



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

### **NCH - South West Fostering Project**

**Weir House  
93 Whitby Road  
St Phillips  
Bristol  
BS4 4AR**

*Lead Inspector*  
**Sam Chisholm**

*Announced Inspection*  
**9th January 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

Reader Information	
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** NCH - South West Fostering Project

**Address** Weir House  
93 Whitby Road  
St Phillips  
Bristol  
BS4 4AR

**Telephone number** 020 7704 7000

**Fax number** 0117 3005365

**Email address**

**Provider Web address**

**Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)** NCH Action for Children

**Name of registered manager (if applicable)** Mrs Joyce Mary Jenkin

**Type of registration** Fostering Agencies

**No. of places registered (if applicable)** 0

**Category(ies) of registration, with number of places**

# **SERVICE INFORMATION**

## **Conditions of registration:**

**Date of last inspection**      24th February 2005

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

NCH South West Fostering Service has 18 approved foster carers providing Long-Term placements for 20 children and young people, including some carers who have been recruited to provide respite care.

The service matches carers who generally live within a hour's drive of Bristol with children and young people from around the country who need Long-Term placements.

# SUMMARY

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

This inspection was carried out through discussion with staff, managers, carers and children, visits to carers and children, scrutiny of records and feedback from questionnaires received from carers and children.

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

The service has a very thorough matching process aimed at promoting placement stability. Thorough recruitment and selection procedures are used to find suitable staff and carers for the service.

The panel is well organised and thorough. The service actively seeks to recruit a diverse range of carers to meet the individual needs of children and young people.

Carers, children and young people receive a good level of support from the service.

A good level of training is provided for carers.

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

A matching process log has been created to show carers the process used. Staff also aim to prepare carers for a potentially lengthy matching process from the outset.

Staff have had additional support to improve IT skills.

Carers have received additional training in record keeping.

Suitable systems and secure storage facilities are now in place for transporting confidential records from one location to another.

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

All appropriate Looked After Children (LAC) paperwork and Personal Education Plans must be obtained from the placing authorities and shared with carers.

Central records of attainment and exclusion levels need to be kept.

All notifiable events' reports need to be sent to the Commission.

A central record of incidents of bullying is recommended.

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 outcomes these Standards are:**

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

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

## **JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are**

12

The fostering service promotes the health and development of children appropriately.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Evidence was seen on the Children's files that sufficient health information had been provided to the foster carers and appropriate links made with health services.

Issues of hygiene form part of the safe care plans that were seen completed by each foster carer. NCH also provides additional training for carers on a range of health related issues. Evidence was seen of courses offered on sexual health and drugs and young people. Evidence that carers had attended training courses was seen on their files.

# Staying Safe

## **The intended outcomes these Standards are:**

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

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

## **JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are**

3, 6, 8, 9, 15 and 30.

The service uses appropriate recruitment and checking procedures to secure suitable staff. All staff are suitably qualified.

The service provides suitable carers with safe and comfortable homes that are suitably equipped for the needs of the children placed there. Carers receive appropriate training and guidance in health and safety matters.

The service has a very thorough matching process.

Suitable procedures and records are in place in relation to child protection training, safe care guidelines and collation of allegations. The service needs to ensure that all Looked After Children (LAC) paperwork is obtained from the placing authorities. They also need to ensure that all notifiable events reports are sent to the Commission. A central record of bullying incidents is recommended.

The fostering panel is well organised and thorough in carrying out its function.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Personnel records for the two most recently recruited members of staff were seen. These showed that appropriate checks (including CRB) had been made, and satisfactory written and follow-up telephone references had been received.

The records also showed that appropriate recruitment and selection processes had been used.

All social workers in the team are qualified and evidence of qualifications was seen on the two staff files seen.

The carers' homes were seen to provide appropriate safe, clean, well furnished space for the children placed there. The children had their own bedrooms containing appropriate furnishings, storage and entertainment items.

