



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

### **Bath & North East Somerset Fostering Services**

**Social and Housing Services  
PO Box 3343  
Bath  
Bath & N E Somerset  
BA1 2ZH**

*Lead Inspector*  
Sam Chisholm

*Key Announced Inspection*  
13th November 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>	
Document Purpose	Inspection Report
Author	CSCI
Audience	General Public
Further copies from	0870 240 7535 (telephone order line)
Copyright	This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI
Internet address	<a href="http://www.csci.org.uk">www.csci.org.uk</a>

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

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

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

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

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

This report is a public document. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the prior permission of the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

# SERVICE INFORMATION

<b>Name of service</b>	Bath & North East Somerset Fostering Services
<b>Address</b>	Social and Housing Services PO Box 3343 Bath Bath & N E Somerset BA1 2ZH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01225 395332
<b>Fax number</b>	01225 396951
<b>Email address</b>	sara_worth@bathnes.gov.uk
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	Bath & North East Somerset Council
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Ms Sara Worth
<b>Type of registration</b>	Local Auth Fostering Service

# **SERVICE INFORMATION**

## **Conditions of registration:**

**Date of last inspection**      21st November 2005

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

The Bath and North East Somerset Family Placement Team provides Fostering, Family Link and Adoption placements with approved carers for local children in need of these services. The fostering service includes placements with kinship carers and therapeutic carers, as well as mainstream short and long term care. The Family Link service provides short breaks with foster carers for children with disabilities.

# **SUMMARY**

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

This inspection was carried out through discussions with staff and carers, visits to carers, observation of the fostering panel and scrutiny of records.

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

The service provides an excellent level of health care for children.

The team manager and assistant team manager provide excellent levels of support and supervision for the staff.

Carers are provided with a good level of support and training.

The service is developing a good therapeutic foster care scheme.

There is a good level of consultation with the children regarding the development of the service.

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

Carers now have a checklist for Looked After Children paperwork which is checked to ensure it is complete.

The team's room has been soundproofed to provide space for confidential conversations.

Information on bullying, behaviour management and medication administration have been added to carers' handbooks.

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

The service has met the requirements from the previous inspection and does not have any resulting from this inspection.

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.

The fostering service has excellent systems and services in place to promote the physical and mental health development of children.

### EVIDENCE:

A sample of children's files were seen. These contained appropriate information about their health needs and medical history. They also included records of annual medical checks and health information for their Review meetings. A Looked After Children's nurse and medical advisor provide health services for the children.

Carers receive appropriate training in health and hygiene, first aid and health promotion. The annual training programme incorporates Core Skills courses that all carers are expected to attend within their first two years. These courses include 'Promoting Health and Social Wellbeing' and 'First Aid'.

Family Link carers attend core courses in First Aid, Disability Awareness and Moving and Handling People.

In addition to the core courses, the training programme was also seen to include a wide variety of health related courses, including training on Aspergers Syndrome, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Mental Health Awareness and Drugs and Alcohol Awareness. Records showed that many carers had attended these courses.

The Foster Carers' Handbook contains clear and detailed guidance about the carer's role in health promotion. A new appendix has been added to this, giving guidance on administering medication, which includes an administering chart for carers to use when needed.

The fostering team and carers continue to receive support and training from the LOCATE service in caring for children with emotional and behavioural problems. This service is greatly valued by staff and carers and has supported the stability of difficult placements.

# 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 **good**.

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

The service has appropriate methods for recruiting staff and ensuring that they are suitably qualified and supervised. The service provides foster carers who offer a safe, healthy and nurturing environment.

The service has a robust new system in place for matching children to carers.

The service has good systems in place to protect children from abuse and neglect and to follow-up allegations.

The fostering panel is efficiently and effectively organised with thorough decision making processes.

### EVIDENCE:

The service has appropriate recruitment methods in place. These include obtaining written references with telephone follow-up and carrying out CRB checks. The team have a system for renewing CRB checks every 3 years.

