



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

### **Kirklees MC Family Placement Services**

**Westfields  
Westfield Road  
Mirfield  
West Yorkshire  
WF14 9PW**

*Lead Inspector*  
Stella Henderson

*Key Unannounced Inspection*  
12th February 2007      08.30

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>	Kirklees MC Family Placement Services
<b>Address</b>	Westfields Westfield Road Mirfield West Yorkshire WF14 9PW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 483707
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<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	Kirklees MC Family Placement Services
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Janet Matley
<b>Type of registration</b>	Local Auth Fostering Service

# **SERVICE INFORMATION**

## **Conditions of registration:**

**Date of last inspection**      27th February 2006

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

Kirklees Metropolitan Council fostering service provides a full range of fostering services including emergency, short term, long term, respite care, family link, friends and family and remand placements. The fostering service is part of the Family Placement Unit, which also provides the local authority's adoption services.

# **SUMMARY**

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

This inspection was carried out over approximately three and a half days. Evidence was obtained from a variety of sources, such as case files, policies, records, and pre-inspection information and data provided by the manager. Discussions were held with the manager and staff from the family placement team, and contact was made with foster carers and children in placement. Their views, and those of their foster carers also made an important contribution to this inspection, as did the comments in questionnaires returned from other professionals, children, foster carers and placing social workers, although very low numbers of questionnaires were returned.

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

The service is well organised and managed and is child-focussed in its approach. The operating of the service is rigorously monitored and reviewed, with managers aware of areas for development. There are good links with education and health, and carers are well supported to meet the diverse needs of the children and young people they care for. Foster carers visited, and those who returned their questionnaires, felt that the support they received was 'excellent'.

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

Since the last inspection a successful recruitment campaign has resulted in several new foster carers being assessed and approved. The service has also benefited from the commitment from elected members to providing considerable amounts of new funding to support a foster carer retention strategy and developing fostering as a career. Specific assessment beds have also been established and are proving a useful resource.

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

The manager has identified several areas for improvement, particularly with regard to translating educational support into more concrete outcomes and managing transitions between placements to minimise a change of school or periods out of school. It is also anticipated that the views of children and young people in placement will be more routinely incorporated into foster carers reviews in future.

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

# **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.

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

12

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**

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

Health promotion is seen as an integral part of caring for a child. Foster carers are supported in addressing the health needs of children placed with them. Children are offered information, advice and options appropriate to their needs, wishes, abilities and understanding. The service has successfully built partnerships with other key health agencies.

## EVIDENCE:

The fostering service performs at the highest rating of all health-related PAF indicators and promotes the health and development of children and young people in the following ways:

- There is a dedicated Health Advisor for Looked After Children and two child health nurses to assist in provision of a comprehensive health service to LAC and to ensure that annual health assessments, regular dental and eye checks are undertaken.
- Prompt referrals are made for specialist services
- In particular, carers and children and young people continue to benefit from access to CAMHS consultations which where necessary can lead to the fast tracking of young people should a direct service to them become necessary.
- Young people who returned their questionnaires stated that they were given access to age-appropriate services and information
- Health issues are taken into account in the matching process



# 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, 30

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**

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

All children and young people are placed with carers who have been thoroughly assessed as being able to meet the child's welfare and safety needs. The service matches children to carers appropriately and fostering panel operates as an important safeguarding mechanism.

## EVIDENCE:

Members of the fostering team are highly skilled in delivering support to foster carers. They are supported by a stable management team who have the skills and experience to run a fostering service.

There was clear evidence of matching, and children and young people are placed with carers who are properly assessed and supported, and an increase in the number of foster carers has resulted in more choice and availability of placements. Panel provides a rigorous safeguarding mechanism; any exemptions are monitored by panel and occur only in exceptional circumstances. A more robust system to deal with statutory and CRB checks

and medical information regarding families in the approval process, has been put into place.

Annual foster carer reviews are undertaken, and records also showed that carers receive regular supervision. Carers confirmed that they also receive unannounced visits. Respite care placements are monitored monthly.

Health and safety checks were evident on file, and there was a safety certificate for a lift at the home of a carer for children with complex disabilities. Records also show that, where episodes of absconding and restraints are concerned, policy is adhered to and followed up by support workers. Foster carers visited were conversant with child protection procedures.

