



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

**London Borough of Hounslow Fostering  
Service**

**Fostering Team  
Hounslow Social Services  
Civic Centre  
Lampton Road, Hounslow  
Middlesex  
TW3 4DN**

*Lead Inspector*  
Paula Eaton

*Key Announced Inspection*  
6th November 2006      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>	London Borough of Hounslow Fostering Service
<b>Address</b>	Fostering Team Hounslow Social Services Civic Centre Lampton Road, Hounslow Middlesex TW3 4DN
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 583 3442
<b>Fax number</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	tom.oneill@hounslow.gov.uk
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	London Borough of Hounslow
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Mr Thomas O`Neill
<b>Type of registration</b>	Local Auth Fostering Service

# **SERVICE INFORMATION**

## **Conditions of registration:**

**Date of last inspection**      15th August 2005

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

The London Borough of Hounslow's Fostering Service is located in an open plan office in the civic centre. The service provides short-term placements and respite care. The Permanency Team deals with long term fostering and kinship care as this is felt to be more appropriate. The length of short-term placements varies and could be up to several years. There is a Service Manager, Family Placements Manager, Team Manager, Assistant Team Manager and Placements Service Manager who form the management team for the service. The service has a Recruitment and Training Co-ordinator and assistant and a Carers Consultation Co-ordinator and also an Education Support Worker. There is a team of Supervising Social Workers and Recruitment Social Workers. The numbers of social workers working for the service had increased since the last inspection. The Fostering Service also has an administrative team who provide vital support.

# SUMMARY

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

This annual statutory inspection took place over four days. Time was spent in the offices of the service viewing case records, policies and procedures and interviewing staff. The Team Manager, two Recruitment Social Workers, two Supervising Social Workers, the Placements Manager and the Training and Recruitment manager were spoken to. Three foster carers were also visited and three young people were spoken to. At the time of the inspection the Local Authority had recently opened a new resource centre for Looked After Children. This resource centre was visited during the inspection.

Questionnaires were sent out to all children over eight years of age that were being looked after by the fostering service. Only three questionnaires were returned but the young people that completed the questionnaires were all very positive about the care they were receiving. Thirty questionnaires were sent out to foster carers of which only four were returned. Again these were generally very positive about the service.

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

The service provides excellent support for its foster carers and is continually evolving and developing new initiatives to improve the service.

The service has a committed and motivated staff team that support each other and are led by an effective and approachable management team.

The self-development of foster carers and staff is encouraged and supported.

The service has excellent systems in place to ensure consultation with children and young people takes place and to ensure that their views are heard and listened to.

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

The London Borough of Hounslow has opened a resource centre specifically aimed at meeting the needs of Looked After Children. Young people were actively involved in the planning for this resource and are able to access the centre for drop-in sessions, activities, health information, support with drug and alcohol issues as well as using the centre to access computer equipment for study purposes. The fostering service has also recruited more qualified social workers and set up a separate support group for teenage carers. Developments have also taken place to encourage more young people to participate in health assessments and even more consultation with young people is taking place.

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

The service must ensure that evidence of all recruitment checks is on employee records and ensure that the fostering panel does not conduct business if it is not quorate.

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**

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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 at least once during a 12 month period.**

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at the outcome for Standard:

12

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The service is proactive in ensuring the health needs of young people are met with evidence of appropriate healthcare arrangements being in place.

## EVIDENCE:

The young peoples files indicated that information is obtained on the details of their healthcare needs prior to a placement being made. It was evident from the records viewed that children and young people were registered with a GP and receiving regular health checks such as dental checks and eye tests.

The Foster Carers Handbook clearly outlines the foster carers responsibilities with regard to healthcare to ensure the health care needs of the children placed with them are met. It also provides advice and general information about specific health issues such as dealing with head lice, sunburn and general hygiene. Foster carers are expected to assist children in attending their annual medical examination and in ensuring that children attend their routine medical/health care appointments as and when required. The foster carers spoken to said that they found the handbook helpful and were clear about the records they were expected to maintain in relation to the health care of the children they were looking after.

The fostering service also provides an information package for foster carers including literature about local health services and health issues affecting children. Information regarding illnesses affecting specific ethnic groups is also included such as leaflets on sickle cell anaemia.

