



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

Diverse Care (UK) Ltd.

**Unit 309-310
183A Harrow Road
Leytonstone
London
E11 3PX**

Lead Inspector
Anne Chamberlain

Announced Inspection
19th February 2007 10:00 am

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 *Fostering Services*. 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

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Telephone number	0208 503 0305
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Email address	diversecareuk@btconnect.com
Provider Web address	
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Diverse Care (UK) Ltd
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	*** Post Vacant ***
Type of registration	Fostering Agencies

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 24th October 2005

Brief Description of the Service:

Diverse Care (UK) Limited is a small independent fostering service, first registered with CSCI in December 2004. It's offices are based within the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The primary role of the service is to recruit foster carers from within and around the London/M25 region and provide suitable placements for Children Looked After.

A diverse group of foster carers are sought to match children/young people requiring foster placements. The agency provides the following services: response to initial enquiries from people interested in fostering, the assessment of applicants, group preparation and training for prospective carers. Ongoing information and support is available to approved foster carers.

At the time of the inspection, nineteen children/young people had been placed with approved foster carers.

SUMMARY

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

The inspection was announced and was conducted by a lead inspector assisted by another inspector. All standards were inspected and the inspection was spread over four and a half working days.

Prior to the inspection, questionnaires were sent out to all foster carers and children/young people in placement. Returns were made by twelve foster carers and eleven children/young people. Pre-inspection information was also received from the agency. The inspectors toured the agency premises, interviewed all staff members of the agency and visited three foster placements, meeting with five foster carers and four young people. The lead inspector interviewed the chair of the foster care panel.

The inspectors viewed files for five foster carers, four foster children/young people and four staff, policies procedures and other key documentation.

The responsible individual and the agency manager are referred to as 'the managers' throughout the report.

The agency is functioning well, building on a good start and overcoming difficulties which have arisen. The fundamental values have been adhered to and the outcomes for children and young people have been good.

The inspectors would like to take this opportunity to thank all foster children/young people, foster carers and agency personnel for their co-operation and contributions to the inspection.

What the service does well:

Young people interviewed were happy with their placements and liked their carers. The interaction between young people and their carers was relaxed and demonstrated attachment. One foster carer simply stated *"they are part of our family now"*.

The agency demonstrates a positive attitude to inspection.

Placements have lasted indicated that matching has been well done and that foster carers have been able to meet the needs of the children/young people placed with them.

The ratio of link workers to foster carers is good.

The managers of the agency have prioritised training in theories on attachment, trauma and resilience in children for foster carers.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The agency has responded well to the requirements and recommendations of the last inspection.

They have built up a bank of skilled and ethnically diverse foster carers. They have also commissioned the services of a Consultant Psychotherapist and have a qualified and experienced manager. Three social workers are in post.

The agency is taking an objective look at their recruitment and marketing practices.

The agency works with a strong and stringent panel of professionals.

What they could do better:

The inspection resulted in two requirements and four good practice recommendations.

The manager must have a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure (CRB) and must be registered with the commission.

Staff retention has been disappointing but the agency has worked hard at improving this.

The agency is looking at its tiered system of payments to ensure fairness and equality. It is planning to develop respite provision to complement the other services offered.

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. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

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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.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at the outcome for Standard:

12.

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The agency does promote healthy development of children/young people.

EVIDENCE:

The agency has a range of policies to promote the health and development of children/young people including, health and safety, drug and alcohol and smoking policy.

The managers stated that health information is sought at the point of referral and passed to foster carers. The foster carer handbook promotes diet and healthy eating. It gives comprehensive health information and deals with childhood diseases and infections. However the information is somewhat out of date, referring to research undertaken in 1996, and not mentioning the NHS direct service. The inspector recommends that the registered person source more recent health information for the handbook (**see recommendations**).

The inspectors noted that several young people are receiving services from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). In addition the agency has access to a psychotherapist. The manager stated that the service was used for a foster carers child who had some difficulties with the fostering situation. During the inspection a fostered child suffered a bereavement and the managers stated that he would be offered sessions with the psychotherapist too.

The inspector was pleased to see on files evidence of regular Looked After Children reviews, which monitor health needs.

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.

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

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

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Staff and foster carers are suitable and matching is well done. Child protection is robust and the panel a strength. There has been an omission in recruitment practice for the manager.

EVIDENCE:

The director of the service explained that he has a background in local authority, voluntary and private sectors. He is a qualified youth worker with an NVQ level 5 in management. He is also an accredited practice teacher and has been a registered manager of a fostering agency.

