



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

### **Tower Hamlets Fostering Team**

**Family Placement Office  
62 Roman Road  
London  
E2 0QJ**

*Lead Inspector*  
Peter Daniel

*Announced Inspection*  
14th November 2006      10:00

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>  | Tower Hamlets Fostering Team                                 |
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| <b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b> | Tower Hamlets  |
| <b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>             | Hilary Bull  |
| <b>Type of registration</b>                                   | Local Authority Fostering Service                            |

# **SERVICE INFORMATION**

## **Conditions of registration:**

**Date of last inspection**      6th February 2006

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

The Fostering Service comprises of:  
Recruitment and Assessment Team  
Fostering Development Team.  
Kinship Care  
Access to Resources

The Recruitment and Assessment Team recruits, assesses and prepares prospective foster carers for approval. This team works with the marketing and publicity officer in identifying a recruitment strategy to meet the needs of children.

The Fostering Development Team aims to support foster carers through supervision. Support is provided through regular visits, weekly telephone calls, regular training sessions and support groups.

Kinship Care undertakes both roles of these teams when working with family and friends as carers.

The Access to Resources Team has a range of functions, which includes processing foster carers payments and liaising with the Fostering Development Team to match placements.

# **SUMMARY**

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

This inspection was carried out less than a year following the last inspection. This has been to accommodate the inspection programme within the required timescale. The inspection has concentrated on professional practice and the direct experience of foster carers and children in placement and focussed on assessing the standards in relation to the outcomes in 'Every Child Matters'. The inspection included the following:- interviewing management staff, inspecting carers and children's files, reading policies, 'tracking' children in their placements, discussions with foster carers, talking to children and attending the Fostering Panel and the Foster Parents Support Group.

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

Tower Hamlets has demonstrated an impressive commitment to developing and delivering comprehensive services to foster parents and kinship carers and children in placement. It has created a management structure with clear leadership and the service has a committed, fully staffed and experienced staff group. Foster carers are well supported and the developmental needs of children are largely being met. Foster carers are offered comprehensive support and training.

The Fostering Service demonstrates a culture that seeks to develop and improve services. This is evidenced through innovative schemes that have been established. These have included building partnerships with the local community, providing services to children with disabilities, establishing links with CAMHS, developing Special Guardianship assessments and establishing a Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care Team, to name a few.

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

The last inspection report commended the Fostering Services for its excellent services. The agency continues to consolidate its delivery of its fostering services. Improvements in the last 12 months have included the inclusion of four independent members on the Fostering Panel, the planning of a specialist Toy Library, the use of Contact Agreements and the move to new premises.

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

The Fostering Service should ensure that *all* children's opinions and those of their families are sought over issues that are likely to affect their daily lives and the future. Views should be ascertained on a regular basis and not taken for granted. The Fostering Training schedule needs to be sent to foster carers in good time. Foster carers should be trained and supported in listening and responding to children's views. Separate records should be kept for carers and staff. There should be consistency regarding the management supervision of Supervising Social Workers. The latter should be offered supervision on a regular, planned basis. The service has itself identified that it needs to ensure that its referral recording mechanisms are improved in order to provide better management information. It also intends to review its fostering allowances

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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Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

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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:

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. The judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service, inspection of files, visits to placements and discussion with foster carers at the foster carers support group.

Tower Hamlets provides services that promote the health and development of children who are in placement.

## EVIDENCE:

NMS 12 The inspection included a random check of foster carer's and children's files. There was evidence that health matters are being addressed as part of the Supervising Social Worker's supervisory visit agenda. Evidence from reading supervisory visit notes and Looked After Review minutes showed that children had had Looked After medical checks and had received an annual health check in the past twelve months. The children had been registered with a GP, optician and dentist. Immunisations were up to date where appropriate. Children and young people were continuing to have regular checks with the optician and dentist. Two children had been referred to CAMHS for psychotherapy.

All foster homes had had Health and Safety checks done within the past twelve months. Foster carers had been issued with a comprehensive Health Advice and Support manual. There was evidence from reading files that foster carers had received training on First Aid. Foster carers had also received core training in child development. Other health initiatives were noted during the inspection. These included the following:- A Looked After Nurse sits on the Fostering Panel and gives relevant advice on foster carers and applicants; Social Services and Health have worked collaboratively to produce the *Health Advice and Support Pack for all involved in the care of Looked After children and young people*;

there is training for carers of babies affected by parents with drug and alcohol problems; carers are to be offered training on drug misuse by Lifeline. The Local Authority has also been working with CAMHS to reduce disruption rates. The agencies are looking at how foster carer's attachment styles impact on their role in caring for children and how best to improve the matching between carers and children.

