



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

ADOPTION SERVICE

Milton Keynes Council

**Saxon Court
502 Avebury Boulevard
Central Milton Keynes
MK9 3HS**

Lead Inspector
Rosie
Dancer

Announced
13th - 15th July 2005

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 *Adoption*. 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	Milton Keynes Council Adoption Service
Address	Saxon Court, 502 Avebury Boulevard, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3HS
Telephone number	01908 253155
Fax number	
Email address	
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Milton Keynes Council
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Eileen Friday
Type of registration	LAA
No. of places registered (if applicable)	NA
Category(ies) of registration, with number of places	NA

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

N/A

Date of last inspection N/A

Brief Description of the Service:

The adoption team is based within Milton Keynes Council's Learning and Development Directorate along with all services for children. The agency is constituted as a service under current legislation that requires local authorities to provide or make provision for adoption services. The agency is a member of the Adoption 7 Consortium, which comprises of 5 other local authorities and one associate voluntary adoption agency. The consortium aims to provide easier access to the range of adoption services, to increase opportunities for matching children and adopters and identify potential adoptive parents at an early stage. The agency recruits, prepares, assesses and approves adopters, provides post adoption support, places children with adoptive families and provides birth records counselling. The agency refers people who want to adopt a child from another country to a voluntary agency which specialises in this work.

SUMMARY

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

This inspection was the first inspection of the adoption service provided by Milton Keynes Council. The openness and cooperation of everyone involved meant that the inspection process was carried out effectively and efficiently.

The inspection was carried out over three days by two inspectors. Senior personnel were interviewed, as were front-line workers and administrative staff; the elected member of the council was also interviewed. The director of St. Francis Children's Society, with which Milton Keynes has a service level agreement to carry out adoption support work, was interviewed. The lead inspector observed the adoption panel. One birth parent was interviewed, four adoptive families were visited and their case files examined, children's adoption files were also inspected. Policies, procedures, professional practices and the department's recruitment procedures were inspected.

Completed questionnaires from adopters, prospective adopters, a birth parent, professional advisers and placing social workers also informed the inspection.

What the service does well:

The preparation courses run by Milton Keynes for prospective adopters were of a good quality. Adopters' comments about the preparation courses included:

- "The preparation is very worthwhile"
- "The most valuable part of the preparation was the talks from adopters, adult adoptees and a birth mother. This was the most valuable part of the preparation as we gained an all round view from all parties concerned."
- "The preparation groups were good, there was the feeling that we were being assessed but it was friendly and informal, we were put at our ease."
- "Milton Keynes is fantastic we feel well prepared."

The adoption team social workers are appropriately qualified and experienced. It was noted that the team were dedicated individuals and that other professionals and the sample of adopters spoke very highly of the workers as a team and as individuals.

Comments from professionals about the team included "The adoption team is solid and strong, adopters are well supported" and from an external professional "the adoption team is skilled." Adopters comments about the workers and the service they had received were also very positive, adopters described the welcome given to them and the professionalism and workers

interpersonal skills as being "excellent" The individual support provided by social workers from the adoption team was also highlighted as being excellent; one adopter stated "I can't think of anything negative about Milton Keynes" and another wrote, that they were dissatisfied with "nothing".

The adoption support services provided to adopters are of a good quality with clear evidence noted of learning having occurred from past difficulties in this area. Adopters spoke of their confidence in Milton Keynes supporting them in the future and social workers spoke of the commitment management has in supporting placements of Milton Keynes children and adopters.

There were some excellent examples noted of support to birth parents and birth families. There is a contract in place with a local voluntary agency to provide a range of independent support to birth families. Milton Keynes has also commissioned the Post Adoption Centre to assist birth families. The centre runs a monthly session in Milton Keynes.

Milton Keynes has recognised the value of providing staff with good quality training. The post qualifying training programme is well advanced with all but one adoption social worker having gained the PQ1 award and half of the team having gained the child care award. Training is also linked into the recruitment and retention policy with opportunities to gain further qualifications from universities such as Luton and York.

What has improved since the last inspection?

This is not applicable

What they could do better:

Clear guidance for staff is needed in respect of the finer details of assessment information. For example when looking at employment history the months of employment should be included so that any significant gaps can be discussed.

It was noted that some social workers were unclear about how to deal with a child protection concern about a child placed for adoption. Refresher training carried out at regular frequencies would address this.

