



**Making Social Care
Better for People**

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

Phoenix Community Care

**The E Case, 85 Bounces Road
Edmonton
London
N9 8LD**

Lead Inspector
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Announced
12 & 22 September 2005 @ 09.30 am

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of service	Phoenix Community Care
Address	The E Base, 85 Bounces Road, Edmonton, London N9 8LD
Telephone number	020 8887 6888
Fax number	020 8807 8795
Email address	fca@phoenixcommunity.co.uk
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Adrian Hawkes
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Pauline Hawkes
Type of registration	IFA Fostering Agency
No. of places registered (if applicable)	0
Category(ies) of registration, with number of places	IFA

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

None

Date of last inspection 31 January 2005

Brief Description of the Service:

Phoenix Community Care is an independent fostering agency registered by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in 2004. The agency states its priority as being to place "children who have come to this country seeking asylum and who are under 15". The agency is owned and managed Adrian and Pauline Hawkes, husband and wife. The office is located in Edmonton, on a main road and can be reached by British rail or London buses. There is a well furnished office where training and meetings can take place. The agency has currently four registered foster carers. Besides being a foster agency, PCC is involved in the provision of support to young persons living in the community with support. This part of the service is not registered by CSI but is run through an arrangement between PCC and placing authorities. From discussions it was understood that the registered providers have other business interests such as NVQ training and full time education for children of different ages. The web address of the agency is www.phoenixcommunity.org.uk.

SUMMARY

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

This inspection took place on 12th September 2005 between 9:30am and 6:30pm. As part of the inspection process a number of documents have been received and examined before the inspection. These documents include the policies and procedures of the agency and completed questionnaires by foster carers, a representative and a child. Staff files, panel-meeting minutes, a child's file and files of foster carers were assessed on the day of the inspection. Discussions were held with the registered manager and the provider, who were present throughout the inspection. Two members of staff were spoken to individually. Through a guided tour of the premises the offices and the facilities were inspected.

Finally, a foster carers' home, where one child was placed, was visited. Both foster carers and the child were spoken to at the home.

The inspector was not able to observe the panel meeting nor was able to speak to the chair of the panel. Unsuccessful efforts were made to contact the chair of the panel by the telephone before drafting this report.

What the service does well:

Clear policies and procedures which ensure the safety and well-being of children are in place. There is adequate number of staff with appropriate skills and training to meet the needs of children. The agency has close working relationships with placing authorities. The selection of the foster carers and the matching criteria are designed to ensure that children's needs in respect of ethnic background are respected. Staff and foster carers are provided with support and supervision, which enable them to accomplish their duties. Foster carers are paid their allowances on time. The office premises are suitable for meetings, training and storing files securely.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The registered person has reviewed the Children's Guide and has provided a copy to foster carers and a child.

What they could do better:

The registered person must obtain two written references before a new member of staff starts work with the agency. One of the references must be from a previous employer, if there is any.

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

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

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Being Healthy

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

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

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 12

The fostering agency and the foster carers have satisfactory systems and understanding of meeting the health needs of children.

EVIDENCE:

The agency's statement of purpose and foster carer agreement have information on the health care needs of children. These documents require foster carers to ensure that each child placed with them has access to:

- Registration with a general practitioner and health appointments as required
- Regular dental and optical appointments
- Appropriate health care that embraces diet and personal hygiene
- Appropriate information about health that encourages children to look after themselves.

It was evident from the files of one child that health information has been made available to the foster carers. Discussions with the foster carers visited showed that they have attended training provided by the agency and that they have good liaison with health care professionals to meet the needs of the child placed with them. One of the foster carers visited said they are employed as a health professional and are aware of the health requirements of the child.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- Any persons carrying on or managing the service are suitable. (NMS 3)
- The fostering service provides suitable foster carers.(NMS 6)
- The service matches children to carers appropriately.(NMS 8)
- The fostering service protects each child or young person from abuse and neglect.(NMS 9)
- The people who work in or for the fostering service are suitable to work with children and young people.(NMS 15)
- Fostering panels are organised efficiently and effectively.(NMS 30)

The Commission considers Standards 3, 6, 8, 9, and 15 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 3, 6, 8, 9, and 15

The agency is lenient in implementing its policies and procedures of staff recruitment in respect of vetting the references of new staff. This can potentially put children at risk.

