

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

Asphaleia Ltd

**9 Liverpool Terrace
Worthing
West Sussex
BN11 1TA**

Lead Inspector
Ms V Khan

Announced
Monday, 18th July 2005 V230738

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of service	Asphaleia Ltd
Address	9 Liverpool Terrace, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 1TA
Telephone number	01903 522966
Fax number	
Email address	
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Asphaleia Ltd
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Miss Carol Anne Lusher
Type of registration	Fostering Agency (IFA)
No. of places registered (if applicable)	
Category(ies) of registration, with number of places	Independent Fostering Agency

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

None

Date of last inspection N/A

Brief Description of the Service:

Asphaleia Ltd has been registered as an independent fostering agency since 22nd August 2004. Since registration, the agency has not been operating, but aims to provide emergency, assessment, short term, intermediate and long term family placements for children. Asphaleia Ltd intends to specialise in placing separated refugee children with foster carers in the South East of England, initially in West Sussex.

SUMMARY

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

This is the first inspection of the agency since registering with the Commission For Social Care Inspection in August 2004.

The responsible individual was spoken to over the telephone prior to the inspection. Miss Lusher was interviewed prior to the inspection as part of the process of registering her as the registered manager. During the inspection, the agency's policies and procedures were sampled and the staff recruitment records were examined. The inspector also met with the personnel director during the inspection.

As the agency has not yet started operating, most of the national minimum standards were unable to be assessed at this inspection.

What the service does well:

The agency is led by people who have expertise in working with children and young people (particularly with unaccompanied refugees).

What has improved since the last inspection?

What they could do better:

Recruitment records and checks need to be improved.

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

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

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Standards

Statutory Requirements Identified During the Inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s)

EVIDENCE:

This standard was unable to be assessed on this occasion.

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 – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 3, 15

The people carrying on and managing the service are suitably qualified professionals, with the knowledge and skills required.

In order to promote the safety of children and young people, recruitment procedures need to be tightened.

EVIDENCE:

Relevant checks were completed on the responsible person as part of the agency's registration in August 2004. Checks were completed on the newly registered manager as part of her recent registration with the Commission.

The inspector examined the staff records and noted that copy letters were not in place as evidence of sending out the reference forms to the referees. The inspector saw that one panel member did not have any references and two panel members only had one reference. There was no evidence of appropriate qualifications for one independent social worker, or that both independent social workers were registered with the General Social Care Council. In addition, not all staff/panel members had Enhanced CRB checks completed. The importance of these matters and also the need to verify references by telephone were discussed during the inspection.

Some standards were unable to be assessed on this occasion.

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 – we looked at outcomes for standard(s)

EVIDENCE:

These standards were unable to be assessed on this occasion.

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 – we looked at outcomes for standard(s)

EVIDENCE:

These standards were unable to be assessed on this occasion.

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 – we looked at outcomes for standard(s)

EVIDENCE:

These standards were unable to be assessed on this occasion.

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 cares 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 – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 1, 2, 5, 17, 26, 27

The agency is managed well and there are good prospects for the development of this service.

EVIDENCE:

The Statement of Purpose clearly sets out the aims and objectives of the agency. The agency has produced a children and young people's guide, which includes a summary of what the service sets out to do.

Miss Lusher became manager of the fostering agency towards the end of January 2005. She has experience as a senior social worker in a local authority children's services team and then went on to work specifically with asylum seeking children and young people. Miss Lusher has a good understanding of the needs of looked after children and young people. Miss Lusher is aware of what needs to be developed further and how this should be done, in order to get the agency operating in fostering. She is also aware that she will need to obtain an appropriate management qualification.

The agency is small and currently only has the registered manager as a qualified social worker. There is a clearly defined foster carer assessment and approval process. The agency intends to use independent social workers to undertake the assessments of carers.

Asphaleia Ltd operates from a town centre office, on the third and fourth floors of a four storey terraced building. The office has bright, spacious, well-equipped space with appropriate security systems in place. There is a reception area, which is open during office hours. There is no disabled access to the premises, but local venues will be used for all staff training, meetings, panel, and foster carer training events.

As part of the agency's registration, a business plan was submitted to the Commission.

As the agency is not operating, some standards were unable to be assessed.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

N/A

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.	15	20	Ensure full recruitment information and checks are obtained, as per Schedule 1.	18 th September 2005

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.	15	Keep copy of letters sent out to referees as proof of writing for references.
2.	15	Telephone enquiries need to be made to verify written references.
3.	15	Obtain confirmation that the independent social workers are registered with the General Social Care Council.
4.	2	The registered manager needs to begin appropriate management training.

Commission for Social Care Inspection

2nd Floor, Ridgeworth House

Liverpool Gardens

Worthing, West Sussex

BN11 1RY

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120

Email: enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.csci.org.uk

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