



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

### **Hampshire County Council Fostering Service**

**Trafalgar House  
The Castle  
Winchester  
Hampshire  
SO23 8UQ**

*Lead Inspector*  
Corrie McKeown

*Announced Inspection*  
21st August 2006      10:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

<b>Reader Information</b>	
Document Purpose	Inspection Report
Author	CSCI
Audience	General Public
Further copies from	0870 240 7535 (telephone order line)
Copyright	This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI
Internet address	<a href="http://www.csci.org.uk">www.csci.org.uk</a>

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

This report is a public document. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the prior permission of the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

# SERVICE INFORMATION

**Name of service** Hampshire County Council Fostering Service

**Address** Trafalgar House  
The Castle  
Winchester  
Hampshire  
SO23 8UQ

**Telephone number**

**Fax number**

**Email address** jennie.polyblank@hants.gov.uk

**Provider Web address**

**Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)** Hampshire County Council

**Name of registered manager (if applicable)** Jennie Polyblank

**Type of registration** Local Auth Fostering Service

# SERVICE INFORMATION

## Conditions of registration:

**Date of last inspection**      12th December 2005

## Brief Description of the Service:

In Hampshire Education and Social Care are now managed by the Children's Services Department (CSD). Throughout the period of restructuring the Fostering Service has sought to maintain a high standard of service delivery within the fostering team, together with a number of new initiatives, which are in the process of being introduced. As a service it continues to provide a range of family based care for children of all ages in Hampshire who are unable to stay with their own families. Placements are provided for children who need to be cared for in emergency situations, for short or long periods or for a planned series of short breaks. The service has three district family placement teams and a Central Fostering Recruitment Team who recruit and carry out the assessments of prospective foster carers, with the exception of family and friends foster carers and family-link carers who are assessed by the regional family placement teams.

The service is managed by a County Strategic and a County Operational Manager based in Winchester and Romsey respectively. The County Strategic Manager's role is overseeing the family placement service including adoption and the Operational Manager oversees the fostering service. There are a number of specialist posts within the service and six multi-disciplinary Fostering panels in operation across the county.

The District teams work with the social workers of children who need to be placed, to see if anyone from within the child's extended family or kinship networks could, with support, look after the child. This would be the first choice solution for any child not able to live at home. Family placement teams carry out the assessments of family and friends carers as well as prospective family-link carers and provide supervision and support to all approved carers. Hampshire also uses a number of independent fostering agencies where they are not able to provide a suitable placement within their own resources.

# SUMMARY

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

The inspection took place over four days with two Inspectors. In addition pre-inspection visits were made to plan arrangements, attend a panel meeting and visit two foster carers' events. Three area offices and six foster families were visited in the Alton, Aldershot and Winchester areas. During these visits The Operational and Strategic Managers were interviewed together with two area managers, two family placement social workers, two family link coordinators, three reviewing managers, a strategic county manager, the manager responsible for the education of children in care, a designated CLA nurse and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Commissioning and Planning Manager, the training officer, the Family and Friends/Kinship Officer and two young people who were looked after and are now engaged in specific paid work projects for the Service. Questionnaires collected at the last two inspections were reviewed together with the last inspection report.

This annual inspection was brought forward in time to meet the needs of the regulatory body in preparation for the move to OFSTED. In spite of this, the managers and staff cooperated fully to assist the inspection process.

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

The new inspection methodology introduced this year includes a Quality Assurance Assessment document; this was comprehensively completed and demonstrated a clear understanding of the Service, its strengths and weaknesses and detailed strategies already in place to achieve continuous improvement. The Fostering Service is delivered by a team of staff and carers whose ultimate concern is clearly for the welfare of the children and young people. They work closely with a dedicated team of CLA (Children Looked After) nurses and other health and education professionals to ensure all of the young people's needs are met. The foster carers offer a wide range of experiences and activities that assist their development and self-esteem. Support provided to foster carers is of a high standard.

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

The new healthcare policy has addressed a number of important areas and in May of this year new recording mechanisms were put in place that should deliver improved practices around healthcare and foster carers' recording. Other new paperwork introduced since the last inspection includes new supervision forms for both social workers and foster carers, which demonstrate that young people are being regularly consulted, meeting a previous recommendation.

