



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

**London Borough of Waltham Forest Fostering  
Service**

**Fostering and Adoption Assessment Team  
1C The Drive  
Walthamstow  
London  
E17 3BN**

*Lead Inspector*  
Paula Eaton

*Announced Inspection*  
5th February 2007 09:45 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

<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

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<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Ms Barbara Foster
<b>Type of registration</b>	Local Auth Fostering Service

# SERVICE INFORMATION

## Conditions of registration:

**Date of last inspection**      26th January 2006

## Brief Description of the Service:

The aim of the London Borough of Waltham Forest's fostering service is to provide a quality fostering service to meet the needs of the diverse local community. They are committed to the provision of a range of placements and placement choice. Fostering services include task centred (short term), shared care/respice, pre adoptive and permanent placements and placements with friends and family for children between 0 -18 yrs who are looked after by the local authority under the Children Act 1989. Where the needs of children and young people cannot be met from within the local authority fostering service, provision is commissioned from independent fostering agencies. These agencies are monitored by the Access to Resources Team and also through arrangements made within the Pan London Agreement, (this is an organisation comprising the London Boroughs who have come together to negotiate contracts and organise monitoring of children's services provided by the independent sector). The London Borough of Waltham Forest embraces diversity and difference in all aspects of its work and strives to provide foster carers who reflect the racial mix of the local community.

# SUMMARY

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

This statutory inspection took place over five days. This included the inspection of the local authorities assessment, management and monitoring of Private Fostering arrangements and a separate report has been produced regarding this. Time was spent in the offices of the service viewing case records, policies and procedures and interviewing staff. Several members of the management team were spoken to including the Quality Assurance Manager, the Group Manager for the service and the Team Managers for the Access to Resources Team, the Fostering Assessment Team and the Fostering Support Team. Several qualified social workers, the panel administrator and the training and information officer for the service were also spoken to. A fostering panel meeting was also observed as part of this inspection.

Four foster carers were visited and six young people were spoken to in the foster carers homes. A couple were also observed interacting with the twin babies in their care.

Questionnaires regarding the fostering service provided by Waltham Forest were sent out to foster carers and young people being looked after by foster carers. The majority of these were returned and were positive about the service provided for foster carers and the young people.

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

The service has effective systems in place for consulting with children, young people and foster carers and access to a proactive Children's Rights Service.

The service has good systems in place to support and encourage young people to maintain contact with their families.

The service has an active Foster Carers Association that organises social activities and there is an annual event held in recognition of the work foster carers do.

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

The service has improved the fostering panel with new members being recruited including a new Chair.

The service has developed action plans for involving young people in the development of the service.

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

The service needs to improve monitoring systems to ensure that records are kept up to date and that procedures are followed and deadlines met.

Foster carer support groups need to be more foster carer led and information provided to foster carers in a suitable format.

The service could greatly improve the matching process to ensure that placements more fully meet the needs of the children placed leading to greater placement stability.

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

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

# DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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# 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 this service.

The agency ensures the health needs of children are met with evidence of appropriate healthcare arrangements being in place.

## EVIDENCE:

All approved foster carers receive a Foster Carer's Handbook, which contains information about foster carer's responsibilities with regard to meeting the health needs of the Looked After Children in their care. The handbook includes information about health assessments, accidents/first aid, infectious diseases, infection control, eye care, hearing and dental care. It also provides information about sex education and sexuality, drugs, food safety, allergies, diet and exercise, immunisations and sunburn.

All of the case files viewed during the inspection contained information regarding the health needs of children and how these were being met. It was evident from the visits to foster carers that foster carers were advocating on the behalf of the children in their care with regard to meeting their health needs. For example, one foster family visited were concerned about a possible physical deformity of a baby they were caring for and had made strong representations to the child's GP regarding a referral to investigate the problem.

The service has two full time Looked After Children's Nurses who are available to advise staff and foster carers and who also assist the service in delivering training for foster carers. The fostering service also has established links with the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Team who also assist with some training provision. Teenage pregnancy and drug advisory services are also available. The service can also access the advice of a local Paediatrician.

The Group Manager said that plans were being made to provide foster families with leisure cards to enable them to use leisure facilities in the local area. The Group Manager also said that the service was planning to develop an intensive, time limited, therapeutic fostering service for young people with more challenging and complex needs.