The arrangements for clerical support need to be reviewed and clarity is needed about what tasks it is expected that clerical staff carry out and what is

expected of social workers. All clerical staff must be subject to all statutory checks.

Close monitoring of the recently introduced financial system is needed as it was noted that there had been some late payments to adopters and others. Some staff were not clear about how to use the system and some training in this would be useful for them.

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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Staying Safe

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Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing - There are no NMS that map to this outcome

Management

Scoring of Standards

Statutory Requirements identified during the inspection

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The agency matches children with adopters (NMS 2)
- The agency assesses and prepares adopters (NMS 4)
- Adopters are given information about matching (NMS 5)
- The functions of the adoption panel are as specified (NMS 10)
- The constitution and membership of adoption panels are as specified (NMS 11)
- Adoption panels are timely (NMS 12)
- Adoption agency decision is made without delay and appropriately (NMS 13)
- The manager is suitable to carry on or manage an adoption agency (NMS 15)
- Staff are suitable to work with children (NMS 19)
- The agency has a robust complaints procedure (NMS 24 Voluntary Adoption Agency only)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 2,4,5,10,11,12,13,15,19

The practices in Milton Keynes overall provide for safe outcomes for children by ensuring that adopters are assessed and approved on the basis of their ability to meet the needs of children.

EVIDENCE:

Due to the small geographical size the adoption service covers and the need for anonymity in adoptive placements, Milton Keynes prioritises applications from prospective adopters, who live outside of the Milton Keynes area. People making enquires about adoption who live in or near Milton Keynes are referred to another local authority or voluntary adoption agency.

Where enquirers may be able to offer adoptive homes for children, from ethnic minority groups, with disabilities or older children and sibling groups these applicants are progressed even if they live in the area. This is as there is a shortage nationally of adopters for children who fall within these groups and being a member of the “adoption 7 consortium” of adoption agencies it is likely that a member agency will be able to use such adopters.

Prospective adopters who wish to adopt from another country are referred to Parent and Children Together (PACT), a voluntary adoption agency which specialises in intercountry adoptions.

There was evidence to show that children's views are sought and acted upon where appropriate throughout the care planning and adoption processes; they are actively involved in their statutory reviews.

The preparation course is based on the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) model; two of the adoption social workers have attended the training run by BAAF in respect of delivering the preparation course.

Adopters with whom the inspectors had contact with were very satisfied with the preparation they received and overall felt that they were well prepared to meet the complex needs of the children waiting for adoption.

One adopter while overall very complimentary of the preparation felt that a little more training on childcare and child development would have been useful.

Adopters are asked to complete an evaluation form about the preparation course; the course leaders and the manager review these. It was noted that changes to the course have been made as a result of these reviews. For example the timing of the sessions were changed to provide a more convenient and effective way of delivering the training. This was subject to further consultation with adopters.

The preparation courses are open to foster carers who wish to become adopters to a child they are caring for.

There was evidence that showed that overall the service has a thorough approach to preparation and assessment. Assessment reports were noted, in the main, as being of a good standard and analytical. There were four areas noted where attention is needed to ensure that all social workers are clear about issues to be explored. These are:

- Some guidance for social workers about obtaining exact dates of adopter employment histories, to allow any gaps in employment to be fully explored.
- Some guidance for social workers about contacting any previous partners of prospective adopters, to establish if the relationship ended due to any issues which may pose a risk to a child.
- Some guidance for social workers about prospective adopters, who smoke, to ensure that children are not exposed to passive smoking.
- The assessments in respect of foster carers who wish to adopt must include an updated CRB check.

The panel members should be made aware that they should ensure that these issues are addressed in each assessment.

The quality of Form E assessments was noted as being variable. This information informs the care planning, panel process, decision making and matching processes and is one of the key documents the child will be able to access in the future. The poor quality of some are of concern and the manager should consider how this could be effectively addressed.

Overall adopters felt that they were kept well informed by their social worker with one adopter commenting, " We had a very positive response from Milton Keynes".

Adopters reported that they were satisfied with the information provided to them about the matching process and the information provided about specific children for whom a match was being considered. One adopter commented on the social workers expertise in finding the 'right' child for them.

