, which they had monitored with the carer.

The systems in place to ensure that carers were provided with sufficient information, skills and knowledge to provide optimum health care to the child were limited.

There was insufficient evidence that carers had received up to dated pertinent information about individual health needs and how to meet them prior to, or after the placement had commenced. None of the files examined contained required or up to date medical information. There was limited evidence available in relation to carers knowing the procedures governing consent to receive medical treatment There was no evidence that carers had been provided with a written health record for each child or that they had been asked to keep written records about health.

Training for carers in the area of health promotion, basic health and first aid was not available. Training for carers who had children placed with them who had to meet specific health needs had not received training about this.

# 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**

We looked at standards 3,6,8,9,15,30

Children may be placed at risk because; the service had not established comprehensive methods to promote protection and safety for children using the service

## **EVIDENCE:**

The Commission had not received notification of a Manager or Responsible Individual for the service at the time of this inspection, as recommended at the last inspection. It is acknowledged that the Acting Manager has requested application packs and that there was an intention to make a notification. However no clear decision could be evidence regarding the management of the service in the future. Therefore, the relevant checks to ascertain the suitability of those in control could not be verified.

Since the last inspection Link workers had started to use a supervision form to evidence the content of their visits to carers. However, there was very limited evidence that the matters set out in standard 6 were being assessed and monitored.

Some carers said that their link worker had looked at their home during an unannounced visit, to ensure that it was suitable to meet children's needs, but no written evidence regarding what aspects of the property had been inspected was seen on files. Although pre inspection information stated that health and

safety check were undertaken at the annual carer review, it was difficult to ascertain whether there was a system in practice to ensure that every home was monitored annually.

In cases where children shared bedrooms, there was no evidence that the Child's needs for privacy or personal space had been assessed or recorded. There was no evidence to verify that when the carer was expected to provide transport for the child, that the service had ensured that it was safe and met the child's needs.

The service had devised a form to match carers to children, however, the evidence that the process of matching was a process of careful consideration based upon information sharing between relevant people was not evidenced. Information from carers stated that they had not been involved in matching process and that the information received regarding the child's need was often very limited, received after the placement had commenced and if future plans were made for the child, these were frequently not adhered to.

During this inspection, carers had been sent dates for training in safe care and some training dates for training in child protection had been set up. These were indicators that an ongoing training plan for carers was being given attention as some initial work had been done. However, there was no clear on going plan to evidence that training needs would be met and at the time of inspection, carers had not received sufficient training to ensure that they knew how to effectively protect children.

The majority of carers were not provided with safe care guidelines.

When emergency placements were made carers rarely received sufficient information about the child, his/her background and needs. Emergency placements exceeded 24 hours in the cases examined, continued long after an emergency period.

Since the last inspection there had been some improvements to the level information held on staff files, but there were still some omissions with regard to the required information set out under Schedule 1.

Not all Link workers were qualified social workers and an approved foster carer was employed by the service.

There had been some changes to the panel members since the last inspection, including the Chair. Some significant changes relating to the quality monitoring of the panel had been implemented but it was too early to assess effectiveness. The new Chair was unable to attend panel which was observed as part of this inspection and the Vice Chair conducted the proceedings. Some lively, relevant discussion took place and the issues were dealt with sensitively and comprehensively. It was disappointing to note that the panel continued to find themselves in a situation where decision about

existing placements were brought to panel well after the placement had commenced.

In relation to the training needs of the panel it was noted that the panel members would benefit from training information about how to refer individuals who may be unsuitable to work with children, to the relevant bodies.

At the last inspection the service had undertaken a campaign to recruit foster cares. Many of these carers were waiting for the assessment process to begin. Although pre inspection information would suggest that there had been improvements in this area, existing carers told us that that they felt that the assessment process was too long and that they had waited extremely long periods of time before they were contacted by the service in order for the process to commence. The time between initial assessment beginning and presentation to panel was often unacceptable

# 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**

We looked at standards 7,13,31

Improvements in targeted recruitment of carers showed a commitment to valuing diversity. Monitoring educational attainment was improving

### **EVIDENCE:**

Discussions with staff, management and foster carers revealed that whilst the fostering service remained aware that the majority of foster carers are White British, there remained an increasing need to recruit significantly more carers from alternative ethnic backgrounds. A recent campaign to target future carers from diverse backgrounds had provided some results in this area.

