



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

ADOPTION SERVICE

Stockton on Tees Borough Council Adoption Service

**Council Offices, Children, Education & Social
Care
Town Square
Billingham
TS23 2LW**

Lead Inspector
Sean White

Announced Inspection
20th September 2005 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

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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 Stockton on Tees Borough Council Adoption Service

Address Council Offices, Children, Education & Social Care
Town Square
Billingham
TS23 2LW

Telephone number 01642 397212

Fax number 01642 393371

Email address

Provider Web address

Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable) Stockton on Tees Borough Council

Name of registered manager (if applicable) Jacqueline Ward

Type of registration Local Auth Adoption Service

No. of places registered (if applicable) 0

Category(ies) of registration, with number of places

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection Not applicable: this was the first inspection of the service by the CSCI.

Brief Description of the Service:

The adoption service operated by Stockton Borough Council is an agency constituted under current legislation. It is managed within the Children & Young People's Operational Service, which is part of Children, Education and Social Care within the council and is located in Billingham. The services provided cover all aspects of adoption work including the recruitment, preparation, assessment and approval of adopters, matching and placing children in adoptive families and supporting placements. The service also provides, or arranges, support services to anyone affected by adoption, the management of indirect contact arrangements and assessments of people wishing to adopt a child from overseas - although this is very infrequent. The service is managed by the Team Manager, Child Placement and is an integral part of the Family Placement Service; all workers are Adoption & Fostering Officers.

SUMMARY

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

The agency prepared well for this, the first inspection of the adoption service. The arrangements made were efficiently organised and all pre-inspection material was produced in a timely way; this enabled the inspection to be well coordinated and conducted in an unobtrusive a way as possible.

The inspection was carried out over three days by two inspectors. During this time all necessary documentation was examined - including case files, personnel information and general administration/policies & procedures – and interviews were conducted with key managers and staff, plus an elected member of the council. The adoption panel was observed and discussions were held with four adoptive families; a meeting also took place with birth parents.

Questionnaires were received from adopters/prospective adopters (8), placing social workers (6), a professional advisor and a birth relative. Comments made in these questionnaires are included in this report.

What the service does well:

In most areas this was found to be a well-managed, conscientious and highly motivated service that operated in a way that tried to ensure that the many and varied needs of children requiring adoption were met. The approach to the recruitment, preparation and assessment of people who wish to adopt was thorough, well informed and inclusive. The quality of preparation material and assessment reports was of a very good standard and ensured that the adoption panel had well-presented and comprehensive information from which they were able to make well-informed judgements. The panel, which is independently chaired, was generally well managed and clearly undertook its responsibilities with care and thoughtfulness. Adopters were almost unanimous in their appreciation of the approach of the service with comments such as, "Excellent social worker who kept in contact throughout" and " We found the social worker, from preparation through to assessment, professional, kind and considerate". There was also supporting evidence from professional advisers – "I have a high regard for the quality of the work carried out – especially assessments" and social workers, "...impressive reports".

The levels of knowledge, skill and expertise in the agency (both managers and staff), underpinned by a passionate and conscientious approach, demonstrated a service that was very successful in undertaking its responsibilities.

Similarly, the matching process was carefully managed with a very thorough approach to ensuring that the most appropriate placements were made. The agency has a very low disruption rate.

The information provided for people considering adoption was very clear, welcoming and enabled people to feel suitably informed about details and processes. This was backed up by a prompt and encouraging early response from the service that adopters found very important, and in at least two instances determined their choice of using Stockton in preference over others.

The commitment to meeting children's needs was evident throughout the department, including senior managers, operational managers and social workers and underpinned by elected members through a corporate parenting strategy. The relationships between the adoption service and wider children's services were well managed and indicated a cooperative and mutually respectful approach to achieving the best possible outcomes for children requiring adoptive placements. The expertise of adoption workers – and how this was shared - was praised frequently by children's social workers, "...always helpful in answering my queries" and "...always ready to offer support and advice", were two comments among many.

The approach of the service to supporting adoptive placements was also positive and well managed. Social workers who have assessed adopters continue to be their support worker through matching, introductions and throughout the placement until an adoption order has been made (and beyond if appropriate). Adopters were aware of the support services available, "...we were clear right from the outset", and appreciated the input provided, "We see out social worker regularly and she always returns our calls". The agency is also involved in providing sophisticated packages of support to families who adopted some time ago. The availability of specialist advisers enhances the support systems although some development in this area is needed (see below).