A new matching report combined with the adoption support plan was about to be piloted; this is one of the documents which will be presented to panel when a match is being considering. There are arrangements in place to record if adoptive parents are willing to inform the agency if an adopted child dies. Prospective adopters prepare an album, video or tape recordings as an introduction for the child coming to live with them. For younger children adopters have provided a personal item to familiarise the child with the individual smell of the adopter.

There are panel policies and procedures in place. These need to include the policy and procedure for appointing the panel chair.

The panel observed was properly constituted. However the panel was the last one the medical adviser was able to attend and a new medical adviser was being sought. There were satisfactory arrangements in place for the interim period. A medical adviser should be appointed to panel as soon as is possible. There is a good induction process for new panel members; this needs formalising to provide clarity to new panel members about what is expected of them. Panel members are provided with training relevant to their role.

Comments from social workers about the experience of attending panel included:

"Panel functions well", "really positive" pleasant to deal with" and " the independent chair took some time to bed in but we are now getting used to having an independent chair." (A range of social workers comments)
One social worker found the experience particularly daunting and felt that had she had an opportunity to observe the panel first she would have been better prepared for the experience.

The panel is timely; the frequency has recently been changed to three weekly from four weekly to cope with an increased level of business. The adoption adviser provides regular updates to panel about all cases it has heard.

The administration of the panel is efficient and effective. There are comprehensive minutes produced of each panel meeting.

The decision making process is efficient and timely and decisions are made only after careful consideration of all of the papers. If required the decision maker will discuss any issues with the adoption adviser before making her decision.

Feedback from adopters and other professionals about the adoption team social workers was that they were a very skilled and strong team. Social workers spoken to across children's teams spoke of a good level of support from the team and the two managers being given to them in adoption work.

There are clear staff recruitment procedures; these need to be amended so that they refer to CRB checks not police checks.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The adoption agency provides support for adoptive parents (NMS 6)
- The agency has access to specialist advisers as appropriate (NMS 18)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 6,18,

There are sound practices in place in respect to supporting adoptive placements and evidence noted of reflective practice where problems have arisen. This enables safe and stable placements for children to be made and maintained.

EVIDENCE:

The preparation and assessment processes provide adopters with a good basic knowledge about parenting a child from the care system. Support to adopters is considered by Milton Keynes as an ongoing piece of work. Each adoptive family now has an adoption support plan in place, which is based on the child and adopters needs.

Inter-country adopters are initially supported by PACT. If needed at any stage in the future families who have adopted from another country will be eligible to approach Milton Keynes for support.

There was not a post approval training programme in place; it is planned to develop such training and this will be a good addition to the services provided to adopters.

Adopters are encouraged, when appropriate to share information with the child. Later life letters are written to the child and life story books prepared by the child's social worker, the foster carer, the family support worker and where appropriate the birth family.

Social workers told the inspectors that Milton Keynes is committed to providing what children need, for example where children have been placed out of the area for some children Milton Keynes have put in packages of care which has a commitment to up to leaving school. Difficulties for some adopters living out of Milton Keynes in getting support for children have been addressed by Milton Keynes, either by helping get the support required in the other area or by providing the support in house.

Adopters spoken to felt confident that they would be supported well by Milton Keynes. One adopter stated, "Staff are very flexible, we are confident we will be well supported."

Where there are difficulties emerging in placements Milton Keynes offer support and advice and aim to sustain the placement in any way possible where this is appropriate.

When a placement breaks down an independent disruption meeting is held. It was noted that there had been a disruption and that one of the key points, which emerged, was around adoption support, there had also been a complaint about an inadequate support plan. It is pleasing to note that lessons have been learnt from these and that the agency is now to introduce a combined matching report and adoption support plan. The matching element of this document details the child's and adopters needs and identify any areas which may need support; the support element details the support to be provided to each party and the professional responsible for each element.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Birth parents and birth families are involved in adoption plans (NMS 7)
- Birth parents and birth families are involved in maintaining the child's heritage (NMS 8)
- The Adoption agency supports birth parents and families (NMS 9)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 7,8,9

There is a clear commitment to supporting birth parents and involving them in adoption plans.

EVIDENCE:

There was feedback from a small sample of two birth parents. One parent was interviewed and a questionnaire was completed and returned by another.