The Local Authority has a Looked After Children's Nurse. The nurse had recently moved into the new young people's resource centre 'Da Spot'. A lot of

thought had been put into making the Looked After Children's health service accessible and more appealing to young people. For example, statutory medicals had been renamed 'health assessments' and gym equipment had been purchased for the nurses' office to encourage young people in for their general health and well being to be assessed. Being based at the resource centre also ensures that young people have easy access to health information and general advice. The Looked After Children's Nurse had also spoken to foster carers at a support group to advise foster carers about health issues.

The Looked After Nurse is also involved in organising the annual 'Healthy Living Day' that the service holds. This includes activities, information concerning health promotion and the distribution of leaflets regarding health issues.

The service provides training for foster carers regarding health issues. For example, all foster carers are expected to attend a mandatory first aid course and course on the health needs of Looked After Children. Other training is also available on drug awareness and withdrawal from drugs and female genital mutilation.

The Carer's Consultation Co-ordinator is available to advise and work with carers and children regarding behavioural and emotional difficulties within the family setting. Two of the foster carers spoken to had used this service and said that they had found the service invaluable in helping them deal with health and emotional issues.

Therapeutic services are provided locally if required for any children placed and foster carers are given practical support with transport etc to ensure children are able to attend appointments.

The records viewed showed that health issues are discussed during supervising visits to foster carers and included as part of the annual review process.

## 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 at least once during a 12 month period.**

### **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following Standard(s):**

3, 6, 8, 9, 15 and 30

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The service has a good number of appropriately trained and experienced staff. The service matches children to carers of the same ethnic, cultural or religious background where possible and ensures that any gaps in the matching process are addressed. There are good systems in place to ensure that children are protected from abuse and neglect.

### **EVIDENCE:**

The service has a very competent Registered Manager who has many years experience working as a qualified social worker as well as several years experience working at management level. Criminal Records Bureau checks are renewed on a three yearly basis and any references taken up are verified prior to acceptance.

The service has clear policies and procedures in place with regard to ensuring the health and safety of children within foster carers homes. Comprehensive information is also provided in the Foster Carers Handbook to guide foster carers. The records viewed confirmed that annual health and safety checks were taking place in foster carers homes and the foster carers spoken to confirmed this.

Three foster carers were visited at home. All three homes were warm, comfortable and safe. Three children were spoken to and all of them showed the Inspector their bedroom. All of them had their own bedroom and were happy with their rooms. Children had toys and games in their rooms and one child proudly showed the Inspector a framed picture of his family. Each child had quiet space in the foster carers home to study.

The Registered Manager said that the local authority had recently changed their policy with regard to room sharing for Looked After Children in foster care. He said that foster children were now able to share a room in a foster carers home up to the age of eleven. This will be decided on an individual basis depending on the needs of individual children and any risks associated with room sharing.

It was evident from the records viewed and from speaking to staff that the service strives to make appropriate matches to meet the needs of the children and young people placed with foster carers. The Placements Manager said that when a referral is made the young person's profile is matched to the Form F's of possible foster carers to ensure an appropriate match. Once a match is made foster carers are supported to address any identified gaps in the matching process. For example, foster carers are provided with training on meeting the needs of black and ethnic minority children.

The service does try to introduce young people to foster carers prior to placement if possible, however, many of the placements made by the service are emergency placements so therefore this is not possible. One of the foster carers spoken to said that three out of the four placements that had been made with her in the time she had been a foster carer had been planned placements. She said the young people had been introduced to the family and had visited her home prior to placement.

Child Protection and Safer Caring training are provided for all foster carers. The service has clear Child Protection policies and procedures in place and clear guidelines are given to foster carers regarding Child Protection matters. The Behaviour Management policy for the service clearly states that any form of corporal punishment is unacceptable and this is also included in the foster Carer's Agreement as required. Training is also provided on managing behaviour and the service has a Carer's Consultation Officer who can advise on ways of managing difficult behaviours.

Appropriate systems are in place to monitor the numbers of allegations made about foster carers. All the information is collated in one place so that the information can be easily monitored and evaluated.

The service has an appropriate anti-bullying policy in place that includes information about the definition of bullying, signs and symptoms and guidance on reporting and recording incidences of bullying. The service also has a

satisfactory policy in place for when a young person absconds from a placement that includes the importance of ascertaining the views of the young person with regard to why they absconded as well as providing them with the opportunity to speak to an independent person.

The employee records for four members of staff were viewed. Generally these records were up to date and in order. However, for one long term member of staff there was no evidence that any references were taken up for their current post and an up to date Criminal Records Bureau check was not seen on file. The Registered Manager said that he had sought and seen a reference for the staff member and had seen a copy of their most recent Criminal Records Bureau check which had been completed in the last twelve months. However, these had not been put on the employees human resources file.