# 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 and 30

Quality in this outcome area is **adequate**. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The service provides suitably vetted foster carers. The service does not always appropriately match children and young people to carers, which leads to some placement instability. The fostering service has appropriate systems in place to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse and neglect. Recruitment systems are generally robust, however, records could be improved. The service has an organised and efficient fostering panel.

## **EVIDENCE:**

All of the management team employed by the service have appropriate Social Work qualifications and relevant experience in childcare or fostering settings. Criminal Record Bureau checks for employees were being renewed as required and it was evident from the employee records viewed that references were being verified prior to staff being employed.

The homes of four foster carers were visited. All of them were safe, comfortable and warm homely environments for the young people placed there. The young people spoken to showed the Inspector their bedrooms and toys and clothes and seemed content in the foster carers homes. One child said 'I love it here, I want to stay here...I help to cook and I like Indian food'.

The foster carers records viewed showed that health and safety checks were taking place on an annual basis and there were no health and safety issues noted in the homes visited. The children had their own bedrooms unless they were siblings who were sharing a room. The Group Manager advised the Inspector that the service has a 'Handy Man' who is available to help foster carers with things such as assembling flat pack furniture and installing safety gates.

Foster carers are provided with information regarding health and safety and the expectations of them as foster carers. The foster carers visited were aware that they may be visited by an Inspector from the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

The Access to Resources Team are responsible for matching children and young people to appropriate foster carers and there are two Placement Officers who are employed by the team one of whom is part time. Requests for a service are made through the IT system used by the service and then approved by a Group Manager before a placement is made. Once the referral is approved a worker is allocated and a more detailed referral form is completed prior to a placement being sought. The Access to Resources Team receives an up to date vacancy list from the Fostering Support Team each week and also keep an up to date register in the team so that they are aware of the foster carers who are available to take placements.

It was noted that the service has a high number of young people in placements that do not match their race, culture or religion and that also placements are regularly made outside the approval range of foster carers. Although the correct procedures for this were generally being followed it was evident that there is a substantial number of placement disruptions and difficulties faced by foster carers where they have taken placements outside of their approval range. The service needs to address this matter to enhance placement stability within the service and ensure that the needs of children and young people are being met.

Two of the foster homes visited included trans-racial placements. Although not ideal it was evident that the placements were meeting the current needs of the children. However, it was noted in the records viewed that Placement Agreements did not always address gaps in the matching process and how these gaps were going to be addressed. The Quality Assurance Manager had developed a checklist for trans-racial placements but this had not yet been implemented.

Information regarding the matching process is provided for foster carers in the Foster Carers Handbook. The Group Manager said that there was a need to recruit more foster carers for teenagers, children with special needs and white UK foster carers.

The service uses the London Wide Child Protection policies and procedures. Appropriate behaviour management, anti-bullying and absent without authorisation policies and procedures are also in place and are provided for foster carers in the Foster Carers Handbook. Foster carers and staff receive regular training on Child Protection issues.

There was evidence in the foster carers records viewed of the required checks being completed and renewed to ensure the safety of children and young people. It is made clear in the behaviour management policies and procedures and in the Foster Carer's Agreement signed by foster carers that corporal punishment is not acceptable in any circumstances.

Separate records are maintained for allegations and child protection issues and any other incidents that authorities are expected to be notified of under Schedule 8 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. These records were being appropriately maintained and it was evident that appropriate action was being taken. One of the records viewed was not up to date, however the Quality Assurance Manager was able to evidence what action had been taken regarding this matter.

The recruitment records for four members of staff and two panel members were viewed. It was noted that on one staff members file there was only one reference and on another there was not any proof of identification. It was also noted that there were no references on file for one of the panel members although letters had recently been sent out requesting references.

A fostering panel meeting was observed. The service has recruited a new fostering panel Chair since the last inspection. This individual is independent of the local authority and is suitably qualified and experienced to fulfil this role. The panel is appropriately organised and administrated. Constructive discussions took place and foster carers and social workers attended the panel at appropriate points of the meeting. The meeting was quorate and the panel minutes viewed showed that appropriate discussions had taken place and appropriate recommendations had been made. The fostering panel had members with expertise in health and education and an ex Looked After Child is also a panel member.

During the meeting two Kinship care cases were presented to panel. There were discussions regarding the appropriateness of the placements and difficulties that may arise but the panel were in a very difficult position regarding making a recommendation because the children had been in placement for over a year before the assessments of these placements had been presented to the panel. It was evident from the records viewed and from speaking to the Quality assurance Manager that there were a significant number of cases such as this to be presented to panel. It is important that these cases are not left to drift and that appropriate assessments are

completed and presented to the fostering panel to ensure appropriate, safe arrangements are in place for children.