The manager of the agency has experience in residential work and fostering. He was registered manager of a fostering agency. He has CQSW and NVQ level 4 in management. However the manager has no Diverse Care CRB disclosure and must apply for one without delay.

Foster carers files evidenced careful recruitment practice, with prospective carers being thoroughly assessed before being taken to panel. Assessments on the files of carers included safe caring competency. The inspectors felt that qualities, competencies and aptitude for fostering were well measured.

References and CRB checks are taken up for foster carers and frequent visitors to their homes. Referees are interviewed and CRB checks are also made on frequent visitors to the home. Carers sign a training and supervision agreement and there are home visits which are reported.

The foster homes visited by the inspectors appeared safe and were and welcoming. The accommodation afforded adequate space and children/young people's rooms were fitted out and decorated appropriately for their ages.

Two brothers visited had individual rooms with TV and games etc. Two teenage girls visited (in separate placements) had bedrooms which reflected their tastes and interests.

One placement offered the benefits of a large extended family with lots of outdoor space and various animals which the young people clearly enjoyed. One young person there had shown skills with ponies and this was related to the inspectors with pride. The opportunity to build this young person's self esteem was clearly grasped by the foster carers. Another placement had pets which the young person placed obviously enjoyed.

The agency has a pet and dog safety policy and the inspectors were pleased that the benefit of having animals around, was underpinned with sensible planning and safety assessment.

Foster carers are supported by monthly visits from link workers and the agency has made proper agreements with them regarding transport.

A file showed evidence of panel approval to exceed the number of placements already approved. This was for a home visited by the inspectors and they felt all the children placed were benefiting significantly from the care they were receiving there.

The inspectors noted that although the initial approval of foster carers is documented and signed by the chair of the panel, a subsequent re-approval was not similarly documented and signed off. The managers agreed this should be done **(see recommendations)**.

The nature of referrals to the agency is emergency. This is due to pressures on local authorities and is beyond the control of the agency. However they are

aware of the challenges inherent and as there is a low breakdown rate for placements have obviously worked well with them.

Managers told the inspectors that they refuse placements they can't match. They believe they develop good knowledge of their carers through the assessment and training process.

The chair of the panel told the inspector that they encourage link workers to challenge boundaries around age. She gave the examples of sibling placement and the fact that young people grow older in placement. The chair felt that it is quite safe to broaden age boundaries because the matching process properly followed will eliminate inappropriate placements.

The inspectors were told that the assessment works to identify skills for caring for various age groups. It takes into account factors like the impact on other children in the household.

The agency has in the past used independent workers to undertake assessments. Now they have three social workers in post, they are going to use them instead. The managers feel that as the social workers will be working with the families when approved, they own the assessment and ensure that it is thorough.

The agency is encouraging foster carers to undertake NVQ 3 specialist training, including working with young people who have been sexually abused. Training is already given to carers on allegations, self harm and managing behaviour. The manager stated that he felt attachment theory very important in fostering and he encouraged carers to have every opportunity to integrate it into their work.

The agency has produced a child protection policy and procedure. This includes a chart showing how the local authority social services will proceed with a referral. Foster carers sign for the reporting procedure they are given and a form has been devised for taking down referrals in the office.

The inspector asked a fostering couple how they would deal with an allegation from a young person which related to past events. They said they would listen to the allegation, would not ask questions, but would write the allegation down and immediately contact the agency.

Foster carers write safe care plans with their link workers and these were seen on files.

The inspector noted a number of policies and elements of foster carer training which are helpful for supporting behaviour, including: essential reporting,

whistleblowing, behaviour management, anti-restraint, drug and alcohol, e-mail and internet usage, missing from home procedure.

A carer was asked how she managed a 'missing from home' situation and was able to describe the steps she would need to take. This carer said that although theoretically she could go to bed at night after she had made all the necessary calls, she never did, but sat up waiting for news of the young person.

Recruitment and retention of social workers has been a major issue for the agency. The inspectors felt that this was due to the current climate in the discipline rather than any retention deficiency. The managers explained that they have taken great care with the recent appointments, looking for people who demonstrate commitment to the work. They will offer training, regular supervision and solid support. The staff files contained their terms and conditions of employment.

The inspectors felt that the social workers in post are qualified, experienced and well supported. They seemed to be settling in well, and bonding as a group.

The inspectors interviewed the development officer. She is reviewing the recruitment of foster carers. She will be reporting her findings to the manager and the agency may change the way it advertises, for example focussing on particular areas where carers are needed. They may try a rolling programme of advertising and analyse the results. The development officer will ensure that enquiries from prospective carers will be followed up. She is also responsible for marketing.