All carers attend first aid training within 2 years of approval and evidence of this was seen on their files. Manual Handling and medication training are supplied in-house when needed. Health and Safety checklists were seen on the carers' files and guidance is also provided in the Foster Carers' Handbook.

The agency makes Long-Term planned placements and therefore has a very thorough matching process. Staff explained that once carers are approved, appropriate placements are sought for them through the Family Finders newsletter and profiles from Local Authorities. Full information is sought about children prior to meetings with their social worker. The agency has a comprehensive matching pro-forma to guide staff in considering possible matches. Staff send a detailed report to the placing authority's Permanency Panel. When a match is approved the agency then creates a carefully considered gradual process of introductory visits, links with schools and health providers. Evidence of this process was seen on files. A copy of the matching pro-forma was also seen to be very comprehensive.

The agency has an appropriate child protection policy and procedure. These were seen in the Foster Carers' handbook. Age appropriate information about this was also seen in the children's guide. Information about safe care and corporal punishment were both seen in the Foster Carers' Handbook and Safe Care policies were seen on each of the Carers' files. All carers attend Safeguarding Children training and may additionally attend other related courses, such as Sexual Exploitation of Young People. Evidence of the training attended was seen on the carers' files and Training Record for 2005.

Scrutiny of files showed that for 2 children Placement Plan part 1 and 2 had not been passed to the service of the placing authority.

The service needs to ensure that the carers and themselves receive all relevant LAC documentation prior to or at the time of placement.

Comprehensive guidance on bullying was seen in both the Foster Carers' handbook and the Children's Guide. The agency does not currently have a system for collating information on instances of bullying and it is recommended that this is created.

An appropriate record of allegations and notifiable events was seen to be kept. The agency must ensure that all notifiable events reports are sent to the Commission. Advice about this was given during the inspection. The panel was observed to be well organised and democratic. With a good level of participation by all members. Appropriate discussion of relevant issues took place and suitable decisions made.

# Enjoying and Achieving

## **The intended outcomes these Standards are:**

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

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

## **JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are**

7 & 13.

The service values diversity throughout its provision, particularly in recruitment of carers and support of children's individual needs.

The service makes a good effort to promote educational achievement but needs to keep a central record of attainment and exclusion levels. They also need to ensure they obtain Personal Educational Plans (PEPS) from the placing authorities.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The agency has an appropriate Equality and Diversity policy contained within their Statement of Purpose and Foster Carers' Handbook. They actively seek to recruit a diversity of carers to meet the needs of the children they place. This was evidenced by their publicity material and the range of places and events they had attended to recruit carers. They also have one social worker with a lead responsibility for recruiting black and ethnic minority carers. As a result of these efforts they have several dual heritage and same sex couples who foster for them.

They have also managed to recruit carers with a range of relevant professional backgrounds in youth work, health visiting, social work, community work and teaching. These skills are often shared with other carers at support group meetings.

The social worker co-ordinating the Children and Young People's group showed evidence of efforts she had made to include all of the children in the group's activities. This had been rewarded with a good attendance rate.

Carers were able to show evidence of activities they had supported children to attend to develop their individual interests.

One member of staff has a lead role in promoting education. She has received accreditation, following training from the Advisory Centre for Education. She provides support to carers in advocating for young people in relation to education. Individual attainment levels are recorded at young people's reviews, but a central record of all attainment and exclusion levels is needed.

Five of the six children's files seen did not include Personal Education Plans. Staff explained that they had chased placing authorities for these and evidence was seen of this. Bristol Local Authority faxed through two PEPs during the inspection. These dated from April 2005. The service needs to ensure that they obtain PEPs for all children placed with them and that this information is also shared with carers.

# **Making a Positive Contribution**

## **The intended outcomes these Standards are:**

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

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

## **JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are**

10 & 11.

The service promotes contact arrangements for the children and young people in its care.