The fostering panel was not attended on this occasion. The service has an experienced and knowledgeable panel in place. The panel meeting minutes were viewed. Comprehensive minutes were being kept that detailed the discussions that had taken place. It was noted that one panel had gone ahead even though the panel was not quorate as it was one member short. The Fostering Services Regulations state that no business should be conducted by a panel that is not quorate. The records for three independent panel members were viewed. It was noted that references had not been taken up for one of the panel members.

Exemptions for foster carers looking after more children than they are approved for are generally approved by panel and signed off by the service's decision maker. It was noted in one of the foster carer's records viewed that this had not taken place for one placement.

The service has clear and detailed panel procedures in place that outline the composition and duties of the panel as well as guidelines for when the panel is in disagreement. The Registered Manager said that the panel receive an annual training day and said that panel members had received training on Special Guardianship in January 2006 and that further training had been arranged for 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 at least once during a 12 month period.**

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

7, 13 and 31

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The fostering service values diversity and strives to meet the diverse needs of the looked after children it cares for in the local community. The educational provision for the children placed is good. The short-term break service provided for parents ensures that parents remain the main carers for the child where appropriate.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The fostering service has appropriate policies and procedures in place regarding equal opportunities and valuing diversity. Foster carers attend mandatory training promoting equality and diversity and working with black and ethnic minority children and young people.

It was evident from the assessments and panel meeting minutes viewed that the attitudes and views of prospective foster carers regarding diversity are explored and any issues followed up. For example, concerns had been raised at one panel meeting regarding the attitude of a prospective foster carer about homosexuality. The panel had emphasised the need for this to be explored thoroughly and for training and support to be provided before a decision was made to approve the foster carer.

The service aims to match foster carers with children and young people from the same cultural, religious and linguistic background wherever possible.

The young people spoken to were involved in various social activities including swimming and cycling. The service encourages young people to become involved in leisure pursuits by providing leisure passes for foster carers to use local sports centres and annual theme park passes. One foster carer said how she had recently taken the child in her care to Chessington World of Adventures using this pass. The service also has an annual event for young people called 'HYPE'. At this year's event over eighty young people attended and many of the young people took part in performances reciting poetry, dancing and a fashion show. This event celebrates young people's achievements over the year including academic and sporting achievements.

Foster carers are given clear guidelines with regard to supporting children and young people with their education. The young people visited all had somewhere suitable to study and computers were also available for young people. Foster carers are provided with training on Personal Education Plans and the educational needs of Looked After Children. The service also provides foster carers with discounts at The Early Learning Centre and WHSmith's to assist with purchasing books and learning aids.

The new resource centre for young people 'Da Spot' has a large room with new computer equipment that young people can use to do their homework and foster carers can also access this resource to get help with their IT skills so that they can support the young people more effectively. The service also has a dedicated Education Co-ordinator for Looked After Children.

The service provides a short-breaks service for birth parents and foster carers as required. Parents remain central to the promotion of health and educational needs where appropriate. One social worker spoken to said that respite care had been organised for one of the foster carers she supervises as she had a particularly challenging placement and this support helped prevent the placement from breaking down.

## **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 at least once during a 12 month period.**

### **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

10 and 11

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Contact arrangements are made clear and foster carers are supported to ensure that appropriate contact is maintained between children and their families. The service consults children, young people and foster carers in various different ways to ensure that their views are heard. The service actively promotes and encourages young people to become involved in various aspects of the service.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Arrangements for contact are made when a child is placed and any restrictions are clearly stated in the foster placement agreement. The foster carers spoken to were able to describe how they manage the contact arrangements for the children placed in their care.

Foster carers are given clear guidelines about managing contact and recording and reporting any changes in a child's behaviour prior to or after contact. The recordings viewed confirmed that foster carers were following these guidelines and supporting children to remain in contact with important individuals in their lives. One foster carer described what types of things that she recorded when a child in her care was having contact with family members. Foster carers also confirmed that they were supported financially if they needed to transport a child to and from contact sessions.

The service has a wealth of ways in which young people are included in the running of the fostering service and it is clearly evident that the service welcomes and values the views of the young people it looks after. The service has an active Corporate Parenting Panel and a Children's Participation Officer



who consults children and young people regarding forthcoming events, requests contributions from young people for the foster carer's newsletter and initiated consultation between the service and young people regarding reviewing the Children's Guide for the service. One young person in particular had made a valuable contribution to the Children's Guide. Looked After Children also have their own magazine that is developed by young people for young people.