The agency has lost seven foster carers since they opened and the managers were asked about this. The losses were due to the agency having no suitable placements for the carers. The inspectors felt that this was unavoidable when an agency is starting up and did not reflect adversely.

The files of foster carers and staff evidenced safe recruitment with the exception of the manager who lacked a CRB in the name of the agency. This has been mentioned elsewhere in the report.

The panel consists of 10 people including a health specialist and a foster carer. The agency are trying to recruit a care leaver to the panel. The lead inspector interviewed the chair of the panel, who supplied much useful information regarding its running. There are policies and procedures in place to guide this.

However there was contradictory information regarding re-approval contained therein and also in the policy and procedure for foster carers.

Foster carers are reviewed annually but return to the panel for re-approval every other year. Statutory checks are taken up every three years. The procedures are contradictory on these points. The managers stated that they were reviewing much of the documentation and these contradictions would be rectified.

The chair of panel had a very strong grasp of its purpose, function and what they need from the agency in order to take decisions. The chair said that the panel are happy to work with either British Association of Fostering (BAF) or Fostering Network assessment formats, but that the assessments should steer the outcome.

The chair told the inspector the panel are looking for competent assessment with exploration and analysis of any issues identified. She said that she has good liaison with the manager of the agency and they are always responsive to her feedback. She said that the vice chair is very knowledgeable and the panel keeps updated on developments. The agency provide adequate training for panel members and useful quarterly meetings are held between them to review and plan.

The panel have an hour at the end of the day to de-brief and reflect, identify themes from the minutes and recurring problems etc. The chair of panel and the inspectors felt that this was a useful quality assurance function.

The panel also de-register foster carers and the chair gave an example of this. She was clear that if carers are not in a position to offer placements for a significant period of time they must be de-registered.

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.

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

7,13 and 31.

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Diversity and educational achievement are valued. Respite carers understand that parents remain the main carers.

EVIDENCE:

The ethos of the agency values equality and diversity. There is an equality and diversity policy and mandatory training includes how to address diverse needs, including race, gender, disability, sexuality, religion etc. Ethnicity is monitored on receipt of referral.

One foster carer visited, supports a disabled young person with regular respite. She had a good understanding of needs and the inspectors were pleased to see the bedroom kept for this person was age appropriate, attractive and personalised.

During the course of the inspection this carer had a visit from another prospective respite placement. This was reported by the link worker to have gone really well.

Bullying is taken very seriously. Two children fed back on their questionnaires that they had experienced some bullying. The manager was advised and he could talk to the inspector knowledgeably about both children's experiences and what had been done to help.

The information packs for children and young people advise them to speak to foster carers, teachers and social workers about experiencing bullying.

The evidence on visits to placements was of young people encouraged to develop skills and talents. One young person attends Girls Brigade and showed the inspector a photograph of herself looking very smart in the uniform.

Another placement offers an opportunity to work with ponies. As previously mentioned all the young people responded well to foster carers various animals enjoying their affection.

The fostering service has produced an educational policy for promoting educational achievement. The manager remarked that foster carers had proved themselves skilled at advocating for young people with educational professionals. The agency has also commissioned the service of an educational psychologist.

The managers told the inspectors that all efforts are made to avoid disrupting a young person's education. However sometimes placements are requested away from the home area and it becomes impossible to continue attendance at the local school.

One young person visited was attending an educational resource called Fresh Start, another had a package of structured education and occupation through school hours, another was attending mainstream school, and another college five days a week.

The inspectors noted that within placements skills of independence were being encouraged. Constructive leisure and recreation were also supported.

One young person visited had not as a Looked After Child, received a computer from her local authority. It is recommended that the registered person follow this up as it may have been overlooked (**see recommendations**).

As mentioned above one carer offered short term respite breaks. The inspectors were satisfied that she fully understood that the young person's parents remained her main carers.

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.

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

10 and 11.

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Contact is well supported and consultation is promoted.

EVIDENCE:

The foster carer handbook promotes contact and there was evidence in files of foster carers supporting contact. The managers stated that there is thorough discussion in the preparation, training and placement planning stages regarding contact.

Contact can be a very difficult issue for children/young people and their carers. There is a contact policy and the inspector was pleased to see evidence of robust link worker support. The agency are able to offer supervised contact on their premise.

The inspectors learned that specialist training is provided for foster carers on trauma, attachment and resilience. They felt that this would be highly relevant.

There was evidence that the views of young people are properly taken into account. An example was of two brothers. One wanted contact with their mother but the other didn't. Contact was arranged according to their individual wishes.