# 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):

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. The judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service including interviewing staff, reading policies and procedures, foster carer's and children's files, visiting foster placements and attending the fostering panel.

## EVIDENCE:

NMS 3 and 15 The management and staff of the fostering service are suitable to run a service concerned with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The managers are experienced in running fostering services – see NMS 2 that refers to qualifications. Evidence from reading staff files showed that the organisation is operating a robust and rigorous recruitment policy for staff and foster carers and that all checks including CRB checks and references, documentary evidence of qualifications and a full employment history are in place. Further evidence was seen that staff are registered with the General Council for Social Care. Police checks are renewed every three years.

NMS 6 The fostering service has suitable foster carers on its books. Examination of foster carer files showed that CRB checks (for both carers where appropriate), medicals, birth certificate, marriage certificate, references, and Form F's were on file. The inspection also included visits to four foster homes where children and young people were interviewed as direct beneficiaries of the service. The inspector was impressed by the high standard of care offered by the carers. The impression was that the carers were fully committed to their role. The children who were interviewed expressed full satisfaction that they were being suitably cared for and their needs were being met. The visits to placements confirmed that Tower Hamlets is promoting an excellent standard of care to the children placed with its carers.

The inspection also noted that the accommodation of the foster homes visited was comfortable and suitable for the purpose of meeting the needs of foster children. Information on files confirmed evidence that annual health and safety checks are being completed. All files contained a comprehensive health and safety checklist and foster carers are additionally sent a copy of this checklist. Safe caring is part of the Foster Carer training plan and 50% of carers had undertaken first aid training.

NMS 8 The service matches children to carers by giving consideration to the child's age, gender, disability, race, ethnic, cultural and linguistic needs. Tower Hamlets uses an evidence based approach to assessment and corroborates information given by applicants through references and interviews with family members. Tower Hamlets is looking to improve the quality of assessments and is involved with CAMHS in assessing foster carer's attachment styles. Where trans racial placements are made, the fostering service provides the foster family with additional training, support and information to enable the child to be provided with the best possible care and to develop a positive understanding of her/his heritage. The Fostering Panel has had training on matching. The success of matching and the involvement of the Fostering Panel in this process is indicated by the fact that there have only been ten disruptions in the past year.

NMS 9 Children are protected from abuse and/or exploitation. The inspector was satisfied that systems are in place to monitor the number and outcome of all child protection allegations concerning a child in foster care. The inspection included perusal of information concerning child protection allegations made during the last year. There were five child protection allegations in total. The inspector was satisfied that the department had dealt with all allegations in line with the London Child Protection Procedures. Allegations had been responded to appropriately and rigorously and within appropriate timescales. All had been satisfactorily concluded. Tower Hamlets has reported all significant events to the CSCI.

NMS 30 The fostering panel is organised efficiently and effectively. The inspector attended and observed a panel meeting. The fostering panel was well organised with a clear agenda. The panel had ten members with a broad expertise, including backgrounds in education, disabilities, child health and psychology. The panel membership also included a former Looked After child. The chair was extremely experienced in the knowledge of fostering and placement issues. An external adviser who does not sit on the panel offers medical advice. The panel was observed to be providing a first rate, quality assurance function in relation to the assessment process. The inspector saw a sample of form F's that were of an excellent standard and provided comprehensive information. The panel had also received good information about the outcome of foster carer's annual reviews. The quality of reports and information was written to a high standard. Members had read the papers in advance. The members demonstrated robust questioning. The chair provided excellent leadership and good chairing skills. The chair was clear in recommending the terms upon which the approval for each carer was given. A pre-panel meeting is held to ensure the appropriate submission of cases. The panel has had training on matching since taking on the responsibility for recommendations with regard to matches between children and long-term carers. In order to conform to good practice, the panel is planning to introduce an appraisal system for members of the panel. The process will be initiated in consultation with panel members and the new chair, who is due to start in January 2007.

# 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):**

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. The judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service, including meeting foster carers at the foster carer's support group, visiting placements and discussion with young people in placement. It has also included reading a selection of Form F's.

### **EVIDENCE:**

NMS 7 Tower Hamlets has an Equal Opportunities Policy and values diversity. The inspector attended a support group at the Foster Carer's Association. It was evident that the agency has recruited and supports a range of foster carers that reflect the ethnic diversity of the community. Further evidence was seen through information held by the agency. The agency seeks to match each child to a suitable carer who can meet the child's individual needs. For short-term breaks, carers who previously provided a sitting service for disabled children through Barnardos have now been fully assimilated into the fostering service. The department has seen the expansion of the Discovery Home Respite Unit, a service providing short term breaks for children with disabilities with high care needs. This is a culturally relevant service for Bangladeshi Muslim Children. Interpreting and translation services are available to all aspects of the fostering service. Specialist posts have been respectively introduced to address the needs of Vietnamese, Bangladeshi and disabled children.

NMS 13 Tower Hamlets is committed to promoting educational standards and gives priority to meeting the educational needs of children in placement. Discussion with foster carers confirmed that children and young people are being supported with their education. This included carers driving and fetching children from school, helping children with homework, holding meetings with the SENCO, attending statement reviews and PEP meetings and attending parent's evenings. Tower Hamlets has a system where fostering households are provided with a computer. Of 233 children of statutory school age, 201 have a Personal Education Plan. It was noted that 3% of young people leaving care whose last placement was with the fostering service achieved five or more GCSE's at grades A\*-C and 27% achieved at least one GCSE at grade A\*-G or a GNVQ in the last 12 months. This is indicative of the national picture and is not only specific to Tower hamlets.

Tower Hamlets also promotes social activities on behalf of its foster children. Foster carers and children spoke of being involved in various social activities including going on holiday, visits to the cinema, the zoo, shopping trips and participation in sports clubs.

NMS 31 The standard regarding short-term breaks was not assessed on this occasion but was fully met at the last inspection.

# **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):**

Quality in this outcome area is good. The judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service, attendance at the Foster Carer's Support Group, visits to placements and discussion with foster carers and young people in placement.

## **EVIDENCE:**

NMS 10 Tower Hamlets Fostering Service promotes contact for children and young people. Foster carers understand the child's needs for family contact. Evidence on file and confirmation from talking to carers and children confirmed that contact is taking place between the child/young person and their birth family and extended family, as appropriate. There was also evidence that carers are helping to facilitate contact by escorting children to contact centres. One carer said she talked frequently to the child about their separation and loss from their birth family. Minutes of Looked After Reviews further verified that contact is regularly discussed and is taking place. Foster carers were aware of their individual contact agreements. There was also evidence that life story work was being done. Contact is covered as part of the training when new carers undergo the induction programme.

NMS 11 Children and young people have the opportunity to express their views through attendance at their Looked After Review and through completion of the LAC Consultation Form. The children's support groups provide the opportunity for young people to meet and discuss issues associated with their experiences. The agency has produced a Children's Guide and a Complaints Procedure and Complaints Form. The inspection however noted that not all children are attending their review. One set of Looked After Review minutes



had included the decision '*to take the opportunity to speak to children on their own*'. The inspector did not see evidence of completed LAC consultation forms. It is recommended that the fostering service ensures that all children have the opportunity to express their wishes and feelings and are consulted over issues that affect their daily life. Children's and young people's views should therefore not be taken for granted. Furthermore, it is recommended that foster carers are trained and supported in listening and responding to children's views. **See Recommendation 1.**

# 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):

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. The judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the agency, the inspection of policies and procedures, perusal of files, attending the Foster Carers Support Group and visiting placements.

## EVIDENCE:

NMS 14 Tower Hamlets has policies relating to Leaving Care and preparing young people for independence. This is included within the Children's Service Plan. There are clear written requirements of what is expected of foster carers in terms of preparing children and young people for independent or semi-independent living. Foster carers receive training and support to enable them to provide effective support and guidance.

NMS 29 Foster carers are paid in line with independent agency rates. There is a written policy on fostering allowances. Foster carers receive clear information about the allowances and expenses payable and how to access them, before a child is placed. Foster carers who were interviewed were satisfied that they were being paid a competitive rate and were the receipt of payment was reliable.

# 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):**

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. The judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service, meeting with managers and staff, inspection of policies and procedures, perusal of files, visits to placements, meeting foster carers including attendance at the Foster Carers Support Group and the Fostering Panel.

## **EVIDENCE:**

NMS 1 The Statement of Purpose was not inspected on this occasion but the standard was fully met at the last inspection. The statement is due for review in 2007.

NMS 2 The fostering service is managed by staff who have appropriate skills and experience. All managers have a professional social work qualification and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Five managers have undertaken the Post Graduate Diploma in Management in Health and Social Care with three gaining the award. A further five places will be offered on 2007/8. The Fostering Team has a commitment to continuous professional development. The majority of staff are fully qualified in social work and have completed PQ1 training. Some have finished the Child Care Award or Practice Teaching Qualification.

NMS 4,5 16 The agency has clear procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the fostering service and ensuring quality performance. The service is managed effectively and efficiently. The Service Manager is responsible for the strategic direction and operation of the service. Fostering Managers meet weekly and are supervised on a monthly basis. The previous inspection evaluated that Fostering Team Managers worked as a cohesive management team and were well-supported and able to use their initiative and creativity. The inspector gained a similar impression during the current inspection. Fostering teams have developed action plans. Discussions with Team Managers illustrated that teams were being innovative and constantly seeking improvement. For example, the Fostering Recruitment Team is targeting various community groups. The team had appointed a Vietnamese worker to recruit from that sector of the community. The team was also focusing on recruiting carers for disabled children. In addition to the generic support groups, the Fostering Development Team has set up a variety of specialist support groups for Bangladeshi, Black African and Afro Caribbean carers and additionally for carers of children with disabilities. The team had also developed a mentoring scheme for foster carers. The Kinship Care Team is currently exploring the issue of Special Guardianship for its carers. The Access to Resources Team has been set up to commission Independent Fostering and Residential Placements. The team provides a valuable monitoring role for these placements. The Adolescent Resource Team is in the process of setting up a multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care Service based on the Oregon model. The service will provide increased placement and educational stability to the more challenging young people in care.

Tower Hamlets Fostering Service is also effectively monitored and controlled and provides a quality assurance function via the Fostering Panel. The role and function of the panel has been commended under NMS 30 (see above).

Staff are organised and managed effectively. Staff receive regular supervision and team meetings are held on a regular basis.

The inspector saw evidence that the agency is maintaining a range of data collection and statistics that provides information on the activities of the service. The Fostering Panel issues an annual panel report. Foster carers are reviewed annually. There is a system to monitor the quality and adequacy of records, and corrective action is taken when necessary.

The inspector examined the records kept for complaints and allegations and was satisfied that this information is managed efficiently. Information about the procedures for dealing with complaints is available in different languages.

NMS 17 The agency has adequate numbers of trained and competent staff. Staff qualifications are covered under NMS 2. The agency employs virtually a fully qualified staff group, (except for two unqualified social workers in the Fostering development Team and two in the Kinship Care Team). All staff receive regular supervision. There was evidence from records that the experience, skills and qualifications of staff working within the agency meets the National Minimum Standards. The service has introduced specialist posts including a Vietnamese worker, a Disability Worker and a Children's Rights Officer. The previous inspection noted that staff receive competitive salaries, clear workloads, study leave, regular supervision and access to a range of training. All staff had reported that they were well supported and felt valued. The agency encourages practice teaching and the placement of students within the agency.

NMS 18 Tower Hamlets is a fair and competent employer and has sound employment practices. This standard was exceeded at the previous inspection. The inspector therefore only inspected records of staff who had been recruited since then. Evidence showed that the following checks and paper work were in place:- CRB, GSCC, probationary period review, application for employment, references, job description, copy of qualifications, work permit, offer of employment, application form and interview checklist. The fostering service website [www.fosteringandadoption.co.uk](http://www.fosteringandadoption.co.uk) enables applicants to register their interest on-line. A free phone number is additionally available for enquires.

NMS 19 Tower Hamlets has provided appropriate training for its staff. Staff have full access to the Learning and Development Programme for Children's Social Care. This includes child protection, a management development programme and work based learning and assessment training. IN 2005/6 staff received training in the new Adoption Act 2004. Training from BAAF in basic and advanced Form F assessment and assessing black and white partnerships has also been provided. Managers have undertaken Post Graduate management training as described under NMS 2.

Staff have been trained to deliver training around the government's initiative to reduce teenage pregnancies.