In respect of diversity the approval process was one, which promoted equality and valued diversity. Carers were approved irrespective of their sexuality, disability and cultural background.

Foster carers were aware of the importance of ensuring that children and young people achieved their potential at school, carers spoken to were supportive to children and committed to ensuring that educational needs were met. Carers said that link workers did discuss the child progress at school with them. The new supervision forms recorded that discussions about education on some of the files seen, this indicated that some progress had been made in the area of monitoring educational achievement.

# **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**

We looked at standards 10,11

Consultation with carers and children was not systematically recorded. Contact arrangements lacked procedure; as a result, consultation was weak

## **EVIDENCE:**

Link workers said that they were monitoring contact and recording this on the new supervision forms. Carers were not always aware that Link workers were monitoring contact arrangements. No clear written procedures setting out the arrangements for contact for each child and how this would be maintained and reviewed were seen.

Foster carers said Sometimes they were not aware that reviews were happening and information regarding the children was not passed to the Link worker form the child's social worker. A number of foster carers felt that information following contact with birth parents was not shared and they were left with the fallout from a negative contact.

There was no evidence that the service had asked carers to record the outcome of contact and the perceived impact upon the child. There was no evidence that this had been communicated to the child's social worker.

Foster carers who were spoken to understood the importance of listening to children and felt that they were able to ascertain the views of children on a day to basis. However, the service had not set up training for carers in respect of listening and responding to children's views and the service had not devised a specific ongoing consistent approach to ascertaining children's view and the views of significant others.

# 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**

We looked at standards 14,29

Young people were not sufficiently supported through the transition in to adulthood. Foster carers remained dissatisfied with delays in the payments system

## **EVIDENCE:**

There was no evidence that the service had helped to develop skills, competence and knowledge necessary for adult living.

Foster carers had not received training to help them to support young person in to the transition to adulthood and leaving care. There were no written guidelines about how foster carers should support young people. In the cases examined, carers had minimal support from the departments leaving care team and specific social work support around leaving care was limited. Carers had frequently provided support to young people without having the required support themselves.

On the whole there had been some improvements to the way that carers were paid, in that the team dealing with payments were more accessible to the Link workers. However, there were a few very notable situations where carers were waiting in excess of six months for payments.

There was a lot of discontent and confusion around the issue of finance. Carers felt that they were not adequately reimbursed for transporting the children, and felt that it was unfair to dock their allowance by ten per cent if they are unable to provide transport. The Acting Manager said that carers were able to claim for any transport provided and that this issue was being addressed. The service had attempted to explain the rationale for reducing the transport allowance in the Foster Carers News letter

Foster carers reported that payments were late or lost in the system. Many were still waiting to be reimbursed for school uniforms that they bought in September, or items they bought at the outset of placement, which the child urgently needed. Foster carers felt they experienced a lot of stress and time wasted chasing these payments.



# 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**

We looked at standards 2,5,16, 17,21,22,23,24,25,26,32  
Management systems were not well established or effective leading to inappropriate placements and expectations of carers. Information on carer's files was insufficient

## **EVIDENCE:**

An Acting Manager had been appointed just prior to this inspection commencing. One team Leader was in post and another temporary Team Leader were appointed at the beginning of this inspection. The Commission had not received notification of a permanent Manager or Responsible Individual for the service, as recommended at the last inspection. It is acknowledged that the Acting Manager has requested application packs. No clear information could be evidence regarding the management of the service and it was not clear who would be managing the service in the near future.

The temporary Management team were suitably qualified and experienced and able to provide support and regular supervision to the team. Feedback indicated that the team respected them. However lack of certainty about future management arrangements coupled with a history of limited management was not productive and clearly had a negative effect on staff moral, this hindered the provision of effective service delivery.