The selection process of foster carers has enabled the agency to place children in comfortable homes where their needs can be met. The agency works well with the placing authorities to match children with foster carers. This includes taking into account of individual circumstances of each child.

Thee agency's policies and procedures on abuse are detailed and clear and children feel safe and protected from abuse.

EVIDENCE:

Records examined showed that CRB checks have been carried out for all staff, foster carers and panel members. It was also evident from staff records that two written references have been taken except for one member of staff for whom the agency is yet to receive a reference from a previous employer. Currently the agency has one child placed with foster carers. A feedback card completed by the child and an observation of the foster carers' home indicated that the home is comfortable and the child has a bedroom of their own. Discussions with the foster carers and the staff and examination of documents revealed that the agency provided a key worker who acted as a mentor and

often escorted the child to schools and football games. The agency's training programme and the policies and procedures demonstrate the agency's commitment to safeguarding and protecting children from abuse. It was clear that the agency matches children on the bases of specific criteria and on the bases of consultations with local authorities. It was noted during discussions with the registered person that the local authorities have known the foster carers with whom a child was placed and it was with the full agreement and recommendation of all involved that the placement decision was made. Even though the child is not from the same racial background as the foster carers, it was evident from discussions that efforts have been made to meet the child's cultural, linguistic, religious and dietary needs. The foster carers said they have taken the child to their preferred places of worship and they have taken them to restaurants, which provide appropriate cultural food. The child is also involved in choosing food items to be purchased and cooked for the family. Besides buying a phrase book in order to study and to communicate with the child in their language, the foster carers confirmed that a previous foster child who has lived with them is from the same racial background as the child and has agreed to visit them and befriend the child.

The agency has a policy on bullying and the foster carers spoken to confirmed that they have been given a copy of this policy. The agency's foster care agreement has a statement which requires carers not to administer corporal punishment to any child placed with them. The agency's foster carer agreement advises carers to consult supervising social workers and attend training programmes offered by the agency regarding management of unacceptable behaviour. As stated above, all staff have clear CRB checks and except one staff all have two written references. There is a recruitment policy and new staff are selected through interviews carried out by the registered person and senior staff members. Two social workers have appropriate qualifications and one member is currently undergoing training to obtain a social work qualification. From records and discussions it was obvious that unqualified staff are supervised by appropriately qualified staff. Two staff members spoken to demonstrated their good understanding of the Children Act and relevant current policies and procedures.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- The fostering service values diversity.(NMS 7)
- The fostering service promotes educational achievement.(NMS 13)
- When foster care is provided as a short-term break for a child, the arrangements recognise that the parents remain the main carers for the child.(NMS 31)

The Commission considers Standards 7, 13, and 31 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 7, 13, and 31

The procedures and the policies of the agency recognise diversity and expect foster carers to promote and value the children's needs in relation to their ethnic background. The children's educational needs are met by the support and guidance the foster carers receive from the agency. The procedures for respite service are adequate to ensure that children are placed with appropriately approved carers when and if a respite care is needed.

EVIDENCE:

From discussions and examination of the records it was clear that the foster carers approved by the agency are from different racial origins. The current placement of a child has been based on previous experience of the foster carers rather than on ethnic, cultural or linguistic background. Discussions with the registered person revealed that the policy of the agency is to match children with foster carers according to culture, gender, age and religion where possible. The agency has provided an interpreter in order to help communication between a child and foster carers and other care professionals. In addition to the regular visit of the home by a supervising social worker, a key worker has been allocated to contact the child and to take them to places of hobbies. There is written evidence to show that the agency's social workers and key workers keep the child's social worker informed of all developments they record after their contact with the child.

An observation of the home and discussions with foster carers indicated that a child is supported and encouraged to complete homework. It was evident from discussions that the foster carers have made an appointment with a school

seek additional tuition where necessary to help a child catch up and enjoy their education. From records it was clear that the fostering agency provided escorting as part of supporting the carers.

The registered person said existing approved foster carers who have no children placed with them are willing to provide a respite care when and if needed. However, the agency has also a plan to recruit respite foster carers. As there is only one child placed and there are four approved foster carers, the agency believes that respite care provision would not be a problem.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- The fostering service promotes contact arrangements for the child or young person. (NMS 10)
- The fostering service promotes consultation.(NMS 11)

The Commission considers Standards 10 and 11 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 10, and 11

The arrangements for children to contact families are robust to enable children to have a contact with families within the limits of risk assessments and consciously made decisions.