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

The Fostering Service needs to find ways of ensuring that all foster carers have attended the necessary courses to complete and update their training. Annual household safety checks need to be in place, updated and in all cases when vulnerable young people are sharing a bedroom, a written risk assessment should be completed. Matching considerations need to be recorded as part of the foster care agreement for every young person placed and a bank of resources needs to be available to foster carers when trans-racial placements are made. The service is working hard to recruit enough foster carers to meet the current demand; these efforts together with new ideas are needed to encourage more respite carers into the Service for children with disabilities.

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**

## **CONTENTS**

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Statutory Requirements Identified During the Inspection

# 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 good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The health needs of the young people are well known to their carers, who work actively in co-operation with other professionals to support them.

## EVIDENCE:

Healthcare services for CLA (Children Looked After) continue to improve. The introduction of CLA nurses has proved to be an invaluable resource and the 7 Primary Care Trusts currently in place across the County are merging to enable better commissioning of services for CLA. The Fostering Service has adopted a new Healthcare for Children Looked After policy; when fully operational this will involve regular, holistic health assessments, which focus on immediate and future needs, moving away from the previous medical model of simply addressing ill health. All young people currently have their health needs identified, some using the recently introduced BAAF health form, which is a comprehensive document, completed by CLA nurses when placements are made and updated annually thereafter. Foster carers feel they are given as much health information as possible when young people are placed and that the assessments by the CLA nurses are in some cases more thorough than those completed by G.P's. All young people are registered with local health practitioners and given regular check-ups; the CLA nurses assist foster carers to locate dentists and other health professionals if they experience problems. The Fostering Service has also recently addressed the issue of medical consent and sharing information, to ensure clarity and consistency in these matters. The Department's performance statistics show that 86% of all CLA have health assessments in place. A number of the young people are receiving specialist help from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and community therapists are part of this service working with CLA. One placing social worker commented "The foster carers work well with other professionals and are willing to challenge and advocate in the child's best interests." Foster

carers attend the young people's statutory CLA reviews and offer information regarding their healthcare. A new policy on the administration and recording of medication and health events by foster carers is being introduced, which will address the current inconsistencies in this area.

Foster carers receive pre-approval training in health promotion and ongoing courses are available on a range of health issues. These are delivered by the CLA nurses, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) alongside the training officer, often in response to requests from foster carers. Health promotion is good according to feedback from the young people, who wrote on their questionnaires and told Inspectors that they eat healthy food, are encouraged to exercise and are supported in their personal hygiene. A number commented specifically that they had been much happier with the health assessment delivered by the CLA nurses, often in their own home, where they had felt more comfortable asking for health advice. Health education programmes delivered by schools support the work of the Fostering Service. Recently some foster carers attended a Sex and Relationships Education Programme (SRE) and were given materials to support their work with the young people in their care. There is also training available in the knowledge and understanding of HIV/AIDS and further guidance on health matters is contained in the foster carers' handbook. Many, but not all foster carers have a first aid qualification; this needs to be in place for all carers. When matching young people with appropriate foster carers the considerations include their health needs, to ensure they can be met in the placement locality and/or the carer has the necessary skills. Two new safety procedures have been developed around the provision of adaptations and equipment for young people with disabilities.

## 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. Young people are kept safe with a variety of systems and strategies employed by the Fostering Service. Some shortfalls have been identified and are being improved.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Experienced and qualified personnel are managing the Fostering Service. They have formal childcare and management qualifications and have undergone the required recruitment checks.

The Service has a range of strategies in place to ensure that their foster carers provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment. Homes are assessed by supervising social workers as part of the initial assessment of foster carers and annually thereafter, to ensure that they provide a safe and pleasing environment. The six homes visited by Inspectors were comfortable, individual in nature and suited the needs of the young people placed there. Most young people have their own bedrooms, but in one case examined the required risk assessment was not in place where young people were sharing. In addition to the training already mentioned, foster carers undertake courses in safe caring, health and safety and behaviour management as part of their induction. Transport is vetted as part of an annual safety checks, to make sure that appropriate insurance is in place and that vehicles meet safety standards, in

two cases examined these safety checks were not up-to-date, but no dangers were observed. An individual safe caring strategy is in place for each household, detailing any special measures to ensure everyone in the house is protected.