Whilst team leaders deputised for the acting Team Manager, there was no written guidance outlining the level of delegation of Management duties.

Fostering social workers and the child's social worker did not work effectively together. Communication between the child's social worker and the fostering team was problematic and the source of much concern among carers.

Since the last inspection the service had recruited additional staff, which had enable one team member to focus on private fostering arrangements. Recruitment and selection procedures remained acceptable and continued to be conducted in line with the councils overall selection processes.

Foster carers said, with very few exceptions that they felt very supported by Link workers and some positive practice was identified since the last inspection this included a more evidence based approach to supervising carers and unannounced visits to carers. However, it is concerning to note that Link workers were let down by the lack of systems and structures in place to assist them to carry out the task of supervising carers in line with Minimum Standards. Feed back from foster carers identifies an unacceptably high level of carer dissatisfaction with the over all service, carers felt burdened and forgotten. Children were frequently placed in an emergency with little or no information given to the carer, emergency placements were frequently not given end dates and left to "drift ". Carers were asked to provide care for children out side of their approval category with out the implications of this being explained. When carers felt unable to cope with the demands of a particular child, they were left to carry on until they felt at the "end of their tether", before they felt they were listened too. Some carers said that they had not been able to access respite care and that Out of Hours Support was limited.

The issue of complaints continued to require attention. Complaints made by carers were dealt with in two stages the second stage being the central complaints department for the council. This meant that many complaints took

an unacceptable amount of time to conclude. Often before the outcome had been concluded, the issue could no longer be effectively addressed because of the amount of time lapsed between receipt of complaint

Foster Care Agreements were not always held on carer's files, some were not up to date and did not contain required information.

Training for carers was an area for concern although there had been some training dates set up, indicating that attention was being given to this area, the concern was that in the absence of an individual to create and coordinate an ongoing training plan, there was a possibility that training could become neglected rather than established. The training provided at the time of inspection was limited but did target crucial areas. Training had still not been provided to those carers who were caring for children with specific identifiable needs. Link workers would need to take a proactive role in identifying the training needs of the carers they supervise.

The office was fit for purpose and made a pleasant working environment for staff. Facilities for the secure storage of files, communication and IT systems were in place. The service did not have an adequate system of managing records as stated in Standard 25. Case records for children provided minimal information, they were not held in line with standard 24 and Schedule 2. Carer's files did not contain all the relevant information as stated in Schedule 3 and some information on file did not relate to the stated carer. Families and friend carers continued to care with out support often unaware of the role of the Link worker, assessment were frequently delayed and the time that it took to bring family and friends carers to panel for approval was not acceptable.

# 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>	<b>1</b>

<b>STAYING SAFE</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>1</b>

<b>ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>

<b>MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>

<b>ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>1</b>

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

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

### STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action
1	FS3	6,10	The service must employ a permanent Manager. The authority must nominate a Responsible Individual. The Manager and the Responsible Individual must notify the Commission of their appointment	30/01/06
2	FS6	29(6) 27(4)	Formalised systems to record that all the issues set out in NMS 6 are monitored must be devised and implemented. including 1: Premises used by foster cares are suitable and fit and inspected annually 2: Children are transported safely, These systems must reflect dates, name of worker and date for review	28/02/06
3	FS8	34	Evidence of how children were matched to carers must be provided. The matching process must involve children, parents, carers and other professionals and provide evidence that this has occurred	28/02/06
4	FS9	12	All carers must receive individual safe care guidelines for each child placed.	30/01/06