# 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 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. The educational provision for the children placed is good and promotes the achievement of young people. An appropriate short-term break service is available.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Since the last inspection the local authority has employed a Community Cohesion Officer for the Children's Safeguarding Board to work with local community groups. This post will enable the fostering service to ensure that all community groups are aware of the service and it's role in the community and help to build links within the local area.

The Group Manager and Training and Information Officer both said that Diversity training had been a priority for staff and foster carers over the past year and that this had been successful. Two of the foster carers visited who had children placed with them from a background different to their own were able to describe what they were doing to ensure that the child in placement was being supported to maintain their identity. Foster carers are also provided with information in the Foster Carers Handbook regarding equality and diversity and encouraging cultural identity. The local authority also provides any published leaflets and documents regarding the services available in common languages used in the local community.

It was evident from the records viewed and from speaking to children and foster carers and also from the questionnaires completed about the fostering service, that children and young people are encouraged and supported to pursue their interests and hobbies. For example, children were attending dance and swimming lessons and playing football and had pets that they helped to look after. The fostering service also has a Looked After Children achievement day that celebrates the individual achievements of children in care in Waltham Forest.

Waltham Forest has a Looked After Children's education team who are available to advise and support foster carers regarding the educational needs of the children placed with them. There is also a homework club available for young people to support them with their schoolwork. It was evident from the records viewed and from speaking to foster carers that foster carers were liaising with educational establishments and advocating on the behalf of children and young people. The Foster Carers Handbook also provides information regarding the educational needs of children and young people and also provides practical advice regarding managing issues that may arise regarding a child's education and how best to support them.

A short breaks service is available to parents and foster carers and specialist respite care is purchased for children with disabilities where required. However, there is still no clear process for accessing respite care for foster carers. The carers spoken to were unclear if respite was available or what they should do if they felt they needed respite and they were also anxious about requesting respite as they thought that this would be seen in a negative way by the service. It is important that there are clear guidelines in place for foster carers regarding respite care.

## 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 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.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Since the last inspection the service has recruited three social work assistants to act as contact supervisors. At the time of the inspection two of these employees had commenced work and the third was due to start. The service has also refurbished the contact suite that is used for supervised contact.

It was evident from the records viewed and from speaking to foster carers that children and young people were being supported to maintain links with family members and significant others. Foster carers understood the importance of maintaining these links and were facilitating contact by transporting children and recording any outcomes/changes in behaviour as a result of contact.

The Team Manager of the Fostering Support Service said that the service was in the process of developing a contact agreement to ensure that there is a clear plan in place and that expectations are clear and to ensure that a risk assessment of the proposed arrangements has taken place. The Looked After Children's panel also discusses contact arrangements.

The service has appropriate forms in place for consultation with young people, foster carers and social workers prior to reviews taking place. The foster carers visited were aware of the concerns of the young people in their care and were able to clearly demonstrate how they had advocated on behalf of the children and young people placed with them.

Detailed information regarding how to make a complaint and who to contact is provided for young people in the Children's Guide. It emphasises the importance of young people telling people if they have a concern until they feel someone has listened to them. The Children's Guide also provides contact details for advocacy services.

The service has an active Children's Rights service that consults with children who are looked after in a variety of ways. Young people have been supported to become involved in preparation training groups for foster carers and in providing 'Total Respect' training. They have also been involved in producing regular newsletters, inspecting new service providers and study clubs are provided for young people. The Children's Rights Service also organises outings and activities for young people. The local authority also works in partnership with Barnado's.

The Group Manager said that the service has introduced a 'Step to Step' programme, which involves each team within the service producing an action plan outlining how they are going to involve and consult with young people in service delivery.

# 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:**

The service provides allowances for foster carers in line with the Fostering Networks recommendations. Kinship carers receive a basic allowance and other foster carers receive a fee on top of this basic allowance. Foster carers who have completed their NVQ level three training receive a higher rate.

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 Waltham Forest 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 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, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 32

Quality in this outcome area is **adequate**. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Staff are organised and managed effectively although systems for monitoring staff performance need to be improved. There are adequate numbers of staff working for the service and support systems are available for foster carers.