The agency has a service level agreement with the St Francis Children's Society to provide independent birth counselling and support to birth parents and birth family members. St Francis is a voluntary adoption service which operates from premises in Milton Keynes

The manager of this agency was interviewed as part of this inspection and she stated that Milton Keynes is a "good partner, the emphasis (of the practice) is on quality not quantity." And that the managers are "prepared to support the independence of the work." Despite extensive advertising and arranging transport for interested birth parents to attend St Francis's premises, sadly the take up of this service is reported to have been slow but has slowly increased. Evaluation questionnaires have been developed for social workers and birth relatives and the responses aid the development of the service so that more birth families feel able to access the help available. Questionnaires for other professional referrers are to be developed in order that their views are also considered in the development of the service. It is also planned that a birth mothers group is established; it is hoped that this will begin in October 2005.

Milton Keynes has also commissioned the Post Adoption Centre to assist birth families. The post adoption centre provides a service in Milton Keynes which is open to any person affected by adoption.

Where the above services are not taken up Milton Keynes ensures that birth parents have support via a worker from the agency. A birth parent was interviewed and this parent was very satisfied with the service received. Counselling had been offered at an early stage and although declined at the time had subsequently occurred; the parent stated that this had been very helpful. There is a plan for letterbox contact; this was stated by the parent as being very well planned and that help was provided to write letters and the letterbox coordinator was always available to talk. Direct contact arrangements were also in place and the parent reported a high level of support, including funding, was provided so that the contact could go ahead. The parent stated, "I am happy to see my kids safe and happy; the adopters made me feel part of the family."

The birth parent questionnaire completed showed that overall the service had been good; it was stated "overall the service was helpful and fair" but that "I have had problems contacting some people, being able to contact relevant people would be a help."

There is an effective letterbox system in place; the letterbox contact coordinator was described by an external professional as being "excellent".

In the event of a parent with specific needs requiring support, the agency has good links with the disability team and this team will assist with support for parents.

While it is stated that birth parents are encouraged to read and sign the form E report there was little evidence noted that this was occurring.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- There is a clear written statement of the aims and objectives of the adoption agency and the adoption agency ensures that it meets those aims and objectives (NMS 1)
- The agency provides clear written information for prospective adopters (NMS 3)
- The manager has skills to carry on or manage the adoption agency (NMS 14)
- The adoption agency is managed effectively and efficiently (NMS 16)
- The agency is monitored and controlled as specified (NMS 17)
- The staff are organised and managed effectively (NMS 20)
- The agency has sufficient staff with the right skills / experience (NMS 21)
- The agency is a fair and competent employer (NMS 22)
- The agency provides training for staff (NMS 23)
- Case records for children and prospective / approved adopters are comprehensive and accurate (NMS 25)
- The agency provides access to records as appropriate (NMS 26)
- The agency's administrative records processes are appropriate (NMS 27)
- The agency maintains personnel files for members of staff and members of adoption panels (NMS 28)
- The premises used by the adoption agency are suitable for purpose (NMS 29)
- The adoption agency is financially viable (NMS 30, Voluntary Adoption Agency only)
- The adoption agency has robust financial processes (NMS 31)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s)

1,3,14,16,17,20,21,22,23,25,26,27,28,29,

The agency is satisfactorily managed. The arrangements for clerical support needs review and further development of some policy and procedure documents are required. This will enable workers to further develop the good service provided to children and adopters.

EVIDENCE:

There is a statement of purpose in place which meets regulation. However, the document is a bulky one and not easy to read; it would benefit from some of the information being summarised, such as the information on complaints.

The statement had been updated and reviewed by the children's services management group and the corporate parenting panel. The statement is made available to all staff and other interested people.

The service provides children with a copy of The British Fostering and Adoption Association children's guide to which has been added information about the service Milton Keynes provides. The manager had recognised that this guide is not suitable for children of all ages and will be developing a guide that will be of more value to a wider range of children.

The CSCI address contained in the statement and guide needs to be amended from the local CSCI office to the adoption team so that any person who wishes to discuss an adoption issue is able to speak to an adoption inspector or manager.

The written information provided to adopters consisted of the British Association for Adoption and Fostering booklet, Adoption Advice Notes, and application forms; the adoption service is developing a more service specific booklet which contains information relevant to Milton Keynes and Milton Keynes children.

There is not a written recruitment plan in respect of the recruitment of adopters. The manager should consider developing such a plan, either in conjunction with the consortia, or on a local basis. This is particularly relevant to Milton Keynes due to there being a small but growing ethnic minority community in and around Milton Keynes.