5	FS9	12	Training for Foster Carers must include training in safe care, caring for a child who has been abused, managing behaviour and recognising abuse	28/02/06
6	FS9	12	Foster carers must be provided with full information regarding the child prior to the commencement of the placement unless in the case of emergency when this must be obtained as a matter of priority	30/01/06
7	FS10	14	The service must ensure that the carer records the outcome of contact and the perceived impact upon the child. This information must be fed back to the child's social worker	30/04/06
8	FS11	18	A system for ensuring that children are consulted and their views heard and accounted for must be devised	30/04/06
9	FS12	15	Carers must receive basic training in health, health promotion and first aid	28/02/06
10	FS14	16	The fostering service must ensure that carers are able to assist young people develop the skills for adulthood and leaving care	28/02/06
11	FS15	20	All social work staff must have an appropriately recognised professional qualification	30/01/06
12	FS15	20	A person who is a foster carer for the agency must not be employed by the same agency in another capacity	30/01/06
13	FS15	20	Staff records must contain the required information set out in Schedule 1	30/03/06
14	FS16	8,35	Link workers and the child's social workers must be able to demonstrate effective joint working on behalf of the child. Children's placements must be made in a considered and planned way	30/05/06

15	FS21	35,38	The service must develop a clear strategy to support carers in line with all aspects of Standard 21 and Regulation 38 including: 1.Working with the child's social worker to promote the welfare of the child, prevent carer burden and to promote planned placements. 2.To visit children placed in an emergency on a weekly basis 3.To ensure that short term and emergency placements have stated end dates 4.To ensure that placements are terminated in line with the child's needs and the requests of carers in a timely fashion	30/03/06
16	FS22	29,30	Foster Care Agreements must be up to date and held on file	28/02/06
17	FS22	29,30	Foster carers must receive sufficient support covering all aspects of standard 22 and including: 1. Prompt payment, 2. Respite care, 3. Out of hours management support 4. Insurance cover	30/04/06
18	FS22	18	All complaints received must be dealt with in a timely fashion; records of complaints held must be comprehensive and the outcomes in the majority of cases, acceptable to the complainant. Outcomes must be used to inform future practice	28/02/06
19	FS23	17	The service must ensure that an ongoing, high quality training programme is established and maintained for carers and that link workers are responsible for identifying training needs with carers as part of their ongoing role and for carer reviews	30/04/06
20	FS23	12	Training must be made available to carers regarding specific identified needs of children	30/03/06

21	FS24	22	Children's case files must include relevant information as set out in Standard 24 and Schedule 2	28/02/06
22	FS25	30	Foster carers files must contain up to date and relevant information as stated in schedule 3	30/04/06
23	FS25	30,32.22	The service must develop a system to monitor the quality and adequacy of its records	30/04/06
24	FS29	28	Foster carers must be adequately and promptly reimbursed	28/02/06
25	FS30	26	Panel members must receive training / information about how to refer persons unsuitable to work with children to the relevant bodies	30/03/06
26	FS30	27,28,29,30	Decisions regarding the continuation of placements must be made with in a reasonable time scale. These must be brought to panel at the earliest opportunity so that the time the child has already spent in the placement is not the over ridding factor in the decision making process.	28/02/06
27	FS31	27,28,35	The service must ensure that family and friends carers are assessed at the outset of the placement and supported	30/05/06
28	FS8	11,28,33,35 SCH 7	<p>1.Foster carers must be aware that no more than three children may be fostered at anyone time unless all the children are siblings with respect to each other.</p> <p>Should the Local Authority make a decision to exempt a carer under Schedule 7 then,</p> <p>1.The decision must be authorised by a senior Manager. The Manager making the decision must be accountable for doing so</p> <p>2.Decisions to exempt must only</p>	28/02/06



			<p>be made in urgent cases</p> <p>3. The Authority must be able to provide written evidence that in applying an exemption, all the matters set out in Schedule 7 have been considered promptly and in full</p> <p>4.Exemptions must not be used for long term foster placements</p>	
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## 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	FS22	The service should continue to carry out unannounced visits to foster carers
2	FS30	Carer assessments must be dealt with promptly so that the time between potential carers expressing an interest and the assessment process commencing is not excessive
3	FS22	The service should re examine its strategy for reimbursing carers for transport and providing taxis, ensuring that cares understand any new system which may be implemented

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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