However, the quality and effectiveness of support and supervision of foster carers needs to be monitored. The standard of recording could be improved.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The service has a satisfactory Statement of Purpose in place. This had been reviewed and formally approved by an Elected Member. The Statement of Purpose contains information regarding the aims of the service, information about staff, available support for foster carers and information regarding the National Minimum Standards.

The service has two Children's Guides, one aimed at younger children and one for young people. Both guides were in an appropriate, colourful booklet format and young people had been involved in the design of these guides with the support of the Children's Rights Service. The Children's Guides contain information regarding social workers, foster carers, education, review meetings, complaints, contact and young people's rights. There is also space for children and young people to add personal information and contacts etc.

The service has a clear management structure and clear lines of accountability. There had been some difficulties within the management team since the last inspection and these issues had caused some anxiety and uncertainty for staff. However, at the time of the inspection these issues were being resolved and some stability being restored.

Although the service has systems in place to ensure that assessments, approvals and reviews are managed effectively these systems are not always satisfactory. For example, one foster carer's live in partner had not been assessed by the service even though he was heavily involved in caring for the children. Also, annual foster carers reviews do not always take place on time.

The Access to Resources Team manager said that the service uses preferred providers in the independent sector if they do not have a suitable in-house foster carer available. She said that previous inspection reports are looked at and that some visits take place to providers.

The staff spoken to during the inspection said that they receive regular professional supervision and that ongoing training is provided. It was evident that the social workers in the fostering service understood the role of the children's social worker and that there was some liaison between the teams. However, there had been problems retaining staff in the Looked After Children's teams and this had impacted on the fostering service.

The service currently has adequate numbers of staff and has recruited sufficient foster carers. However, it is important that staffing levels are

regularly monitored and reviewed. It was noted that the Fostering Assessment Team were carrying out assessments as well as providing support to Kinship carers and that workloads were quite high in this team. In addition to this, this team were also preparing to take on Private Fostering work. The Group Manager said that there were plans to make some changes to the remit of this team.

The service uses local press and word of mouth as their main recruitment methods as well as information sessions that are advertised. As mentioned earlier the service has also employed a Community Cohesion Officer to build more effective links with local community groups.

The Supervising Social Workers spoken to said that their caseloads are generally manageable and that they have a maximum of up to fifteen cases at any one time. The social workers did say that it would be beneficial if their caseloads were reduced to allow them to concentrate on some development work but generally felt that managers monitored caseloads and supported staff to ensure they were able to manage their workloads.

The service has a clear assessment process in place and the completed assessments that were viewed were comprehensive and covered all areas of competence. There is a very structured process with approximate timescales to guide staff with regard to assessments. The Fostering Assessment Manager said that assessments are monitored and viewed prior to them being presented to the fostering panel. As mentioned earlier it was noted that one foster carer's partner had not been assessed as a joint applicant even though he was living with the foster carer at the time of her assessment. This is not acceptable and needs to be addressed.

Waltham Forest has an active Foster Carer's Association that mainly takes the lead on organising social activities and events. The Group Manager for the service said that there were plans to expand this further to include quarterly meetings with the association to enable them to have more of a voice in service development.

There are also regular support group meetings for foster carers. The foster carers spoken to said that the support group meetings had become very social work led and that they would prefer to have more time to talk amongst themselves and share ideas and experiences. The Fostering Support Team Manager said that she had acknowledged this and that there were plans to change the support groups in light of consultation that had taken place with foster carers. The service also has plans to develop more specialist support groups, for example, a group for male carers and a group for the birth children of foster carers. The service also arranges an annual event for foster carers in recognition of the work they do and service they provide for Looked After Children. The Foster Carers Handbook outlines the support available for foster carers.

There is an out of hours service available for foster carers until midnight, seven days of week and the duty emergency team are available after this.

Reports are prepared for annual foster carer reviews and presented to panel as required. However, it was noted that annual reviews were not always taking place on time. It was evident from the records viewed that foster carers, children and young people and social workers are encouraged to contribute to review reports.

Foster carers and social workers spoken to said that there were some issues regarding children's social workers not keeping foster carers informed about plans for young people and changes that occur. For example, foster carers were frustrated about not being told about changes in the care plan for children they were looking after.

The service has a very detailed and comprehensive Foster Carers Handbook that contains a wealth of information regarding services available, policies and procedures, practical guidance, expectations and useful contacts. However, as a result of the size and layout of this document it is not very user friendly. It was evident from speaking to foster carers that they found it difficult to find the information they were looking for in the handbook. The service was in the process of reviewing this document.