The evidence of matching reviewed by the Inspectors showed that outcomes for the young people were good and the considerations were well known to the family placement social workers. The young people visited were very happy with their placements and all the professionals consulted spoke about individual cases, including black and minority ethnic placements, where the matching had been successful. Some of the comments from the young people included "I've got the loveliest family in the world" and "Nothing needs changing, I think that this family is the right place to stay, this family is very loving and caring." A placing social worker commented, "The carers provide a safe, secure environment which has enabled the young person to feel both valued and wanted, raising his self-esteem and image." There is a document currently in use to record matching considerations, but it is only completed in the case of exemptions. It is necessary for this form to be completed in all cases, to identify where foster carers need additional support to compensate for any gaps in the matching process and to sit alongside the foster care agreement in order to fully meet Standard 8.4. Additional training and information has in some cases been provided to foster carers to cover shortfalls in the matching process, for example training for specific conditions and advice on behaviour management from supervising social workers, but in the case of an asylum seeker the foster carer had to seek out her own resources. The Service delivers training in this area but does not have ready access to appropriate resources to support foster carers who look after young people from black and minority ethnic groups.

Training is offered to foster carers in safeguarding skills and procedures and working with young people who have been abused. These subjects are included in pre-approval training and in more detail as a core-training course. The service has appropriate policies in place covering sleepovers with friends and sitting arrangements. All foster carers visited were clear that corporal punishment is not acceptable and this is clearly reinforced in the foster care agreement. In cases where allegations had been made against foster carers, proper procedures were followed and the Service offers independent support to the foster carers, which is highly valued. Detailed written procedures are available in the service handbooks to all staff for guidance. All of the young people reported that they knew how to make a complaint and details of all complaints received by the Fostering Service were recorded electronically. In total 60 complaints had been received, 20 were upheld, 20 were partly upheld and 20 were unsubstantiated. Specific training on how to respond to complaints has been delivered to staff within the last year and work is currently taking place to improve procedures, as they were identified by an independent audit as needing review. Reports to foster carers of bullying are not currently being monitored, but the Fostering Service is planning a more

comprehensive approach to bullying which will complement that underway in local schools. There is no specific training for foster carers in anti-bullying measures.

Staff recruitment was examined at the last Inspection in December 2005, no concerns were raised and the Managers reported that safe recruitment practices are employed.

There are six fostering panels across Hampshire to monitor the assessments of potential foster carers. The one observed as part of the inspection had a wide experience in childcare and the composition of the panels meets the requirements, with the exception of a person who has been fostered or had a child who has been fostered. According to the evidence reviewed, the standard of assessments presented to the panel are good. The Fostering Service has identified inconsistencies in practice and some training needs for panel members and expect that these will be addressed when the vacant post of panel adviser is filled. The panel also perform a quality assurance function for the Service by scrutinising the first annual foster carer reviews and all changes to approval. The panel receive information regarding the range and type of carers and the degree to which the needs of the young people referred are met.

# 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 of this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Young people have access to a wide range of activities and opportunities in order to develop their skills and abilities, including access to an appropriate educational resource.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The Service has training courses in place for staff and foster carers, which particularly address diversity and equal opportunities. Aspects of that training are included within other courses, for example the Sex and Relationships training that encompasses issues for those from a variety of faith and cultural backgrounds. In all placements the Service attempts to match the needs of young people from black and minority ethnic groups and unaccompanied asylum seekers, this includes the use of Independent fostering agency placements. Where obvious matches are not available and trans-racial placements are made, some successful outcomes have been noted. However, as mentioned earlier the Service needs to develop a resource pack to support foster carers in this situation.

The education of CLA continues to be a focus for improvement in the county Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). Some good outcomes have been noted in terms of academic achievement, for example there are more than twenty young people already placed on a University or College Course and students receive financial assistance to support their studies and upon graduation. The Team supporting the Education for Children in Care (TECIC) are also aiming to track the young people's progress using the Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings, in order to track pupil progress at an earlier

stage and offer help to those falling behind. TECIC offers an advisory service to foster carers when young people are having problems or are not in school; this may involve some 1:1 support or access to an Educational Psychologist who prioritises CLA and runs an advice surgery for foster carers. In the homes visited, foster carers were clear about their responsibility to support the education of the young people placed with them, by attending school meetings, enabling homework to be completed and encouraging participation in school trips and after-school clubs. Alongside families throughout the county, family and friends carers and foster carers are offered training modules in this area, entitled 'Confident Parents – Confident Kids' and 'Supporting Parents of Teenagers,' encouraging learning together. Young people reported: "I get a lot of help reading and playing word games." And "I like going to things I can learn about." Good evidence was available to suggest that foster carers provide encouragement and equal access to opportunities and a wide range of activities, in order to develop the young people's talents, interests and hobbies; these include such diverse pastimes as dinky toy models, clubs, singing and dancing and "caravanning and getting muddy." New supervision forms for foster carers are aiming to ensure that a certain % of the allowance is being spent on activities that raise the young people self-esteem and contribute directly to enjoyment and achievement.

