



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

London Borough of Haringey Fostering Service

**Childrens Division
40 Cumberland Road
Wood Green
London
N22 7SG**

Lead Inspector
Monica Saunders

Key Announced Inspection
29th January 2007 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
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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	London Borough of Haringey Fostering Service
Address	Childrens Division 40 Cumberland Road Wood Green London N22 7SG
Telephone number	020 8489 1981
Fax number	020 8489 3299
Email address	
Provider Web address	www.haringey.gov.uk
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	London Borough of Haringey
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Ms Rachel Elizabeth Clare Oakley
Type of registration	Local Auth Fostering Service

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 29th November 2005

Brief Description of the Service:

The Haringey Fostering Service recruits, assesses, trains and supports a range of fostering resources to meet the diverse needs of Haringey's Looked After Children. The fostering service is divided into three teams, the under 11's team the over 11's team and the Long term and Kinship care team. Each team has a manager and supervising social workers. A senior team manager oversees the work of the three teams, the independent reviewing officer and the learning and development co-ordinator. There are two administrative posts within the teams and a designated panel administrator for the fostering and adoption panels.

At the time of this inspection the fostering service was providing fostering placements for a total of 172 children. Eighteen new foster carers have been recruited in the past year.

SUMMARY

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

The inspection was undertaken by one inspector over a period of four and a half days.

The process of inspection included the inspector conducting the following:

- visits to four foster family homes
- discussion with two foster children
- case tracking
- examination of records, policies and procedures
- discussion with foster carers attending the foster carers AGM (Annual General Meeting)
- discussions with managers and three members of staff
- discussion with the fostering service manager

The inspector would like to thank the foster carers, children/young people, and staff for their assistance during the inspection and for actively contributing to the inspection process.

What the service does well:

The local authority continues to work hard to operate in accordance with the National Minimum Standards and associated regulations.

The staff team demonstrate a commitment to improving the quality of care offered by the fostering service. The fostering service has established good links with the Tavistock clinic in order to offer foster carers support in dealing with difficult issues that may arise during the course of a foster placement.

It was positive to note that the fostering service has run training for foster carers to highlight the importance of promoting Looked After Children's health care needs. Carers visited verified that they had registered the foster child/ren with a GP, dentist and optician as part of promoting children's health care. In addition, the carers provided evidence in support of preparing varied and balanced meals for foster children.

While some work has been undertaken to action requirements arising from the previous inspection conducted 29 November 2005, some of these are either not met or only partially met. The requirement section of this report highlights those matters which have not been fully actioned within the timescales previously specified.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Staff have worked hard to improve the standard of the fostering service. This can be seen in the team whose work relates to the Authority's duty and responsibility concerning private fostering arrangements.

Improvements have been made to monitoring when checks require updating. This has resulted in an improved system whereby CRB (Criminal Record Check) for foster carers are more efficiently updated.

While supervision arrangements for foster carers have got better, further improvements are needed in this area.

While foster carers' recording has improved, further work is needed to promote a consistent approach to foster carers maintaining records in their daily logs rather than diaries.

Foster carers have attended training arranged by the fostering service on the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. It was relayed that this has helped foster carers to better understand the regulatory framework and the context of inspections. In addition, the majority of foster carers have now attended first aid training.

Staff have a good understanding as to their responsibilities and lines of accountability and maintain that they receive adequate supervision and support.

What they could do better:

The fostering service must review and document the training needs of foster carers to ensure that training needs are identified, relevant and acted upon in line with their terms of approval. The delivery of training must also be reviewed so as to make sure that all approved carers receive appropriate and timely training. Supervisory Social Workers must monitor the foster carers practice to ensure they are adhering to the agreement to record relevant details about the foster child in their daily log. These issues were raised in the previous inspection and had not been fully actioned.

Work must also be undertaken by the fostering service to ensure that all fostered children are aware of what they can do should they have a complaint or concern.

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

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Being Healthy

The intended outcome for this Standard is:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at the outcome for Standard:

12

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the service. Children and young people's development is promoted through foster carers having a good understanding of their role and responsibilities within this aspect of care. Access to clinical supervision further supports their ability to make sure the health care needs of children and young people are promoted.