# 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, 31

Quality in this outcome area is **good**

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

Children and young people, and their families, are provided with services that value diversity and promote equality. The fostering service ensures that most children and young people are encouraged and supported to do well and reach their potential. Staff and carers value education and understand the importance of their role to enable children to achieve.

## EVIDENCE:

The service has consulted with minority ethnic support groups and drawn on the expertise of other local authorities in order to provide appropriate support for young unaccompanied asylum seekers. The service has also been successful in increasing the number of foster families of South Asian origin, thereby improving the ability to making placements appropriate to the race, culture and religion of Kirklees children.

The Education Support Team monitors and supports the progress of Looked After Children in foster care, and is highly regarded by those carers who returned their questionnaires. Although a number of initiatives are in place and management arrangements are being aligned across social work and education services to promote more joined up working which will further improve looked after children's services, the manager acknowledges that this

has yet to be reflected in significant improvements in the educational achievements of Kirklees LAC.

Extra training has been put into place to enable carers for the short-break service to achieve higher skills levels. The scheme operates a specialist respite care service for children with complex medical needs. This is an excellent example of multi-agency working alongside parents.

## **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, 11

Quality in this outcome area is **good**

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

Children and young people are usually asked for their views, and these views make a difference. The service demonstrates that systems for children and young people's participation are being developed into service policy and planning. Children and young people confirm that they are listened to in a way that informs their daily life.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Inspection of case recording and evidence from returned questionnaires demonstrated that children and young people are consulted about day-to-day decisions. Increasingly, the service is able to demonstrate that their views are being incorporated into policy and planning:

- A working group is currently looking at how better to consult with children with disability
- A project is underway to capture the views from children and young people as expressed within the statutory review process
- Young people in foster care have contributed to the new design of a consultation booklet for statutory reviews
- Corporate parenting training events are, in part, facilitated by young people who are fostered
- Changes have been made to the Assessment Placement documentation as a result of feedback from young people placed and assessment carers.

New guidance has been developed and assessment documents now specify what is being assessed to enable young people have a better understanding of the purpose of the placement.

There are, however, still some areas for development, such as ascertaining children and young people's views as part of the foster carers annual review, and improving consultation with parents.

Children, young people and foster carers confirmed that the service makes every effort to facilitate contact with friends and family. The service is careful to ensure that the safety of the child is paramount in these situations, and risk assessments undertaken where appropriate and feedback from contact visits noted.



# 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

Quality in this outcome area is **good**

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

The service enables young people to remain in placement whilst preparing for independence. Carers support young people in developing skills they will need for independent living.

## EVIDENCE:

Pre-inspection information indicated that 15 out of 16 young people who were eligible for pathway planning had received such an assessment. A Pathway Plan was evident on one file inspected. The Leaving Care Team includes a Connexions Advisor, and there is also a Transitional Advisor for young people when they are approaching the end of Year 11.

# 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, 4, 16, 17, 21, 24, 25, 32

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**

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

There is awareness and recognition amongst managers and staff of what the service does well and where development is required. Managers ensure that

working practices, processes and systems support good practice. Managers demonstrate a pro-active approach to working in partnership with a wide range of other key people to ensure continuous improvement of the service.

**EVIDENCE:**

Since the last inspection the Statements of purpose has been reviewed and has incorporated any changes that have occurred.

There has been a successful recruitment campaign resulting in an increase in available foster placements, and the manager is proposing the establishment of a second panel to ensure that new applicants are quickly processed.

The service has made intelligent use of external placements, both to secure the long-term stability and to provide assessment beds, which are a new resource.

Staff interviewed commented that they feel supported by senior management. New deputy manager posts have enabled unit managers to focus on more strategic planning issues and particular areas for development. The foster service manager exercises effective quality assurance and monitoring procedures, systems which quickly identify areas for improvement.

Case files and administrative records were found to be kept in compliance with these regulations and the council's own recording policies.

Family and friends carers are properly assessed and supported in line with these standards. Family and friends carers are also offered opportunities to undertake competency portfolios and training to enter the 'skills uplift' system for all foster carers.

# 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>	4

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

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

<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>	3
<b>29</b>	X

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

No

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

### **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	FS11	The opinions of children, young people and their families are sought over all issues which are likely to affect their daily life and future

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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