The questionnaires received from children and young people strongly supported the fact that foster carers listening to them. Statements included:

"they sit down and talk to me if I am scared or frightened"

"because they talk to me a lot and things"

"she asks me what I like and dislike"

"we talk together about things that happen during the day in college and everywhere"

"whenever I have a problem or want them to listen they do and if I want advice then they give me the advice I need"

The need for support groups for foster carers and children/young people is recognised. The manager of the agency is consulting with them to find the best days of the week for these.

There was evidence of placement feedback from young people and carers, viewed on files. However the managers recognised a need for more unannounced visits to assure quality.

The systems for reviews and re-approvals are sound, but the manager must ensure they happen within timescale.

The information given to children and young people includes advice on how to complain and the complaint policy has reasonable timescales.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

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

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

14 and 29.

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Young people are prepared for adulthood. Carers are paid allowances and expenses.

EVIDENCE:

Foster carers visited understood that some young people are emotionally immature for their age and they should work with them at their level of maturity rather than their chronological age. In one placement young people were being encouraged to take responsibility for domestic jobs and were quite pleased to tell the inspector all about it.

The agency has developed a Where Am I Now tool to assist young people to assess their skills and make plans for independence. The manager stated that foster carers encourage young people to work with Connexions careers service where appropriate. Evidence was seen in one young person's file of planning for future independence.

Foster carers receive an allowance and expenses which cover the cost of caring for each child or young person placed with them and the agency operates a clear scale of payments. Placements and payments are classified on a three tier system as Standard, Enhanced or Specialised.

Two difficulties with this system were pointed out by carers to inspectors: 1) the amount of information available when a placement is accepted in an emergency, is not always adequate to determine the classification. 2) when

the carer has successfully worked with the young person and progress is made, the classification may be reduced giving the carer a perverse incentive.

The inspectors discussed this issue with the managers and suggested that there might be some flexibility built into the classification system at the early stage. Also that a bonus might be awarded to foster carers when a placement was moved to a lower classification, to recognise and reward their hard work.

The management of the agency said they are considering revising the structure to better reflect the skills and responsibilities of carers and would bear in mind what had been said.

The breakdown of payments (to include savings, pocket money, clothing etc.) was explained to the inspectors and seemed fair and clear. The foster carers seemed to understand it perfectly.

The system for paying foster carers was described to the inspectors and seemed sound. Foster carers reported that they are always paid on time.

Holidays can be an issue and the inspectors heard two examples of extended family providing respite care for young people. One had worked well and the foster carers told the inspector they were really pleased because their daughter had totally upheld their boundaries and the young people had been very settled. The other example had been quite negative as the young person had made an unfounded allegation against the family member and she had been very upset.

The agency is trying to develop respite care for holidays and as a safety net for emergency placements. The inspectors felt this would be a very useful addition to the agency's services.

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 1, 16, 17, 21, 24, 25 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.

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

1,2,4,5,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28 and 32.

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The aims and objectives of the fostering agency are clearly set out and they well met. The managers are skilled and the service is managed effectively and is monitored and controlled. There are a sufficient number of well organised staff. They are supported and accountable. The agency is a fair and competent employer and provides quality training.

There is a clear strategy for supporting carers and they are provided with training and supervision. Case and administrative records are well maintained. The office premises are suitable and the service financially viable with robust financial processes.

EVIDENCE:

The agency has produced a statement of purpose. Since the previous inspection it has been revised to include the general qualifications and experience of the staff group. The statement of purpose now meets the requirements of regulation.

Guides for children and young people are age appropriate but both need amendment. The children's guide has pages which don't correspond to the index and the young persons guide has an index of page numbers but the pages are not numbered. The inspectors recommend careful proof reading of all guides and documents **(see recommendation)**.

The agency has two directors, one of whom is the responsible individual. He oversees policy, practice and development. The agency manager is responsible for service delivery and dealing with day to day issues. Both individuals are qualified and experienced to run the agency.

The responsible individual has a background in local authority, voluntary and private sectors. He is a qualified youth worker and has NVQ level 5 in management. He is also an accredited practice teacher and has been a registered manager in a fostering service.

The agency manager has a background in residential care and fostering and was the registered manager of a fostering agency. He has a CQSW and NVQ level 4 in management.

The agency manager is not registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). The inspectors understand that this is because his appointment has not been confirmed. The manager must submit an application to the commission (**see requirements**).

Staff have clear roles and line management structure. In addition to the two directors and the agency manager, a development officer, three social workers and two administration assistants are employed. The inspector interviewed the whole staff and they were all clear about their responsibilities.