Regular short breaks are provided by the Link scheme for young people with disabilities who live at home. Foster carers have access to specialist advice from a team of family placement social workers with experience in this area. An example of this support observed by an Inspector was a foster carer who needed equipment to support the young person's daily routine and the family placement social worker arranged for an occupational therapist to visit. The foster carers were very enthusiastic about the support they receive saying, "They are fantastic" "...brilliant, always there." "I have been helped so I can communicate better with P." Co-working with voluntary organisations is a feature of this service and family link social workers felt that disability awareness was being raised in a number of ways. There is a long-standing shortage of carers in this area of the Service and whilst these initiatives are a meaningful start, further efforts need to be made to meet the needs of these young people within the Service or by commissioning placements. (See Standard 17)

# **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 of this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Safe contact between young people and their families is strongly promoted. The Service enables all parties concerned with the care of the young people to contribute their views, to ensure that positive outcomes are achieved in line with their wishes.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Good evidence was found when visiting the homes that foster families welcomed the young people's friends and family members and worked hard to forge positive links with them, which benefited the young people. Meetings sometimes take place outside of the home and facilities for this are undergoing some restructuring, leading to temporary difficulties. Training and guidance is provided to foster carers in this area of work, stressing the importance of contact to the young people.

Prior to the statutory CLA reviews, feedback is sought from the young people and their foster carers on their care experience. Reviewing officers reported that increased efforts are being made to put the young people at the centre of the reviewing process; receiving their views prior to the meeting is important so they can facilitate this and further improve the number of young people attending their reviews. The Service also seeks annual feedback on foster carers' performance from all parties concerned. Foster carers reported to the Inspectors that they felt the Service valued their views, as actions often demonstrated, particularly in the area of training, where the Service have tried to time events to suit the foster carers and health personnel have designed courses around their specific needs. Foster carers are approached for feedback

on particular issues, sometimes running trials for new systems and paperwork and a foster carers' forum is in operation, where issues in any area of their work can be raised. One of these meetings was attended by an Inspector and discussions were held about the purpose of the forum; it was felt that this needed to be clarified in order to improved participation in the future. The mailbox system of sending out information to carers and the inclusion of training details in the foster carers' diary, were identified as ways in which the communication has improved between the Service and the foster carers, but some felt it could still be better. The ways in which young people are consulted is particularly innovative. Activity events are run for various groups including the foster carers' own children and young people who have left care, where their opinions are sought on a range of issues; they are also involved in the foster carers' training, the recruitment of the CLA Managers and research projects. One young people told Inspectors that he was asked about pocket money and bedtime and they both changed. The Rights, Respects and Responsibilities programme, which is currently running in the residential sector, is to be adapted to work with those in foster care and those young people with disabilities, to encourage positive involvement in the community.

## **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):**

There are no key standards to assess in this section of the report and no concerns have been raised since the last inspection or in recent reports.

### **EVIDENCE:**

# 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):**

17,19,21,24 and 32

Quality of this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The service continues to be well managed and the staff are both committed and well qualified. However, poor attendance by foster carers at training and the implementation of improved recording paperwork needs to be addressed. Foster carers are well supported and the family and friends foster carers are a significant part of the Service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Staff working for the Service are suitably qualified and undertake training to update their knowledge and skills. Foster carers feel that there are adequate staff to meet their needs and the needs of the young people placed. However, Inspectors became aware of increases in their workload and rising expectations around recording and the level of support they are required to offer some families and feel the current level of performance will be difficult to sustain. The range of foster carers recruited is suitable to match the needs of the majority of young people referred, but there is a significant shortage in numbers, which means the Service is not able to offer a choice of placements to the young people. Extensive recruitment activity has taken place to cover this shortfall, including advertising in a range of publications and a carefully planned campaign to raise the profile of fostering generally. This has been rewarded with some success, but the need remains for more skilled foster carers to meet the needs of young people with disabilities and challenging behaviour in all areas of the county. In response to comments from the young people, foster carer profiles have begun to be developed; these can be used when a choice is available or simply to help with the introductory process.