NMS 20 This standard requires that all staff are properly accountable and supported. The inspection noted saw caseload based supervision records on file. Evidence showed that staff receive supervision but it is not always as regular as it should be i.e. 4-6 weeks. It was noted from the evidence seen that there were gaps of 2-3 months and in one case 6 months. The inspector accepts that supervision might have taken place more frequently but has not been recorded

on file. A recommendation has been made for line managers to ensure that all Supervising Social Workers receive management supervision that is regular and planned. **See Recommendation 2.**

NMS 21, 22 and 23 Foster carers are appropriately supported. The inspector heard evidence from foster carers that they are well supported in their role by their Supervising Social Worker. Foster carers confirmed that they were receiving regular support - approximately every 4-6 weeks (although there were some instances where visits were less frequent). Additionally, they were receiving regular telephone contact. Tower Hamlets also operates a duty service that offers out of hours support to foster carers. Foster carers confirmed that they are receiving formal supervision once every six weeks.

Foster carers have the opportunity of attending a monthly support group. The inspection included attendance at the Tower Hamlets Foster Care Association meeting. The group was well attended. It meets to discuss fostering issues and to provide social functions for carers and foster children. Supervising Social Workers attend alternative support groups. The inspector observed the meeting as a vibrant and lively meeting. There are separate support groups for Caribbean, Bangladeshi, Black African carers and for carers of children with disabilities. There is also a support group for short break carers. These groups are convened quarterly. Foster carers informed the inspector that they found the support groups a positive experience.

There was evidence that unannounced visits are taking place once a year although in one case, the last unannounced visit was eighteen months ago.

Foster carers are offered a comprehensive training programme. The inspector saw a report on training undertaken within the Family Placements Section. A part time training consultant co-ordinates the foster carer training programme and is supported by a part time administrative worker who has responsibility for setting up the courses and crèches for carers.

The following courses have been offered: First aid, lifting and handling, safe caring, managing challenging behaviour, separation and attachment. Other courses have been offered in working with children including dealing with health issues, mental health problems, moving children on and working with Vietnamese children and families. Courses have also been offered for working with disabled children, working with parents and IT training. Currently, 23 foster carers are undertaking the Caring for Children and Young People NVQ level 3. There have been problems with the provider that has slowed the progression of the candidates. To date 13 foster carers have completed the training and 25 are in progress. A new programme for 25 foster carers will start in March 2007. The new programme will be delivered by the Council's NVQ assessment centre.

Some foster carers informed the inspector that they did not receive the training programme soon enough and therefore missed the start of the training schedule. A recommendation has been included that advises the agency to give suitable notice to its foster carers about forthcoming training events. **See recommendation 3.**

NMS 24 and 25. The inspector examined files for foster carer's and children. Records were comprehensive. Files and records were observed to be well organised and maintained. The fostering service is using an electronic social care record known as the SWIFT system. It appeared to be an efficient method for recording information. The inspector had some difficulty finding information on the foster carer's files. The foster care's files did not present as organised as the children's files. For example, the supervision notes of carers were mixed up with case based supervision notes of staff. It is recommended that there should be separate sections in the file for these functions. The pink form that records dates for CRB and medical checks on foster carer files were not always filled in. A recommendation has been set to address these issues. **See Recommendation 4.**

NMS 26, The Fostering Service has recently moved to modern premises that offer a very positive working environment and have the latest technology. This includes a loop system that was highlighted in the last inspection.

NMS 27,28 These standards were not inspected on this occasion but were exceeded at the last inspection.

NMS 32 Tower Hamlets has recognized the contribution of family and friends as carers and has set up a Kinship Care Team. This standard was inspected in detail at the last inspection and the inspector has reviewed progress since then. The team has now approved twelve carers and has fifteen assessments that are ongoing. Some cases are part of an assessment for Special Guardianship. The team recently held an away day in December to look at Special Guardianship and improving ways of working in partnership with Area Teams. The inspector visited a kinship carer. She confirmed that she had been offered regular support. She told the inspector 'I was satisfied with the Kinship Care Team. If I needed anything, I only had to get in contact'. The Supervising Social Worker would cover all aspects of A's development. He looked at everything. There was nothing I was unhappy about'.



# 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>            | 4            |

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

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

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

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

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

NO

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.  | FS11              | The fostering service needs to ensure that all children are consulted about their wishes and feelings. Foster carers should be trained and supported in listening and responding to children's views. |
| 2.  | FS20              | The agency should ensure that as part of the responsibility regarding accountability and support of staff, Supervising Social Workers are given management supervision on a regular and planned basis |
| 3.  | FS23              | The agency should ensure that foster carers are given sufficient notice about forthcoming training  |
| 4.  | FS24              | The agency should ensure that comprehensive and up to date information is held on foster carer's files (See Standard 24.1) Separate records should be kept for carers and staff (see Standard 25.2).  |

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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