All foster carer's have a named qualified supervising social worker. It was noted from the records viewed that monthly visits to foster carers were generally taking place, however, some gaps in visits were noted. Two of the foster carers visited said that their supervising social worker did not visit them as often as they were supposed to and said that this worker regularly cancelled visits. It was also noted that the records for visits were not always signed by foster carers. Unannounced visits were recorded in the records viewed.

The service has a Training and Information Officer who takes the lead on training for foster carers with the support of the Deputy Team Manager of the Fostering Support Team. There is an annual training programme and attendance is generally good. Local venues are used and lunch is provided for foster carers and the service pays for childcare to support foster carers to attend. Training is discussed during supervision visits and monitored through the annual foster carers reviews. There is core training that is mandatory for all foster carers. The training programme for 2007 includes training on education, coping with your child's behaviour, Child Protection, safer caring/allegations, identity, self harm, first aid, fire blanket training, preparing for adult life/independence and promoting positive contact. The foster carers spoken to said that they generally found the training interesting and useful.

The Children's case files viewed were generally up to date and in order and contained all of the required information. It was evident that some life story

work was taking place and that some training had been provided, however, it was evident from the records viewed and foster carers spoken to that this work needs to be further developed.

The service has a system in place for auditing case files and where this had happened files were generally in order. However, closer monitoring of case files needs to take place to ensure that records are up to date and accurate. It was also noted that issues raised at supervision visits to foster carers were not always followed up at subsequent visits. It was also noted that on one foster carers file that records regarding an exemption had not been completed until almost eight months after a placement had taken place.

The Fostering Assessment Team Manager has developed a guide to Kinship care for Kinship carers. This includes a definition of Kinship, the legal rights of carers, duties, support available and dealing with concerns. The service has a comprehensive assessment process in place for Kinship carers and Kinship carers receive an allowance, training and support.

As mentioned earlier in this report it was noted during the inspection that the assessments for Kinship carers and presentation of these cases to the fostering panel were not taking place within acceptable timescales. This has led to situations where children have been left in placements for over a year where the fostering panel have had concerns about the suitability of placements to best meet the needs of children. The panel have been put in a difficult position where recommendations would unsettle and disrupt the placements of children as they have been in placements for a long time prior to their cases being presented to panel. Management decisions must be made to ensure that any backlog of Kinship care cases are dealt with effectively with the least amount of disruption to children.

# 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	1
9	3
15	2
30	3

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

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

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

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

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.	FS8	33(b)	The Registered Person must ensure that children and young people are appropriately matched to foster carers.	01/05/07
2.	FS8	33(b)	The Registered Person must ensure that where trans-racial placements are made any gaps are identified and additional support provided.	01/05/07
3.	FS15	Schedule 1	The Registered Person must ensure that all required recruitment checks are completed prior to employment.	01/04/07
4.	FS16	30	The Registered Person must improve monitoring systems for fostering assessments and annual reviews.	01/07/07
5.	FS17	27(1)	The Registered Person must ensure that assessments are completed for all live-in partners of foster carers.	01/06/07
6.	FS21	17(3)	The Registered Person must ensure that links with children's social workers are improved to ensure important information is passed on to foster carers.	01/07/07
7.	FS22	35	The Registered Person must ensure that all supervision sessions are recorded accurately,	01/05/07

			agreed by carers and made available on foster carers files. <b>(Timescale of 31/03/06 not complied with)</b>	
8.	FS25	30	The Registered person must ensure that all staff maintain accurately and keep up to date records as specified in the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and Schedules 1-8. <b>(Timescale of 31/03/06 not complied with)</b>	01/05/07
9.	FS32	27	The Registered Person must ensure that Kinship care cases are assessed and presented to the fostering panel within acceptable timescales.	01/07/07

## 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.	FS8	It is recommended that supervising social worker record support provided to foster carers where trans-racial placements to enable the young person to be provided with the best possible care and to develop a positive understanding of their heritage.
2.	FS17	Staffing levels in the Fostering Assessment Team should be closely monitored and any identified issues addressed.
3.	FS21	Support groups for foster carers should be reviewed and changes made to ensure they are meeting the needs of foster carers.
4.	FS22	The Foster Carers Handbook should be produced in a more user friendly format.
5.	FS24	Further work should be completed with foster carers regarding life story work for children.
6	OP31	It is recommended that further work be done to ensure foster carers are fully aware of the information regarding short-breaks for children that further work is done to ensure that carers are receiving adequate support.