EVIDENCE:

The case tracking exercise conducted as part of the inspection process concluded that there were no paper files pertaining to the children/young people accessible to the fostering team. In addition, the information about children/young people stored on the Framework I (electronic recording system) was not easily available. Staff commented that they were still struggling to access and retrieve information from Framework I. Senior management however felt that the staff would find the system far easier in the near future. While staff are learning and familiarising themselves with the new electronic record keeping system, attention must be given to making sure that relevant information about children/young people is available to staff.

Three permanent members of social work staff spoken to were able to clearly describe their roles and responsibilities. Feedback from them included that they felt that some foster carers remained resistant to accommodating supervising social workers carrying out unannounced visits to their homes. The fostering service has sought to remedy this by arranging training for foster carers. The aim of this being to raise foster carer's awareness of the National Minimum Standards for fostering services, in particular that there will be occasional unannounced visits to foster carers homes at least once each year.

The fostering service has established a good link with the Tavistock Clinic. Through this foster carers are provided with support in dealing with difficult situations that may arise for them during the placement of a child/young person with them.

A number of foster carers have completed a first aid course during 2006. While training for foster carers to raise awareness of the need to promote Looked After Children's health care has also taken place, some foster carers spoken to could not recall receiving LAC forms from social workers, as a means of informing them of any health/routine requirements of the child/young person. Following the inspection, information received from the London Borough of Haringey highlights that the Integrated Children System (ICS) has been in use since August 2005 and that this replaced the LAC forms.

Foster carers visited verified that they have registered the foster child/children with a local GP, dentists and optician. In addition, foster carers said that they prepare varied and balanced meals for the children/young people in their care.

In sampling records they were not consistent in displaying updated annual health and safety checks in line with the services policy and procedural documentation.

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 good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The service strives to meet the diverse needs of Looked After Children.

EVIDENCE:

Work has been undertaken to improve systems for ensuring that CRB (Criminal Record Bureau) checks are updated on time. Notwithstanding this, further work is needed as some CRB checks for foster carers still need renewing.

The fostering service must develop a more robust system to make sure that supervisory social workers carry out supervisory visits within the required frequency specified in the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. The fostering service may wish to consider adopting the practice of social workers scheduling the next visit at the end of each visit.

Files examined demonstrated that carers are recruited from a range of ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. It was evident from discussions with foster carers and staff that the service endeavours to ensure placements are culturally appropriate. Notwithstanding this, the fostering service has limitations to more fully meeting this objective due to the shortage of white carers to match actual demand. The fostering service is fully aware of the need

to recruit more white carers and it was reported that the strategies in place to achieve this are subject to regular review. In situations where the need to place white children in white families is paramount, it was reported that an Independent Fostering Agency is commissioned.

While the foster panel have a new chairperson they were not interviewed by the inspector on this occasion. The checks and references specific to the fostering panel chair were examined and deemed to be satisfactory. Given that there were no major issues identified during the previous inspection concerning the functioning of the fostering panel and there have been no significant changes noted since then, the inspector took the decision not to observe the panel on this occasion.

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 good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The monitoring systems in place and efforts made promote good educational achievements of fostered children.

EVIDENCE:

Foster carers have a good understanding of their role in children and young people's development.

The fostering service offers children and young people appropriate encouragement to enjoy and achieve so as to support them in developing to their full potential. This includes the fostering service conducting call- over meetings, identifying young people who are undertaking GCSE's and making a referral to the homework club on behalf of the young person.

Several foster carers spoken to said that they were proactive in making sure that the child/young person in their care received appropriate educational opportunities.

The fostering service has a designated kinship team. The stability of the child/young person remaining within their own family is reported to be reflected in the child/young person's educational statistics.

The fostering service has introduced new initiatives to enhance Looked After Children's educational achievements. As the inspector did not explore this in

detail comment on the effectiveness of this in achieving higher educational achievements for children/young people cannot be made.

Feedback forms received from foster children indicated that overall they felt well supported.

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 adequate. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. In order that the needs of the children/young people and how such needs are to be met are clear, all relevant information about a young person must be available on the main recording system. Future development work to promote consultation with children is needed.