Although not particularly actively involved in working with birth parents it was clear that there were sufficiently thorough systems in place to ensure that independent advice is readily available for them through an arrangement with an independent agency. It was also evident that birth parents are encouraged and enabled to be involved in the plans for adoption of their children – and their representations taken seriously and acted upon. It was also evident that they are involved in the development of life-story books.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable; this was the first inspection of the service.

What they could do better:

The agency was fully aware of most of the areas where improvements were necessary. The manager had undertaken a thorough self-assessment prior to the inspection and indicated a clear commitment to development and improvements.

Although the department's approach to ensuring children's needs was central to all decision-making and planning, the overall quality of adoption assessment reports (Forms E) was variable. There needs to be a concerted effort made to improve quality and consistency in this area.

There also needs to be a more coordinated and targeted approach to recruiting adopters for those children where finding a placement has been, or is considered to be, difficult.

The adoption panel, although well managed overall, needs to make improvements in some areas. It should not consider cases when full and complete information is not available and should give more opportunity for applicants attending to be involved in its proceedings. Panel minutes should be constructed in a way that provides clearer information on why recommendations have been made – particularly in respect of reasons for matching. The panel venue is not welcoming or appropriate for its business and responsibilities, particularly in respect of attending applicants.

Adoption support, although well organised to meet its responsibilities, should be developed further; greater, better organised relationships with CAMHS, in particular, would be required.

Whilst there was some very positive evidence of life-story work being done, it was also clear that the resources available to undertake such work were not as good as they should be. Social workers often did not have the time to do life-story work and gave it less priority than other areas of their responsibilities; this needs to be addressed and acted upon.

The overall administration of the service, as indicated above, was of a generally high standard, however, there were some areas where improvements would enhance the service overall. The case files for adopters and children's adoption files should be subject to a particular protocol and auditing system that is different from the corporate model – which does not fulfil the needs of these specialist files. This would overcome some errors and mis-filing that were found. The administrative resources for the service are becoming increasingly stretched and are insufficient to meet the demands of the agency.

Records in respect of adoption panel members did not include all the information required by regulations and standards.

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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Management

Scoring of Outcomes

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)
- Adoptors 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 the following standard(s):

2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 19.

The approach and practices of the agency are aimed at ensuring children are placed within suitable families who have been assessed as having the qualities to meet their needs. This enables children to grow in environments where their welfare is protected and promoted and which keeps them safe.

EVIDENCE:

The recruitment of suitable adopters by the agency is based on a sound understanding of the needs of children requiring placements and a satisfactory written plan. There is a range of general strategies in place – advertising, poster campaigns, leaflets etc. – supplemented by more specific methods, ie for difficult to place children/sibling groups. Although the agency recruits sufficient adopters overall it would find benefit in adopting a clearer 'marketing' strategy for those groups of children where difficulties in finding placements have been experienced.

The agency demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring that children were placed with families that could best meet their needs. This was achieved, in the main, through careful planning and matching children with families who had been selected on the basis of their ability to provide appropriate placements. Consistently well-presented and written assessment reports (Forms F) on

adopters make a significant contribution to effective matching along with careful introductions and placement support. Assessment reports produced in respect of children (Forms E) were not as good, however, and there should to be some efforts made to raise standards in this area. Some reports were found to be composites of court reports that did not reflect the demands of what an effective Form E should represent and it was evident that authors were not fully informed of their purpose; training would be advantageous to address this. There have been very few disruptions in recent times (which demonstrates successful matching and placement) but one case did raise some issues that the agency should address, particularly in respect of inter-agency communication and providing up to date information in respect of children. In the main, however, it was evident that full and up to date information on children is provided and children (where they are able) have their views taken into consideration.

The preparation and assessment of adopters was of a high standard and it was clear that a thorough and focused approach is used to ensure that the people approved are able to meet the needs of children requiring adoptive placements. The preparation groups (four whole days) are well structured and the programme provides for a thorough introduction to the adoption process. Adopters reported consistent satisfaction with the preparation groups, "...workshops excellent", said one family and the assessment process was reported as being professional, thorough and sensitive. Comments made about the home studies included, "Social worker was lovely and really professional" and "Social workers are fantastic and do a really good job". As already mentioned in the previous paragraph, Forms F showed a thorough and analytical approach to assessment; all other aspects of the agency's approach (referral, initial visits and evaluation of process and practice) complement this thoroughness.