The agency has sound financial procedures which were explained to the inspectors. Placement fees are agreed with placing authorities and they are invoiced for them. Carers are advised of the fostering allowance before they accept the placement and they are paid fortnightly.

The services of an accountant are employed.

Social workers are supervised by the manager of the agency. There was no evidence of supervision on the files but it is understood that all three have started very recently. They all stated verbally that they had had supervision. They also stated that the development officer and an administration assistant who have been with the agency from the beginning, have been very helpful to them, over the course of their first few weeks.

Inspectors were told that the training year runs from May to April. Staff and carers undertake appropriate training. The manager explained that the 2007-2008 training plan has not been finalised for either group. Foster carers reported to the inspectors that they had had relevant training in the previous year and five days induction. The inspectors also saw evidence of this on file. One foster carer commented that five days together felt rather intensive.

The carers handbook contains a training manual. The inspectors noted that child protection, diversity and appraisal and supervision training were mandatory. Foster carers receive training in de-escalation of situations, conflict resolution, physical safety, breakaway techniques, and permissible forms of restraint. They are advised when they should call the police for assistance.

The inspectors were satisfied that there are enough staff and they are well organised with clear lines of management and accountability. The social workers fully understood the role of the children's local authority social workers, and of multi-agency working.

The administrative back up for the agency is provided by the two aforementioned assistants. They appeared to have a comprehensive grasp of their work, describing the systems clearly to the inspectors. The system for dealing with referrals and enquiries was well designed.

The recruitment strategy for foster carers was explained to the inspectors as mentioned elsewhere in this report.

Foster carer supervision, appraisal and support is undertaken by link workers. They visit, telephone and run a duty system. The inspectors felt that the link workers were well qualified and experienced for their role. Several foster carers commented positively on support, via their questionnaires:

"They are in regular contact and always available"
"We have 24 hour support"

The agency keeps an incident and an accident book for staff and for the premises. Both were viewed and raised no concerns.

The agency has adequate insurance cover.

Staff are supported by policies and procedures, some of which have been mentioned elsewhere. In addition there are the following:

Staff Practices
Confidentiality
Bereavement
E-mail
Equal Opportunities

The inspector noted that supervision of foster carers by link workers includes asking fostered children/young people for their comments.

The case records viewed were well structured, comprehensive, and neatly maintained. The inspectors noted that the section labelled Incidents was usually empty, as incidents are recorded elsewhere. They suggested that this section could be removed if it is not being used.

The inspector was pleased to note evidence of regular Looked After Children reviews on file and good daily records kept by foster carers and regularly transferred to children's files.

One young person was able to show the inspectors lots of photographs of herself in the placement. These commenced from the beginning of her placement, which happened to be Christmas and showed her apparently having a really happy time.

Administration records were clear and well maintained.

The inspectors toured the agency premises which are well equipped, and afford adequate space. They include a pleasant reception area, a training room and filing room. Security is good and there is a panic alarm which sounds directly in the police station. Post drops into a metal cage and file cupboards lock. Fire arrangements are sound with heat sensors, emergency lighting and a fire proof safe. The kitchen has a fire blanket and a small fire extinguisher. An outside contractor calls every four months to check the fire protection systems.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) items are locked away,

The inspectors viewed the financial plan for the future. It looked sound. Robust financial processes are in place and there is a clear up to date picture of cash flow. The business appears to be on a stable footing. The administrator responsible for accounts explained that the nature of the business means that it takes time to become established and ensure profitability. This has obviously been anticipated.

The agency does not make kinship placements.

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>
12	3

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

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

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

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

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	3
2	2
4	3
5	3
16	3
17	3
18	3
19	3
20	3
21	3
22	3
23	3
24	3
25	3
26	3
27	3
28	3
32	3

yes

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action
1.	FS2	6	The registered person must ensure an application to the Commission is submitted for a registered manager (previous timescale of 31/01/06 not met).	31/03/07
2.	FS3	7	The manager of the service has no Diverse Care Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure and must apply for one without delay.	31/03/07

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations relate to National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice for the Registered Provider/s to consider carrying out.

No.	Refer to Standard	Good Practice Recommendations
1.	FS1	Children and Young persons guides both had minor errors. It is recommended that documents are proof read before being printed.
2.	FS6	Reapproval of foster carers should be documented and signed off by the chair of the panel in the same way that initial approval is.
3.	FS13	It is recommended that the registered person follow up the possibility of a computer for a Looked After Child with her local authority.
4.	FS12	The inspector recommends that the registered person source more recent health information for the foster carers handbook.
5.	FS1	The inspectors recommend careful proof reading of all guides and documents .

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