EVIDENCE:

Looked After Children reviews to monitor the children's progress take place at appropriate intervals. The reviews of children's cases are maintained electronically.

Questionnaires/surveys received from young people were positive regarding the care afforded to them. However, a number of surveys from young people indicated they were unclear as to how to make a complaint should they be unhappy about something.

There was a lack of evidence in support of young people being involved in future planning with the local authority. The fostering service does however propose to stage a consultation forum for young people in the future so as to give them an opportunity to express their views and opinions. It is important that once in place the fostering service assesses the effectiveness of this initiative.

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 adequate. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the service. In order to better prepare young people for adulthood more work between the fostering service and foster carers is needed so as to ensure young people moving into independent living settings are placed in an environment conducive to their needs and abilities.

EVIDENCE:

It continues to remain unclear as to how the skills level 1 and 2 payments to carers are to be paid by the fostering service. Carers expressed some level of dissatisfaction as to not being recognised for the skills they acquired prior to fostering. For example, an ex foster carer from another borough and a nursery nurse qualified carer. It was reported that Haringey Foster Carers Association are currently addressing the issue of level 2 payments and have agreed a timescale for this. It is important that the fostering service monitors the progress of this so that the matter can be resolved.

A newly approved foster family expressed concern about how a placement was made prior to the Christmas period, in particular that the children were placed with them with limited information being provided about them. The foster carers also expressed comments that more support could have been put in place, particularly as they were new carers.

A week after the main inspection activity a foster family made contact with the inspector. The foster family expressed concern relevant to a young person moving on to independence and that they felt the young person did not have the level of understanding to cope with moving directly into semi-independent

living. The foster family felt that the young person would greatly benefit by going into supported lodgings in the first instance so as to better prepare the individual for independence. The foster family said that they had felt unsupported by the fostering service in moving the young person on from their care in a planned and timely manner between themselves and social services. The fostering service will need to resolve this as a matter of urgency as there may be potential for a placement breakdown due to what may have been a premature placement move.

The majority of foster carers surveyed indicated that they were saving for the child/young person. However, the supervising social workers recordings did not demonstrate that documentation relating to this was being monitored as part of their supervisory visits.

Foster carers have received training in allowances and taxation. The foster carers' handbook has guidance pertaining to allowances and payments. Foster carers spoken to confirmed that generally payments are now made on time.

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, 32

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. While staff are committed to promoting improvement and efforts are being made to develop a training programme, the deficit in information available to supervising social workers partly through to the introduction of a new recording system potentially places children at risk of their needs not being fully known.

EVIDENCE:

Not all supervising social workers are conducting unannounced visits to foster carers, in accordance with the national minimum standards for fostering services.

Generally the fostering service has demonstrated that improvements have been made.

The inspector viewed a sample of foster carers log books. A number of foster carers continue to use a diary for the purpose of recording information about children/young people rather than a log book. Further work is needed to ensure consistency of the method used by foster carers to record information and supervising social workers need to monitor entries made by foster carers in their daily log books as part of their supervisor roles. It is recommended that the supervising social worker signs off the foster carers daily log book at the end of their visit as evidence that these records have been seen. The foster carers training programme indicates that training in record keeping has been arranged and is due to take place in the future.

The kinship team have developed excellent materials which clearly explain the role of the service. While there is not a separate training programme specific to kinship carers, training arranged for other foster carers is made available to kinship carers. This is with the exception of a few instances whereby kinship carers are exempt from applying.

Staffing levels have increased since the last inspection. This has resulted in improvements being made resulting in better efficiency and effectiveness of the service. Notwithstanding this, there remains a concern relating to the record keeping practice which must be addressed.

The management structure of the fostering service is both clear and appropriate and staff are appropriately supervised and supported by the manager. The inspector is of the opinion that the service does however require additional clerical and administrative support taking into account the overall size and scope of the service. The office space is not conducive to the growth of the fostering team and there would be a benefit to consider securing premises with additional space as part of any future planning.