The adoption panel has clear policies and procedural guidelines that inform its functions and operations. It is satisfactorily constituted and sits at appropriately scheduled times to deal with the amount of business presented to it; there is also the facility to arrange for extra panels whenever this is found to be operationally necessary. An independent person chairs the panel and the membership reflected a broad range of experiences and qualities. New members are suitably recruited and inducted into their roles and the process includes observing a panel before they take up their duties and each member routinely prepares a confidentiality statement.

The panel that was observed demonstrated a thoroughness of approach and was clearly committed to ensuring that positive outcomes for children were at the forefront of its operation. It was skilfully chaired and members made insightful contributions to the proceedings; the recommendations it made were based on a full analysis of the material presented to it. Applicants are routinely invited to attend the panel and respondents to questionnaires – and people who were interviewed – said that they were generally happy that they had

attended and had been received and treated with sensitivity and warmth. "The panel were [sic] lovely, they made you feel at ease", said one couple.

The administrative and organisational arrangements for the panel were efficient and of a very good standard.

There are some issues, nevertheless, that the agency should address to improve the overall quality of the panel performance, namely:

The venue is not very conducive to undertaking panel business in a welcoming and inclusive way; the Council Chamber is somewhat intimidating. The waiting facilities for people attending are poor.

Applicants' attendance at the panel is somewhat perfunctory; being invited in at the end of the item, often when a recommendation decision has already been agreed, does not give full justice to the proceedings. One adopter when asked about experience of panel said, "Brief".

Panel minutes are not as clear as they should be in respect of specific details as to why a match has been recommended. It is acknowledged, however, that training has been arranged for the panel administrator.

Although a panel has a responsibility to avoid delays wherever possible, it should not make recommendations to approve adopters 'subject to checks being completed'. Business should only be on the agenda when the assessment and checks are full and complete.

Nevertheless, the panel demonstrated an overall competence that ensured safe decisions could be made. Decisions were made in a timely way following the panel's recommendations and approved adopters received their written confirmation within a few days. The agency should note that the word 'decision' does not appear on either the decision pro-forma or the letter confirming approval.

The recruitment and selection practices in the council are, in the main, satisfactorily thorough. This ensures that the people appointed to management and practitioner posts are suitable to be involved in an adoption agency. All necessary checks are carried out, including CRB disclosures, and references are verified by telephone and recorded. Although there is a system in place to undertake CRB checks every three years on all staff, the process is somewhat crude and would benefit from a more robust arrangement.

The workers in the agency were all suitably qualified and all had experience of social work with children. Although most of the workers were very experienced and long-serving staff – who demonstrated a significant level of skill and understanding of adoption matters – there were some workers who were less experienced. It was clear, however, that the processes of induction and training of new, less experienced, workers was very carefully managed to ensure their competencies and knowledge were developed in the most appropriate way. Approved adopters were keen to express their appreciation of the skills and professionalism of workers saying, for instance, "When doing the

assessment [the social worker] was very clever, helping us to provide very sensitive information as carefully as possible”, and, “We were given loads of help and advice about some of the more complicated things to do with adoption.” It has been mentioned earlier in this section about the quality of the assessment reports; these demonstrated a skilled and knowledgeable approach to adoption and provided evidence of a group of workers who were clearly very able to undertake their responsibilities. The agency has already met the targets for workers having achieved the Post Qualifying Award and it continues to be committed to providing this opportunity for all staff – and to providing facilities to manage time effectively so that it can be pursued realistically.

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 the following standard(s):

6, 18

The agency provides adequate support services for adopters, backed up by good specialist advice. The service would be improved with better arrangements with other support agencies.

EVIDENCE:

There is a pack provided for all approved adopters that gives a range of information that will be useful throughout the matching, introduction and placement process. All approved adopters retain their assessing social worker who continues to provide support until an adoption order is made; comment was made about the conscientious approach of social workers, “[the social worker] keeps in touch and is always there when needed”, and it was clear that supportive relationships have been built. The agency is also increasingly involved in providing support to long-standing adoptive placements where there are difficulties being experienced; some of these arrangements involve sophisticated packages of support using a range of specialist input. There was some suggestion, however, that the range of support services available is not fully understood by all approved adopters, in particular when family members are approved.