It was clear from the evidence viewed and the interviews undertaken that people are welcomed from a variety of backgrounds. This is an indication of the non-discriminatory and positive approach of the agency to recruitment.

There is a system whereby prospective adopters can be fast tracked where it seems likely they could provide a placement for a child or children waiting for an adoptive home; this system should be formalised in writing to provide social workers with clarity about how to progress such assessments.

All enquirers wishing to adopt a child from another country are referred to PACT, which undertakes all inter country assessments on behalf of Milton Keynes.

The adoption manager has an appropriate qualification in social work and will complete the NVQ in management at level 5 in November 2005. She has

considerable experience in working with children and started work in the adoption field in October 2003 when she joined the adoption team as acting manager. She was appointed as team manager on a full time permanent basis in July 2004. She works closely with the Adoption and Fostering Development Manager who splits his thirty-hour post between adoption and fostering issues and is the adoption adviser to panel.

The adoption agency is satisfactorily managed overall. There are clear arrangements in place when the manager is absent. The social workers described a number of changes over the past few years in respect of the management arrangements, but now feel that the management team is "supportive", "good at decision making" "accessible, approachable and caring" and that the team feels "positive and settled." The evidence was that communication is good both within the team and across teams.

The executive side of the council are kept informed through an annual report and regular; written reports should be provided to the executive on a six monthly basis to ensure that a robust approach to monitoring adoption work continues to be high on this agenda.

As is the case for many local authorities recruitment to children social work teams is difficult. The staff shortages in these teams had begun to impact on the adoption work. It was decided that for each child for whom a full care order has been granted the case would be transferred to a worker on the adoption team. At the time of the inspection there had not been a case transfer to the adoption team. The social workers across the teams were anxious about how this change, at what they view as a crucial stage of the process, will impact on the children. The managers were aware of the social workers anxiety about this. This situation will need close monitoring to ensure that the outcomes for children are not compromised.

There are a range of recruitment and retention initiatives in place. These include, financial enhancements, a key holder housing scheme and an excellent package of post qualifying training.

There is a web link for prospective adopters and staff to FYNE, a publication for the gay community. There are also two support groups for the workers, one for black and ethnic minority workers and one for gay and lesbian workers. Social workers stated that there was a high level of peer support.

The adoption social workers confirmed that they have regular formal supervision and team meetings are held on a regular basis. There is an annual appraisal system in operation. Informal supervision is available on a daily basis; as stated above the social workers described the managers, at all levels, as being approachable and accessible.

Seven out of the eight social workers employed on the adoption team have a PQ1 and four of these have gained the child care award. Further post qualifying opportunities include access to a Systemic therapy course and a play therapy course run by Luton University. The social workers confirmed that overall the training opportunities in Milton Keynes are good. However, workers from the children's teams spoke of occasions whereby they had been unable to attend planned sessions due to the pressure of work.

It was noted that some workers were unclear about the actions to take in the event of a child protection concern arising about a child placed for adoption. Refresher training in this area is not routinely carried out and a refresher course must be provided to staff in the use of the procedures. This will ensure that all staff are confident in responding to child protection concerns.

The Child Protection procedures need to contain specific reference to children placed for adoption and the contact details of the CSCI.

The clerical support is provided to the adoption team via a private company, which the council has a contract with. The calibre of the personnel is not in question, but these arrangements mean that, except from the panel administrators, there are no individual staff dedicated to adoption work. The impact of this on the adoption work is that some administrative staff, assigned to carry out work for the adoption service, have little or no understanding of the adoption processes and the impact adoption can have on individuals. In addition to this social workers clearly had little clarity about the roles and responsibilities of the clerical staff. A number of sources were of the view that the current arrangements were not meeting the needs of the adoption service and this situation must be urgently reviewed.

The clerical staff, who are employed through an external agency, had not all been subject to a CRB check. Only staff who have been subject to statutory checks can work for the purposes of the adoption service. Checks of the managers and social workers personnel files showed that all required checks had been carried out prior their appointment.

Milton Keynes has introduced a new financial system. It was reported that there were difficulties in generating payments through this system and this needs to be evaluated to ensure that all staff who are authorised to use the system receive effective support until they are confident in its use. This is of concern as it came to light that some adopters and some speakers had not been paid on time and some staff were not using the system to claim legitimate expenses due to the finding the system complicated.