The service also provides 'Total Respect' training. This is training that has been developed and facilitated by young people for foster carers to give them some idea of what it is like to be a Looked After Child and also to give some information regarding what makes a placement successful. It is very interactive training.

The service also has a Children's Rights Officer and information regarding how to make a complaint is included in the Children's Guide. The Registered Manager said that the service was in the process of setting up a service called 'Text Care' that would be used to alert young people about forthcoming events.

Children and young people are encouraged to contribute to foster carer's annual reviews and are also invited to contribute to foster carers preparation group training.

Young people were also consulted with and were actively involved in developing the new resource centre 'Da Spot' (including choosing the name of the centre). They chose the colours and names of rooms and have contributed to developing an appealing and young person centred resource that will in the opinion of the inspector prove to be invaluable.

# 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):

29

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Foster carers are paid a sufficient allowance to ensure they are able to meet the needs of the children placed with them.

### EVIDENCE:

Detailed information regarding the foster carers allowance is provided in the Foster Carers Handbook including information regarding how the allowance should be used and what additional support is available. The foster carers spoken to were clear about how the allowance should be used and said that they received their payments promptly. Foster carers save money for each child placed with them. The London Borough of Hounslow regularly reviews the foster carers allowance.

# 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 17, 21, 24 and 32 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.**

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

1, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 32

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The service provides excellent support and training to foster carers. The service has a stable and well managed staff team and good systems in place for monitoring and evaluating service performance.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The service has a satisfactory Statement of Purpose in place that at the time of the inspection had been recently reviewed and updated. This document includes all of the relevant information required.

The service had also updated its Children's Guide. As mentioned earlier young people had been consulted regarding the content of the Children's Guide and as a result a new section about the experience of a young person in care had been added. It also contains details of advocacy services and includes a DVD regarding what to expect and what services are available for Looked After Children.

The service has a clear management structure and systems in place to ensure that staff are clear about what is expected of them. There are adequate numbers of staff employed by the service and staff are recruited, as the service requires. For example, the numbers of recruitment social workers had increased since the last inspection to meet the growing need in this area. The Registered Manager said that there were only two staff vacancies both being filled by locum workers at the time of the inspection. Social work staff are paid an annual retention bonus of £1500. The staff spoken to said that the service provides opportunities for personal development and support staff to attend relevant training.

The Social Workers spoken to said that their caseloads were manageable and that their caseloads were monitored and adjusted depending on their workloads. Two of the staff spoken to said that their manager had reduced their caseloads to account for Practice Teaching responsibilities they had taken on.

The service has a significant number of Looked After Children that are placed with Independent Fostering Agencies. The Placements Manager said that the service had preferred providers that they used and that checks are completed to ascertain the standard of care provided. However, the service was not looking at previous inspection reports for these agencies and it is recommended that this is done.

Social Workers confirmed that they are provided with professional supervision on a monthly basis and a relatively new member of staff confirmed that she was receiving supervision more regularly than this. Staff also said that the management team were very supportive and approachable and that there was always someone available to discuss any issues with.

The service has good admin support systems in place and has developed a system that allows some staff more flexible working as they are able to work from home sometimes. However, the members of staff spoken to said that the resources available were not fully supportive of this way of working.

The service has a duty team that deals with requests for service and social workers in the fostering team spend a week on a rota basis on duty. This system is not ideal as social workers are not able to carry on with work on their caseloads during this week and social workers said that they found this way of working stressful. However, the Registered Manager and staff said that meetings had taken place to discuss this and that changes to the duty system were being planned.

The service has access to advice from a designated education worker for Looked After Children, a medical advisor, the Looked After Children's nurse and a legal advisor.

The service has a Recruitment and Training Co-ordinator who was spoken to during the inspection. She was able to describe the various strategies in place to recruit new foster carers to the service such as having stalls in local shopping centres, advertising in local newspapers etc. The service has also commissioned an outside organisation for a period of two years to deal with all the marketing and publicity for the service in an attempt to recruit more in-house foster carers. This organisation is organising events approximately four times a year. Other members of the fostering service had also been involved in recruitment events.

The service has a comprehensive assessment process in place. The recruitment social workers spoken to were able to explain the assessment process and the qualities looked for in a prospective foster carer.