Although, as indicated above, the agency works with a range of people and organisations that can assist in the support of adoptive placements, there is some development work required to establish a fully integrated approach to adoption support. A more formal arrangement with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, beyond that which provides a fast-track initial consultation for looked after children, should be developed (as is already planned) to provide for a more integrated approach when this level of support is found to be appropriate.

Nevertheless, the current arrangements in general provide for a satisfactory level of support arrangements to meet the needs of adopters who have children placed with them and for those approved but still awaiting placement.

There is a Medical Adviser on the adoption panel and a Legal Adviser to it; the agency has a protocol for the use of advisers that governs their role. It was clear that invaluable advice and support is provided from these sources; social workers said that advice is readily available and that both these individuals provided them with an accessible and knowledgeable resource. It was said during one interview that the advisers, "...had a good handle on adoption matters". Further advice and support is available from an Educational Psychologist.

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 the following standard(s):

7, 8, 9.

The agency makes some good arrangements to enable birth families to contribute to and be involved in their children's adoption, and to support them through it. These arrangements however, were not consistent which results in a somewhat patchy service overall.

EVIDENCE:

There was clear, albeit limited (because of a small response from birth family questionnaires), evidence that birth parents are encouraged and enabled to be involved in the planning for their children's futures when plans for adoption have been agreed; this includes being invited to attend and contribute to reviews. Opportunities to have their say and express wishes and choices were provided, and considerable efforts are made to fulfil these when making arrangements for adoptive placements. It was said in one instance that the agency provided them with the opportunity to read and comment on what was said about them, but that this may not have been written down.

All birth parents are provided with information about the services offered by a voluntary support agency with which the adoption service has an arrangement; this agency provides independent support for birth families. There was some evidence, however, that all birth parents are not aware of this. The agency should, so far as it is able, ensure that information is readily available to birth families about any support services that they can access and should consider the best means of achieving this; birth parents in distress may not always 'hear' what is said to them, or be suspicious of services promoted by the department.

Some impressive life-story work was seen and it was clear that birth parents had been fully involved in contributing to it. Birth parents confirmed that they had been asked to provide information and photographs to enable a comprehensive record to be constructed. There were some inconsistencies, however, in respect of birth families being involved in maintaining their children's heritage. It was reported by social workers that, although they understood the importance of gathering life-story information and its significance for adopted children, there was often insufficient time in their busy caseloads to give this area prominence or priority. The agency should address this issue and make plans for ensuring that life-story work is a central aspect of the work being undertaken when plans for a child to be adopted have been made.

In addition to the arrangement/contract with a voluntary support agency, the service's social workers also become involved in providing counselling and assistance to birth parents. This occurs when workers have been involved with, and developed a trusting relationship with, birth parents during their children's foster care episodes. The agency has a well-managed contact letterbox system but there was some evidence that not all birth parents were satisfied with the service.

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 the following standard(s):

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

The management of the agency was, in most areas, of a very good standard, which enabled a skilled team of workers to undertake their duties in a well-organised, supportive and well-motivated environment.

EVIDENCE:

The overall management of the agency, both at organisational and team level, was of a very good standard.

The agency has a Statement of Purpose that has been reviewed in recent times and has been formally approved by elected members of the Council. It is a well-structured document that clearly outlines the aims and objectives of the service, its responsibilities and operational practices, and how the agency is structured and managed. The agency uses the BAAF children's guide to adoption with additional material that is specific to Stockton; this is adequate for the purposes of meeting minimum standards but does not do justice to the service. However, the agency is in the process of developing an interactive tool for children who may be, or have been, adopted in the form of a bag that includes toys, dolls and reading material for use by children, their social workers or carers to explore and explain adoption. It was not complete at the time of the inspection but the material seen appeared interesting and innovative.

The approach to providing information for prospective adopters was clear and unequivocal. The information booklet sent to all people who express an interest is comprehensive, easy to read and understand and makes explicit the agency's anti-discriminatory approach to recruitment. It clearly states the eligibility criteria for consideration but is encouraging and welcoming to all members of the community. Information about children requiring adoptive families is included, as is a full explanation of the adoption process. It is also sent out in a very prompt and timely way. Adopters clearly found it useful, with comments such as, "It made a lot of sense and prepared us for the training workshops".

This is a department that clearly places the needs of children at the forefront of its planning and practice and the commitment to pursuing the best possible outcomes for children was very clear. The departmental management, supported by a clear commitment from elected members, gives a clear message of promoting children's best interests; the corporate parenting committee demonstrated a clear commitment of the Council to taking its responsibilities in this area very seriously. It also became very clear that Stockton's approach to staff recruitment, retention and support demonstrated that it was a good employer; staff were very clear that they were happy with their 'lot' and many were keen to state their satisfaction with their employment status and the protection they enjoyed as workers.

The manager of the adoption service is highly motivated, committed and conscientious. She has a sound knowledge and understanding of children's and adoption issues and brings a clear and skilled approach to her management responsibilities. She is held in high esteem both within the adoption service

and across children's services generally – "We get good supervision, she's a good manager", said one member of the team. The manager is appropriately qualified and is imminently expecting to achieve NVQ level 5 in management.

The operational management of the service was supportive and enabling. Workload management and casework supervision were well organised and it was clear that social workers were able to undertake their responsibilities with a clarity of purpose and professional integrity. Underpinning the general management of operations and practice was a thoughtful approach to training and staff development. The arrangements for inducting new, less experienced, workers into the service were, in particular, well organised and sensitive; "We were made to feel welcome and given the opportunity to learn and develop at an appropriate pace" was one comment. The commitment to and resources available for staff pursuing Post Qualifying Awards was also commendable.

The quality of the work undertaken by the service, demonstrated by assessment reports and feedback from adopters, was of a very good standard. The feedback from adopters was almost universally positive, much of it being very complementary indeed - for instance, "We have had a first rate service, social workers are brilliant" and "We would like to take this opportunity to say that staff have been wonderful and professional all the way through" and "We decided on Stockton because of the quality of their approach". The workers were able to demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and understanding of adoption matters along with a strong commitment to undertaking their duties conscientiously. The service's integration into the wider children's service was well managed and it became increasingly evident that the inter-relationships across the department were sound and based on mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities. Information provided by children's social workers showed that there is significant respect for the skills, knowledge and accessibility of adoption workers; "They have a good level of understanding of all processes and will provide advice whenever it is needed", said one.

The quality of case recording, in most cases, was of a good standard. It was possible to 'track' the history of case subjects and the detail contained in records was sufficiently well recorded to enable supervisors to be fully up to date with progress; the inclusion of supervisors' signed and dated supervision decisions added to the overall quality of case monitoring and management. Although there is a corporate file audit system in place, it is only realistically applicable to children's case files; it does not meet the quality assurance needs of adopters' files or children's adoption files. The department should develop a case file protocol for these areas and produce a realistic file management/audit mechanism accordingly. Some of the information found on case files was either mis-filed or inappropriate. However, the overall administration of the service was of a good standard; this is despite the fact that, although the workload is continuously increasing – and will continue to do so – the resources have not been increased. The department should address this issue to ensure that the servicing of the work of the agency is not compromised by an overwhelmed administration section.

The recruitment and selection of workers and panel members was generally of a good standard. There were some minor omissions from the personnel files of workers, although they were, overall, well kept; there was some evidence of internal audits of staff files – although in one instance action had not been taken to rectify a shortfall. The files in respect of panel members did not contain much of the required information and action is required to address this. The system in place for ensuring that CRBs are updated every three years was flawed and requires a more 'foolproof' model putting in place.

The premises are conveniently located in the town centre of Billingham. The facilities are reasonably good and there is sufficient space and equipment for workers to carry out their duties and responsibilities. The maintenance and management of records, including security and back up, were of a satisfactory standard.

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	2

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	2
4	4
5	2
10	3
11	3
12	2
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	

<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
6	2
18	3

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	3
3	4
14	3
16	4
17	3
20	4
21	3
22	3
23	3
25	2
26	1
27	2
28	N/A
29	N/A
30	N/A
31	N/A

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

N/A

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.	28	11(3)(d)	All information required by this regulation must be available in respect of each panel member.	01/01/06

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.	2	A more coordinated and targeted approach should be developed in respect of recruiting families for difficult to place children.
2.	5	Improvements to the consistent quality of Forms E should be made.
3.	12	Panels should not make recommendations when full and complete information is not available; all checks should be complete and verified. Panel minutes should be explicit in outlining why recommendations have been made.
4.	6	Greater cooperation with specialist agencies should be developed to improve the overall support systems available to adopters.
5.	9	Arrangements should be made to ensure that life-story work is completed in a timely way.

6.	27	A protocol and audit system should be put in place in respect of adopters' and children's adoption files.
7.	29	A more appropriate venue for the adoption panel should be found.

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