The adopters files sampled were well ordered and contained records of the supervisor's decision making. The original notes made during assessment visits were not on file and it would be good practice to retain these notes for future reference. The adoption files viewed seemed to be in order, bearing in mind

the stage each case was at. It would be a good idea if photo's contained on these files were named and dated. While there are written access to records, case recording and audit system documents in place none of these documents were adoption specific and these need to be developed. There was also little evidence noted that case files are subject to regular audit by managers.

IT systems are backed up on a daily basis; the system in respect to children placed for adoption was to be updated imminently to ensure these records are subject to special security.

All formal complaints are referred to the council complaints officer; the manager should keep a record of all complaints whether they are informal or formal in order that she can monitor the progress of each complaint.

There was no written disaster plan specific to the adoption service. This needs to be developed to ensure that workers know the arrangements in the event of a major incident.

The archive system for adoption files is a work in progress; this work is crucial in birth records work and needs to be progressed as a matter of urgency. There is an archive storage facility; a documented risk assessment in respect to fire and other risks was not available. Such an assessment should be included in the disaster recovery plan.

The office facilities while in a central position were of a poor quality; this was being addressed with a full refurbishment programme about to commence. Security arrangements were in place; some social workers praised the security staff for their diligence in carrying out their role

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 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>
No NMS are mapped to this outcome	

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
7	3
8	3
9	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	3
4	2
5	3
10	2
11	3
12	3
13	3
15	3
19	3
24	N/A

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
No NMS are mapped to this outcome	

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
6	3
18	2

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	3
3	2
14	3
16	3
17	2
20	2
21	2
22	3
23	2
25	1
26	2
27	2
28	1
29	2
30	N/A
31	N/A

N/A

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, Voluntary Adoption and the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2003 or Local Authority Adoption Service Regulations 2003 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action
1.	23	9 of LAAS regulations 2003	The child protection procedures must be amended to include specific reference to children placed for adoption and the contact details of the CSCI. Staff must receive training in the procedures.	31/10/05
2.	21	10 of LAAS regulations 2003	The arrangements for clerical support carrying out work for the purposes of the adoption service must be urgently reviewed. The CSCI must be informed of the outcome of this review.	By 30/11/05
3.	28	11 of LAAS regulations 2003	All clerical staff undertaking adoption work tasks must be subject to the statutory checks.	By 31/10/05
4.	25	14 AAR 1983	The archiving arrangements for adoption files must progress as planned and the fire risk assessment of the storage facilities should be documented.	subject to ongoing monitoring by CSCI

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.	4	Clear guidance should be produced for social workers about the four issues identified with the assessemnt process, as detailed in the main body of the report. When produced panel should be notified of the guidance issued.
2.	4	The manager should consider how to best ensure that all Form E reports are of a satisfactory quality on a consistant basis.
3.	10	The panel policies and procedures should include the policy and procedure for appointing the panel chair.
4.	18	A medical adviser should be appointed to panel as soon as is possible.
5.	11	The induction process for new panel members should be formalised, in writing.
6.	7	The agency needs to ensure that in each case birth parents are given the chance to read the information presented to the panel about them and the parents response should be clearly recorded.
7.	1	The CSCI address contained in the statement of purpose and children's guide needs to be amended from the local CSCI office to the adoption team head office. The manager should consider condensing the contents of the statement.
8.	3	There should be a written recruitment plan developed in respect of the recruitment of adopters.
9.	3	The system for fast tracking prospective adopters should be formalised in writing to provide social workers with clarity about how to progress such assessments.
10.	17	Written reports should be provided to the executive on a six monthly basis
11.	21	The situation in respect of adoption workers case working children's cases needs to be closely monitored to ensure that the outcomes for children are not compromised.
12.	20	The newly introduced financial systems should be subject to close monitoring and consideration should be given to providing social workers with training in using the system.
13.	28	Notes of assessment visits to adopters made by social workers should be retained on file.
14.	26, 27	Written access to records, case recording and audit system documents specific to the adoption records need to be developed.
15.	27	The manager should keep a record of all complaints whether they are informal or formal in order that she can monitor the progress of each complaint.
16.	29	The manager should develop a written disaster plan specific to the adoption service.
17.		

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