Twenty-nine foster carers currently have, or are working towards the NVQ Level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People. Some carers hold other relevant qualifications and the service is in the process of conducting a skills and training audit in order to clearly identify the training each foster carer has undertaken. A core-training programme is in place, which is supplemented by health and education courses accessible by carers with particular needs; these courses can contribute to achieving the relevant NVQ. Foster carers consulted particularly value the attendance of experienced foster carers at the induction sessions and feel the Fostering Service offers plenty of training. However, in two recent audits, the attendance of foster carers at training events was noted as generally poor; as a result much of their core training has not been completed. The Service needs to be clearer at the pre approval stage and in the foster carers' agreement about their expectations regarding training. It needs to be clear when training is mandatory, where timescales are applied and when updates are relevant, together with the likely outcome for foster carers who do not attend the required sessions. The Service has put incentives in place but this has not brought about the desired outcome. Where training levels were poor this has been noted in the relevant section of the report. It appears that some foster carers take full advantage of the opportunities on offer, but this is not consistent. Some health courses have been especially well attended and it is possible that courses may feel more relevant when held for specific groups of carers, in particular friends and family carers. The quality of foster carers visited as part of the inspection was good and feedback from placing social workers indicated the same, for example: "The carers are

insightful and knowledgeable, they are very able to identify individual children's needs and respond appropriately."

According to all foster carers consulted, they are very well supported by the family placement social workers and family link social workers with six-weekly supervision visits and a much-improved out-of-hours service. This has been largely due to the introduction of fostering support workers, who are themselves experienced foster carers and available for advice. Part of their remit is to encourage and set up local support networks and groups; this has been quite successful in some areas and slow to become established in others. Supervision visits are recorded on new paperwork that offers prompts to family placement social workers, in order to ensure that all areas of supervision are covered, including contact with the young people. This meets a previous recommendation from the last inspection. Performance reviews are carried out for the foster carers at six months, twelve months and annually thereafter and all are scrutinised by the panel. These include feedback from all parties concerned. Training needs are also identified at this time. As foster carers increase their skills and experience, their approval is sometimes extended. All approval changes are referred to the panel. Working partnerships between family placement social workers and the young people's social workers were very good in most cases reviewed, according to all social workers this is helped a great deal by the sharing of office space.

Comprehensive case records are maintained for all young people and the Service is in the process of transferring to an electronic system. Foster carers are asked to encourage and enable the young people to keep a record of their life while fostered and this was taking place. However, expectations with regard to recording by foster carers have very recently changed and Inspectors found a general lack of clarity on this issue. As a result recording was of a variable quality and in some cases daily events and medication administered were not noted. Discussions were held with the Service Managers and it was felt that the new paperwork needs to be introduced effectively, in order to clearly evidence the quality of care provided and the young people's progress. The new supervision recording sheets go some way to ensuring records are checked, but the methodology needs to be made clear to all staff and foster carers. Training is given to foster carers regarding the storage of information and this was found to be appropriate in the homes visited.

The family and friends carers are a substantial and growing part of the Service, which is commendable. As mentioned earlier, their training and management needs to be carefully structured to meet their specific needs and encourage their attendance. Family group conferencing is now a well-established tool, used throughout the Service as a whole and reinforces the ethos of putting families at the centre of support for CLA.

# 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>	2
<b>8</b>	3
<b>9</b>	3
<b>15</b>	3
<b>30</b>	3

<b>ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>7</b>	3
<b>13</b>	4
<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>	X

<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>1</b>	X
<b>2</b>	X
<b>4</b>	X
<b>5</b>	X
<b>16</b>	X
<b>17</b>	3
<b>18</b>	X
<b>19</b>	2
<b>20</b>	X
<b>21</b>	4
<b>22</b>	X
<b>23</b>	X
<b>24</b>	3
<b>25</b>	X
<b>26</b>	X
<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.	FS19	20 (3)(b)	That all foster carers undertake a clearly identified post approval programme of training to ensure they have the necessary skills to meet the needs of the young people placed.	30/03/07

### **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.	FS6	That the service ensures all household reviews include an updated safety check and that risk assessments are in place when vulnerable young people are sharing a bedroom.
2	FS7	That the Service provides information about available resources to help foster carers meet the needs of black and minority ethnic groups and unaccompanied asylum seekers.
3	FS8	That matching considerations and any shortfalls are recorded for every placement.
4	FS17	That a sufficient number of suitable foster carers are recruited within the Link Service.

5	FS24	That recording by foster carers is more detailed.
---	------	---

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

Hampshire Office

4th Floor Overline House

Blechynden Terrace

Southampton

SO15 1GW

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)

© This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI