



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

### Moments

**Moments Limited  
Holme Lodge Farm  
Pean Hill  
Whitstable  
Kent  
CT5 3AY**

*Lead Inspector*  
Alex Turner

*Announced Inspection*  
23rd January 2006      09:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

<b>Reader Information</b>	
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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Fostering Services*. They can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

*Every Child Matters*, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life. Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above

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# SERVICE INFORMATION

<b>Name of service</b>	Moments
<b>Address</b>	Moments Limited Holme Lodge Farm Peon Hill Whitstable Kent CT5 3AY
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<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	Moments
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Vacant
<b>Type of registration</b>	Fostering Agencies
<b>Category(ies) of registration, with number of places</b>	

# **SERVICE INFORMATION**

## **Conditions of registration:**

**Date of last inspection**      7th March 2005

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

Moments Ltd is an independent fostering agency based in Whitstable, Kent. Services that can be provided include long, short term and emergency placements, supervised contact and outreach for children not attending school. At the time of this inspection the service was supporting 29 children and had 20 approved foster carers.

# SUMMARY

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

The inspection took place over four days and three evenings. Four foster carers homes were visited. Six children were seen and spoken to. Children, placing social workers and foster carers completed and returned pre-inspection questionnaires. Key records were inspected. A panel meeting was attended. Conversations took place with the chair of the panel and six members of staff.

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

The fostering service does well in providing support to foster carers. Staff retention is good. Arrangements for health care and contact was well planned. The fostering service values and works to promote diversity and children's educational attainment. There was evidence of effective consultation with children and carers. Payment to foster carers has been managed well. Administrative support and back up is well organised.

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

Requirements and / or recommendations relating to health and safety, staff supervision, written panel procedures, safe care and the appointment of a manager have been acted upon. It should be noted that at the time of this inspection the manager was not registered with the Commission and that their fitness to manage the service had yet to be ascertained.

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

The qualifications held by the manager of the fostering service do not meet the standards. Safe care guidelines should be developed with every foster carer. The matching process should include a greater element of risk analysis and result in clear risk management strategies being developed. Recruitment procedures should be more rigorously applied in practice. The roles of the social work members of the panel should be clearer. Training strategies should be reviewed with a greater emphasis placed on needs analysis and appraisal.

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

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

## **CONTENTS**

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Statutory Requirements Identified During the Inspection

# Being Healthy

## The intended outcome for this Standard is:

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

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

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at the outcome for Standard:

12

The fostering service has promoted and provided for the health and development of children.

## EVIDENCE:

Evidence was found in children's files of appropriate services being provided for children i.e. GP, dentist and optician. The agency has taken action to obtain from the placing authorities information about children's health and medical status. Foster carers commented that the agency has passed on information of this nature to them and acted on their requests to obtain more information where it has been deemed to be lacking. The matching process takes into account the health and medical needs of children when a placement is being considered. A format to record the health and development of children on placement has been developed. There is an expectation put upon foster carers by the agency to maintain these records as and when necessary during the course of a child's placement with them.



# Staying Safe

## The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

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

**The Commission considers Standards 3, 6, 8, 9, 15 and 30 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.**

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following Standard(s):**

3, 6, 8, 9, 15 & 30

The persons carrying on the fostering service are suitable to do so.

The fostering service takes care to ensure that children are placed with foster carers whose homes are suited to meet their needs.

The matching process used by the fostering service is thorough though has not in all cases been rigorously applied.

The fostering service takes seriously the need to maintain and promote children's welfare and safety and by doing so has contributed to protecting children from abuse and neglect.

The recruitment process is such that it would ensure that people working for the fostering service are suitable to do so if it was applied in full.

The fostering panel is operated in a manner that serves to ensure foster carers approvals and reviews are scrutinised and carried out in a proper manner.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Persons carrying on the fostering services have undergone the prescribed checks in terms of their background and character. The outcome of these

checks has been satisfactory. No information has come to light to contradict these findings.

Four foster homes were visited during this inspection. In each case the accommodation provided was warm, adequately furnished, decorated and maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene. All of the children being looked after had their own bedrooms. All of the children living with the foster carers were spoken to. All indicated that they were satisfied with the standard of accommodation provided and that their needs for privacy and space was being met. The fostering service undertakes regular visits to foster carer's homes and conducts health and safety checks aiming to ensure they are kept free of avoidable hazards.

For each of the children (7 in total) who were living with the foster carers visited during this inspection there was information evidencing a matching process had taken place. The evidence illustrated that the fostering service has developed a good system to determine matches between children and foster carers. It was noted however that the application of this system on occasions failed to fully consider information available. For example in three instances risks had been identified though there was nothing to indicate how these risks would be managed in the proposed and subsequent match. There was an instance where a match was proposed and subsequently accepted by a placing authority even though the fostering service had identified what it considered to be important gaps in the match put forward. The placement subsequently broke down. On balance there was an example where the fostering service had worked in collaboration with a local authority to ensure an excellent match was made for long-term foster care. Included in the process were introductory visits, meetings and trial stays.

The fostering service has established policies and procedures in relation to child protection, missing children and countering bullying. Information forwarded to the Commission between inspections indicates that these procedures have been enacted as and when appropriate and that measures have been taken to protect children from abuse. There have been a significant number of occasions of repeated unauthorised absences from carer's homes. On these occasions the fostering service has worked with placing authorities to address pertinent issues though should keep under review risk management strategies in this area. From the inspection of carer's files it was determined that training in safe care and child protection is being provided. Work has taken place to introduce the concept to foster carers of individualised safe care policies. It was noted that some though not all of the carers visited during this inspection had developed and updated these in relation to their circumstances and the children placed with them.

The fostering service's written recruitment procedures reflect the points specified in the National Minimum Standards. Three staff files were inspected. Evidence was found that checks with the criminal records bureau are being

carried out. References have been taken up though there was one instance where no reference could be found from one persons last employer. There was one instance where no evidence was on file demonstrating that a written reference had been followed up with a telephone call. There was two instances found where no record could be found to evidence that verification had been sought as to why people who had previously worked with children or vulnerable adults had left their post. There were two instances where no record had been made to evidence that gaps in employment had been satisfactorily explained. Without these records it is difficult to be sure that the steps required by regulations in order to safeguard children have been carried out to the full.

The fostering panel has written policies and procedures about the handling of their functions. There are procedures to cover decision-making when all members of the panel are not in agreement. The panel membership includes a general practitioner and a teacher. The panel fulfils a quality assurance function in terms of feeding back to the registered provider about the quality of assessments and reviews presented. The panel chair, who was interviewed as part of this inspection, confirmed this. The quoracy of the panel on at least one occasion was questionable due to a duality in the roles of social work members.

# Enjoying and Achieving

## The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

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

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

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

7 & 13

Children benefit from a fostering service that values diversity.

Children benefit from a service that recognises the value and importance of education and one that aims to ensure they are given appropriate support in relation to educational development and progress.

Standard 31 is not applicable to the service at the time of this inspection.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Gender, religion, ethnic origin, language, culture, disability and sexuality are factors taken into account by the fostering service in its matching process. The service promotes anti discriminatory practice and diversity in its written policies and procedures. During this inspection one good example was found where services have been tailored to address a child's needs and circumstances in relation to ethnic origin and cultural background. The statement of purpose has been produced in different language versions and the manager has stated that arrangements are in place to access interpreting services when needs require such a provision to be made.

The fostering service has worked with carers and local authorities to secure suitable educational provision for children that have been referred and subsequently placed. Written notes and discussion with foster carers indicate that carers have taken an active role in promoting and encouraging children's educational attainment, for example by liaising with schools, attending school meetings and supporting children with transport and other arrangements to

enable attendance and positive participation. Where children have not been in full time education the fostering service provides an outreach worker to support both the child and the carer during the day. At the time of this inspection there were four such children, three of who were awaiting arrangements to be finalised in order that their specific educational needs are taken fully into account.

## **Making a Positive Contribution**

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

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

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

### **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

10 & 11

The fostering service promotes contact arrangements for children and young people.

The fostering service promotes consultation and seeks to enable children to have their voice heard.

### **EVIDENCE:**

The fostering service has devised a placement plan for each child that has been placed. Within the plan details regarding contact arrangements are described. It was noted that the details were often well specified, kept under review and updated in accordance with changing circumstances and the directions of placing social workers. Children spoken to during this inspection indicated that they were satisfied with the arrangements made and the support that had been provided. Training that covers the importance of contact has been arranged and provided to carers. Carers have described various means by which they have supported children to maintain and develop positive contact with people important to them such as providing transport, supervision, appropriate liaison and supporting telephone and letter box contact. Outcomes of contact arrangements and their perceived impact on the child have been recorded and this information has been fed back to children's social workers.

Paperwork indicated that the opinions of children, their families and others significant to them are routinely ascertained in the childcare review process. Documentation relating to foster carers annual reviews indicate that the views of children and placing social workers are sought and taken into account as part of this process. It was explained and evidenced in records that on a day-

to-day basis there is contact between the agency, placing authorities and children placed creating another means for views and opinions to be shared. Carers spoken with gave examples of listening to children's views and advocating on their behalf. Children demonstrated an understanding and knowledge of who and how they would make a complaint to should they wish/need to do so.

# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

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

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

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

29

The fostering service pays carer's their agreed allowance and expense in a timely and professional manner.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Foster carers have confirmed that they receive allowances and expenses as per the written information they have been provided with and that these payments are made promptly and at the agreed time. Allowances and fees are reviewed each year. It was confirmed information about fees and allowances is distributed to the relevant parties.



# Management

## The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

- There is a clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and the fostering service ensures that they meet those aims and objectives.(NMS 1)
- The fostering service is managed by those with the appropriate skills and experience. (NMS 2)
- The fostering service is monitored and controlled as specified. (NMS 4)
- The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.(NMS 5)
- Staff are organised and managed effectively.(NMS 16)
- The fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff.(NMS 17)
- The fostering service is a fair and competent employer.(NMS 18)
- There is a good quality training programme. (NMS 19)
- All staff are properly accountable and supported.(NMS 20)
- The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.(NMS 21)
- Foster carers are provided with supervision and support.(NMS 22)
- Foster carers are appropriately trained.(NMS 23)
- Case records for children are comprehensive.(NMS 24)
- The administrative records are maintained as required.(NMS 25)
- The premises used as offices by the fostering service are suitable for the purpose.(NMS 26)
- The fostering service is financially viable. (NMS 27)
- The fostering service has robust financial processes. (NMS 28)
- Local Authority fostering services recognise the contribution made by family and friends as carers.(NMS 32)

**The Commission considers Standards 17, 21, and 24 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.**

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

2, 17, 19, 21, 23 & 24

The fostering service has been managed such that children, foster carers and placing social workers offer a positive account of the services provided.

The fostering service has a cohesive staff team though is stretched in terms of qualified social work provision.

People employed by the fostering service have been supported in terms of furthering their professional development.

The fostering service has established strategies for working with and providing support and supervision to foster carers thus helping to maintain positive placement experiences.

Training of foster carers lacks clear strategy, review and evaluation potentially having a negative impact on carer's skills to provide professional care and support to children placed with them.

Children benefit from a service that works towards ensuring that records held about them are comprehensive, completed to a professional standard and managed and stored in a correct and proper manner.

### **EVIDENCE:**

The manager of the fostering service has yet to attain a professional qualification in social work or management. They are currently undertaking training to attain the Registered Managers Award and aim to complete the course towards the end of 2006. Whilst the material impact of this shortfall has not transpired to be severe on the overall operation of the agency it clearly does not meet the standard required. It should be noted that the registered provider on a day-to-day basis supports the manager in their role and an established and cohesive team compliments these current arrangements.

The fostering service employs one full time qualified social worker. The expectation is that this person delivers regular practice supervision to 19 foster carers approved by the service in addition to completing and presenting reviews, contributing to the delivery of foster carers training, preparing for and attending reviews and being a panel member. The commitment and skill of this person is clear though it is recommended that at least one more social worker should be employed to support them and the wider team in their work. This view is strengthened by the fact that there were a number of instances where it was apparent that supervision from time to time was being provided by unqualified staff. It should be noted that carers have been very positive about the level of support that they have been provided. Primarily a team of two coordinates referrals and placements. There is an efficient and skilled administrative and financial support. There are two unqualified support workers one of whom is a designated outreach worker for children not in full time education.

Assessment of prospective foster carers is undertaken by independent social workers contracted on a sessional basis to complete this task. The assessments inspected were professionally completed and addressed each of the points specified in the National Minimum Standards

Staff training and development initiatives include supporting the manager to gain appropriate qualifications. The manager explained that plans are underway to support two further unqualified staff to undertake training to gain a professional qualification. It is noted that the service is currently supporting a student social work placement.

The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers. Individual supervision, peer group meetings, and out of hour's assistance are included in these strategies. Evidence was seen and heard of how the agency has supported carers in different situations and given help when it is needed. It was confirmed that the agency's policies and procedures are circulated to carers and staff. Foster carers have reported that they receive a good standard of support and guidance from the operational staff team. Annual review reports are prepared and presented to the fostering panel. Placing Social Workers have confirmed they are kept well informed of events by foster carers and the operational staff.

Training has been provided to foster carers in the last 12 months and has incorporated some of the areas specified in the standards. The proposed training programme for 2006 was included in the foster carers files inspected though there was no indication how this related to individual foster carers training needs or what actual training had been identified as relevant for individual foster carers to attend. Foster carers annual reviews listed training attended though provided no analysis or appraisal of the impact training has made on their performance. Foster carers supervision records contained little useful reference to training and typically included the comment that the carers were "...willing to undergo any training provided". There was no evidence presented to demonstrate that the effectiveness of training received is evaluated and reviewed annually.

Administrative records were well organised, easily retrieved and in the main comprehensive. Children and young peoples case notes and foster carers files were to a good standard. Record management took into account confidentiality and security.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services have been met and uses the following scale.

**4** Standard Exceeded (Commendable)      **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)  
**2** Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)      **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion  
 "N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

<b>BEING HEALTHY</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>12</b>	3

<b>STAYING SAFE</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>3</b>	3
<b>6</b>	3
<b>8</b>	2
<b>9</b>	2
<b>15</b>	1
<b>30</b>	2

<b>ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>7</b>	3
<b>13</b>	3
<b>31</b>	N/A

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

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

<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>1</b>	X
<b>2</b>	1
<b>4</b>	X
<b>5</b>	X
<b>16</b>	X
<b>17</b>	2
<b>18</b>	X
<b>19</b>	2
<b>20</b>	X
<b>21</b>	3
<b>22</b>	X
<b>23</b>	2
<b>24</b>	3
<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?

Yes

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action
1.	FS8	11	The registered provider shall ensure that they offer carers only if they represent appropriate matches for a child for whom a local authority is seeking a carer.	13/04/06
2.	FS9	11	The registered provider shall ensure that safe caring guidelines for each foster home are developed in consultation with the carer and everyone else in the household.	13/04/06
3.	FS15	20	The registered person shall ensure full and satisfactory information is available in relation to all employees in respect of each of the matters specified in paragraphs 1 to 6 of Schedule 1. This requirement has been carried over from the last inspection report.	13/04/06
4.	FS30	25	The registered provider shall ensure that no business shall be conducted by a fostering panel unless at least five of its members, including the person appointed to chair the panel, or the vice chair, at least one of the social workers employed by the	13/04/06

			fostering service and at least two of the independent members, meet as a panel.	
5.	FS2	7	The registered provider shall ensure that a suitably qualified and experienced person manages the service.	20/05/06
6.	FS23	17	The registered provider shall ensure that adequate arrangements are made to ensure that foster carers are provided with such training, as appears necessary in the interests of children placed with them.	13/05/06

## 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	The registered provider should ensure that foster carers individualised safe caring guidelines are cleared with the placing social workers and are explained clearly and appropriately to the children placed.
2.	FS17	The registered provider should review the adequacy of its current provision of qualified social work staff.

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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