The social workers spoken to were positive about the training provided by the service. Many of them had been given opportunities to undertake external training relevant to their posts as well as attending internal training sessions. The service also has a comprehensive induction programme in place for new members of staff. The programme includes reading policies and procedures, meeting useful contacts, a 'buddying system', some shadowing and a handover from the member of staff leaving if possible. One fairly new member of staff described the induction she had received and said 'it was the best induction I have had'. Foster carers are given the opportunity to attend some of the corporate training provided by Hounslow and therefore joint training takes place between the fostering service staff and foster carers.

The service has excellent support systems in place for foster carers. There are regular support groups held which the foster carers spoken to said that they found useful to share ideas and experiences. There is a newsletter that goes out to foster carers on a regular basis. Foster carers are also able to access the new resource centre for advice and support as discussed earlier. The service has a Carers Consultation co-ordinator who is available to provide support and guidance to foster carers. One particular foster carer said that this individual had been very helpful in supporting her after a child moved on and also with

some personal issues she was dealing with. The service had set up a support group for teenage foster carers since the last inspection and the service has an established sons and daughters group for the birth children of foster carers. The service also has an annual carers award ceremony to acknowledge and celebrate the good work of foster carers and there is a quarterly carers consultation forum. Also, as mentioned earlier the service has negotiated various discounts at high street stores and provides carers with leisure passes and annual theme park passes. The service also provides foster carers with a wipe clean magnetic card with useful contacts on such as out of hours numbers etc that foster carers can place somewhere prominent.

Two supervising social workers were interviewed. They said that they visit foster carers on a monthly basis and carry out unannounced visits as required. This was confirmed by foster carers and the records viewed. There is a pro-forma used for these visits that the social workers said acted as a useful reminder to ensure they cover all areas of need. The foster carers spoken to were clear about the role of their supervising social worker.

All of the foster carer records viewed included a detailed Foster Carer's Agreement that contained all of the required information. The service also has a comprehensive Foster Carer's Handbook in place. All of the foster carers spoken to said that they had a copy of the handbook and found it useful as a guide to refer to. The handbook is regularly updated, however it was noted that changes in legislation regarding child safety seats was not included in the recently updated handbook. The Registered Manager said that this would be included and that foster carers had been written to about the change and also said it had been included in a recent newsletter.

The service maintains a separate complaints record that can be easily monitored. There had been a low number of complaints since the last inspection and appropriate action had been taken with regard to any complaints that had been made. The service has an appropriate complaints procedure in place that is made available to foster carers and young people. The service has clear procedures in place for dealing with allegations made about foster carers.

The service has a comprehensive training programme in place for foster carers and the attendance at training is quite good. The service has a good range of mandatory courses that foster carers are expected to attend in their first two years as a foster carer. These include training on Child Protection, managing behaviour, first aid, safe caring, moving young people on to independence, health issues, promoting equality and diversity and health issues. There are then 'advanced' courses foster carers can attend that include, drug awareness, contact, anger and aggression, children in domestic violence, disability awareness, making the most of men in foster care and responding to stress. The Recruitment and Training Co-ordinator said that attendance at training is monitored and discussed at foster carers annual reviews and that the quality of

the training and trainers is monitored and evaluated to ensure that good quality training is provided. On average two training sessions are held a month and foster carers are also able to complete NVQ programmes.

The case records for six children were viewed. These were in order and up to date and contained all of the required information. The files clearly documented the needs of children and young people and how these needs were being met.

Kinship care arrangements are assessed and monitored by the Adoption and Permanency Team. A thorough assessment process is completed and cases are presented to panel. Kinship carers are offered social work support by the service and paid the basic fostering allowance.

# 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>	3

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

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

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

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

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



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
1	FS15	20(3)(d)	Recruitment records for all staff who work for or for the purpose of the service must include evidence of all completed checks as required.	01/02/07
2	FS30	25(1)	No business must be conducted by the fostering panel if the panel is not quorate.	01/01/07
3	FS30	30(3)(b)	Exemptions with regard to foster carers approval must be approved and this approval appropriately recorded.	01/01/07

### 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.	FS20	The duty system should be reviewed to explore ways of improving the system so that it impacts less on the workloads of Social Workers.
2	FS22	The Foster Carers Handbook should be updated to include information about the changes in car safety legislation for children.

3	FS16	The service should look at previous inspection reports for Independent Fostering Agencies prior to deciding to place a child or young person with them.
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## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

West London Area Office  
11th Floor, West Wing  
26-28 Hammersmith Grove  
London  
W6 7SE

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120

Email: [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk)

Web: [www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)

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