The service promotes consultation with children, young people and foster carers.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Appropriate information was seen in the Foster Carers' Handbook about promoting contact. Evidence was seen in the carers' weekly recordings of contact. The placement agreements outline whether carers send invoices for contact expenses to NCH or the placing authority. Training around contact issues is provided for carers and will be offered again in 2006. Evidence was seen on the children's files that they are able to express their views about contact in their reviews and to their carers for inclusion in their weekly recordings.

Training is provided to carers in promoting children's views. Recent training offered includes managing school transitions and external training in advocacy skills. A copy of the latter was seen. Carers spoken to explained and showed documentary evidence of the ways in which they had advocated for the children placed with them in relation to health and education issues.

One support group session per year is used to consult with foster carers. The minutes of the most recent one were seen to be satisfactory. Copies of children's feedback on their placements were seen on Carers' files as part of their Annual Review information given to the Fostering Panel.

Feedback from children and carers indicated that they felt able to make their views heard by the service.



# **Achieving Economic Wellbeing**

## **The intended outcomes these Standards are:**

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

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

## **JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are**

29

The fostering service pays carers an appropriate allowance and agreed expenses.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Evidence was seen on carers' files that they receive an appropriate allowance and expenses. This has been reviewed since the last inspection. Carers confirmed that they receive prompt payment.

Information about the allowance and expenses is contained within the Foster Carers' Handbook. This was seen to be appropriate.

# Management

## **The intended outcomes these Standards are:**

- There is a clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and the fostering service ensures that they meet those aims and objectives.(NMS 1)
- The fostering service is managed by those with the appropriate skills and experience. (NMS 2)
- The fostering service is monitored and controlled as specified. (NMS 4)
- The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.(NMS 5)
- Staff are organised and managed effectively.(NMS 16)
- The fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff.(NMS 17)
- The fostering service is a fair and competent employer.(NMS 18)
- There is a good quality training programme. (NMS 19)
- All staff are properly accountable and supported.(NMS 20)
- The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.(NMS 21)
- Foster 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, and 24 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.**

## **JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are**

17, 21 and 24.

The service has an adequate number of suitably qualified and experienced staff.

There is a clear and appropriate strategy for working with and supporting carers.

The case records for children were complete apart from the areas formerly mentioned in this report.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Evidence gained through discussions with staff, scrutiny of staff files and information provided in the pre-inspection questionnaire, demonstrated that the agency has sufficient staff with appropriate qualifications and experience to deliver a satisfactory service. The team also has a good level of staff retention. The agency uses the Fostering Network Competency Based Assessment format for assessing potential carers. Copies of these were seen on carers' files and the content met the requirement of NMS 17. An appropriate written strategy for the management and support of carers was seen. Carers' annual reviews were observed to be appropriately conducted at panel. Staff reported that communication between themselves and placing authorities can be variable.

The children's case records were seen to be appropriate, apart from some missing LAC paperwork. Carers demonstrated suitable secure storage facilities for records that they keep and appropriate collections of memorabilia for the children. The service is also contracting an agency called Catchpoint to provide support and training in Life Story work for the coming year.

# 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>
<b>12</b>	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>3</b>	3
<b>6</b>	3
<b>8</b>	4
<b>9</b>	2
<b>15</b>	3
<b>30</b>	3

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

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

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

MANAGEMENT	
<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>	X
<b>20</b>	X
<b>21</b>	3
<b>22</b>	X
<b>23</b>	X
<b>24</b>	2
<b>25</b>	X
<b>26</b>	X
<b>27</b>	X
<b>28</b>	X
<b>32</b>	X

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

No

## 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	FS9	17	Ensure all LAC paperwork is obtained from placing authorities.	09/01/06
2	FS9	43	Ensure all notifiable events are reported to CSCI.	09/01/06
3	FS13	16	Ensure a PEP is obtained for each child for their placing authority.	09/01/06
4	FS13	16	Maintain and monitor a central record of attainment and exclusion levels.	30/06/06

## 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	FS9	Maintain and monitor a central record of incidents of bullying.

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

Bristol North LO  
300 Aztec West  
Almondsbury  
South Glos  
BS32 4RG

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