The foster carers' handbook contains loose leaflets from various national organisations and some which relate to Haringey's general policies and procedures. It was reported that the manual is constructed in a way that allows foster carers to access Haringey's own policies and procedures as well as information produced by national organisations. It was reported that information relating to Haringey was reviewed and where necessary updated during 2006/07.

Supervision records generally indicate that relevant issues are discussed. Some files however indicated that issues that had been raised by foster carers with their supervising social worker during visits had not always been followed through.

Foster carers' views about the service were generally positive regarding the advice and quality of support given to them from the fostering service. Three foster carers did however express some dissatisfaction as to the support afforded to them by their supervising social workers.

Overall foster carers spoke highly of staff and there is evidence in support of relationships continuing to improve.

In line with the national minimum standards, all foster carers should receive at least one unannounced visit annually.

The inspector attended the foster carers Annual General Meeting as a part of the inspection. Observations of the various roles within the committee were made by the inspector. A number of experienced carers were present at the meeting. The manner in which the meeting was conducted was not inclusive of those carers who were unable to attend. The fostering service may want to consider in future introducing the facility for postal voting as a way of bridging this gap. Through observations made by the inspector, the inspector is of the view that foster carers may have benefited from some training/guidance as to how to conduct business meetings prior to the election and new committee members. No memorandum of articles were available for inspection. It was however positive to note that during 2006 the foster service engaged the support of an organisation. This was to support the development of Haringey Foster Carers Association and is aimed at improving such matters as the conduct of meetings, voting arrangements and procedures.

Improvements have been made in making sure that the CRB'S for foster carers, and foster panel members are updated/renewed where appropriate. Information provided after the inspection indicated that there is only a very small number of foster carers CRB's that are yet to be renewed.

While staff were generally satisfied as to the level of support they received, there was a lack of evidence in support of a regular appraisal system taking place.

Staff said that they visited foster carers regularly. Of the foster carers records sampled not all of the supervising social workers records were up to date. Senior managers advised the inspector that the social workers are still familiarising themselves with the new electronic recording system and indicated that this factor had impacted on the quality of recording currently being kept. The fostering service should consider further IT training for staff so

as to give staff the confidence and better equip them with the skills needed to use the electronic record system.

The inspector sampled foster carers files. There were no development plans for foster carers on files. An individual training/development plan for each foster carer should be developed.

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	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
3	3
6	3
8	2
9	3
15	2
30	3

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
7	2
13	3
31	3

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
10	3
11	2

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	3
29	3

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

Yes

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.	FS15	27 Sch 3	The fostering service provider must continue the work to ensure that very few remaining enhanced CRB checks for foster carers are renewed every three years and that this is evidenced on their files.	01/06/07
2.	FS22	17(3)	The fostering service provider must ensure that appropriate information is given to foster carers prior to the placement of a foster child. The previous timescale of 31/01/06 not met.	31/05/07
3.	FS23	17(1)	The fostering service provider must review and document the training needs of foster carers to ensure that training needs are identified, relevant and actioned in line with their terms of approval. The previous timescale of 01/03/06 not fully met	01/06/07
4.	FS24	28(5)	The fostering service provider must ensure that supervisory social workers monitor foster carers practice to ensure they are adhering to the agreement to record relevant details about the	01/06/07

			foster child daily in daily logs. The previous timescale of 01/03/06 not met	
6.	FS23	17(1)	The fostering service provider must review the delivery of training to ensure that all approved foster carers receive appropriate and timely training. Training must be reviewed annually in line with the needs of the foster child. The previous timescale of 01/03/06 not met	01/06/07
7.	FS11	11	Action must be taken to ensure that there are suitable means by which the fostering service provider consults with children/young people	01/05/07
8.	FS11	18	The fostering service provider must make sure all fostered children are aware of what to do if they have a complaint.	01/05/07

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations relate to National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice for the Registered Provider/s to consider carrying out.

No.	Refer to Standard	Good Practice Recommendations
1.	FS29	The fostering service should continue to monitor the work currently being undertaken on the payment system to ensure a resolution to the dissatisfaction of some foster carers regarding level 1 and 2 payments.
2.	FS22	In line with the national minimum standards it is strongly recommended that supervising social workers visit foster carers at least once a year unannounced and that this is fully and clearly documented.

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