The complaints procedures are clear and children and foster carers feel that their concerns can be listened to and acted upon.

EVIDENCE:

The agency's placement plan provides details of contact arrangements for each child. Under this plan, information, which includes place, time, frequency, and mechanisms of monitoring contacts are outlined and given to foster carers. Discussions and records demonstrated that the agency has liaised with the local authority in making contact arrangement decisions for the child placed with the carers.

The agency has a complaints procedure a copy of which is included in the Children's Guide. An interpreter has been provided for a child who has little understanding of English. As stated above the agency has a key worker who visits the child regularly. A student social worker, who is supervised by a senior social worker, also visits the child on a regular basis. Written feedback card completed by the child and an interpreter confirmed that the child is well settled at the current placement.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- The fostering service prepares young people for adulthood.(NMS 14)
- The fostering service pays carers an allowance and agreed expenses as specified.(NMS 29)

The Commission considers Standards 29 the key standard to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 29

There is a clear policy on payment to foster carers and the carers are satisfied that their allowances are paid regularly on time.

EVIDENCE:

Written policy on foster allowance is available in the placement plan. The registered person said the agency started paying the foster carers before waiting the money to arrive from the placing local authority. The foster carers spoken to said they have been paid their allowances on time. Sample copies of cheques sent to the foster carers were presented and seen as evidence of regular payments to the foster carers.

Management

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- There is a clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and the fostering service ensures that they meet those aims and objectives.(NMS 1)
- The fostering service is managed by those with the appropriate skills and experience. (NMS 2)
- The fostering service is monitored and controlled as specified. (NMS 4)
- The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.(NMS 5)
- Staff are organised and managed effectively.(NMS 16)
- The fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff.(NMS 17)
- The fostering service is a fair and competent employer.(NMS 18)
- There is a good quality training programme. (NMS 19)
- All staff are properly accountable and supported.(NMS 20)
- The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.(NMS 21)
- Foster cares are provided with supervision and support.(NMS 22)
- Foster carers are appropriately trained.(NMS 23)
- Case records for children are comprehensive.(NMS 24)
- The administrative records are maintained as required.(NMS 25)
- The premises used as offices by the fostering service are suitable for the purpose.(NMS 26)
- The fostering service is financially viable. (NMS 27)
- The fostering service has robust financial processes. (NMS 28)
- Local Authority fostering services recognise the contribution made by family and friends as carers.(NMS 32)

The Commission considers Standards 17, 21, and 24 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 17, 21, and 24

There are sufficient number of staff with appropriate experience and knowledge to meet the needs of children placed with foster carers.

The agency has support and training arrangements for carers to be motivated and update their skills to meet the needs of children placed with them.

The record keeping procedures are satisfactory and necessary information is obtained, recorded and made available to foster careres.

EVIDENCE:

The agency has two senior social workers, a student social worker and a support worker with a responsibility of escorting children to leisure places and schools. The foster carers spoken to said they are able to contact staff when and if they need and they have emergency contact telephone numbers. There are procedures for selecting staff and foster carers. A detailed assessment report is completed for prospective foster carers and this is presented to a panel for consideration. The completed assessment of carers and the minutes of the panels have been inspected and have been found to be satisfactory. It is evident from the minutes that the panel examines the foster carers' assessment reports and makes appropriate recommendation on the suitability of foster carers to be registered.

There are induction packages and training opportunities for foster carers. From discussions with the registered person it was clear that the agency supports foster carers to be members of a body, which issues periodic magazines, related to foster caring. The foster carers spoken to confirmed that they have a copy of the Foster Carers' Handbook. The two members of staff confirmed that they receive regular supervision from the manager.

In a discussion with the inspector and in a questionnaire the child stated that they know how to complain. The child said they are happy, well settled and have no concerns at the moment.

The offices occupied by the agency are well equipped with facilities for training, office, meeting and interview rooms. Special security arrangements such as closed circuit television/video cameras are installed and the windows are fitted with shutters.

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	2
6	3
8	3
9	3
15	3
30	X

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

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

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

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

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.	3	20	The registered person must ensure that two written references, including a reference from the person's most recent employer, if any, are obtained before a new employee starts work with the agency. The registered person must ensure that the employee with no written reference from previous employer obtains the refernce. It is required that the registered person confirms in writing to the CSCI inspector that a satisfactory reference is received for the employee.	31/10/05

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.		

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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