The carers' homes visited during the inspection were seen to provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment. The homes were clean and well furnished. Appropriate toys and equipment were seen for the children placed.

Health and safety guidance for carers was seen in their handbooks and training on this was seen included in the courses offered in the training programme.

Health and safety checklists for carers' homes were seen on their files. These are completed by a member of staff from the Family Placement Team and shared with the Panel.

The service has a new matching process. This has been streamlined to assist with finding the most appropriate placements for children. At the time of the inspection it had been operating for one month. Children's social workers now send their referral information to a Placements officer located within the Commissioning Team. The Placements officer then discusses the referral with the Family Placement Team to see if they have an appropriate match. If they don't have one, external providers are then considered using a comparison chart and appraisal system that takes into account the needs of the child and the distance of the placement from the child's home. Staff reported that the new system was working well and had freed up time for the Family Placement Team social workers, as they now only deal with placing children with their own carers. Placement Agreements were seen to contain appropriate information about the children's needs and how they would be met.

The core skills training for all carers includes Child Protection and Safe Caring. This was seen included in the current training programme, along with other related courses. Training records showed that carers had attended this training.

Individual Safe Care policies were seen on carers' files. Children's files showed that appropriate information had been provided to carers to enable them to care for the children safely. An appendix had been added to the Carers' Handbook. This contained detailed and comprehensive guidance.

Records of allegations were seen to be appropriately recorded. One allegation was case tracked as part of the inspection. Appropriate investigations and decisions had been made and clearly recorded. The service makes clear in its Foster Carer Agreement that corporal punishment is not acceptable.

The staff in the team are either qualified social workers, or where unqualified, are appropriately supervised by the team manager. Qualified social workers carry out the assessments of prospective carers.

Observation of the fostering panel and discussion with the panel chair provided evidence that thorough and democratic decision making processes are adhered to.

# 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.

The service is proactive in valuing diversity and meeting children's individual needs.

The service has good systems in place to promote educational achievement.

The Short-break Family Link scheme is well organised and provides a good quality service for disabled children and their families.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The social worker responsible for recruiting foster carers reported that the service is still in need of more black and ethnic minority carers, carers for children with challenging behaviour and therapeutic carers. Adverts have been placed in a variety of papers and have included adverts regarding specific children.

The new matching system operated by the Placements officer includes thorough processes for identifying and matching the needs of children with appropriate carers. The service has recently produced a leaflet giving information on places in Bath that offer hair, beauty and skin care products

and services for children with specific needs in this area, related to their ethnicity.

The service demonstrates an ongoing commitment to the educational needs of children. The Education co-ordinator assists social workers and carers in liaising with schools and ensures that each child has a personal education plan. Copies of these were seen on files. The co-ordinator also keeps records of attainment and exclusion levels for monitoring.

The Group Manager described a recent event held by the Local Authority, that focussed on promoting the educational achievement of Looked After children. The event included presentations and workshops on all aspects of this subject and brought together carers, social workers and education staff to discuss the issues in this area. The group manager felt that the shared budget he now has with education has encouraged closer partnership.

Two carers were able to describe the way that they had worked with a school to promote a child's educational attainment. They had faced significant challenges due to the therapeutic nature of the placement they were providing and had useful suggestions for improving partnership with schools, it is therefore recommended that they meet with team manager to discuss these further.

Files relating to the family link scheme were seen to contain all of the relevant documents and records. The files and discussion with the family link co-ordinator indicated that the scheme continues to be well organised and efficiently run. The handbook for family link carers has been recently revised. This was seen to give clear and comprehensive information to 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):**

10,11

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

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

The service has appropriate systems in place to promote contact between children and their families.

Children are well consulted about the service and play an active role in developing it.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Files showed records of contact as well as appropriate planning and reviewing of this. Information about contact is included in the carers' handbook.

The R2K scheme had recently consulted children about the activities and holidays they had attended and what else they would like to do. A sample of these questionnaires were seen. The children had also contributed to the creation of a Looked After Children's pack, and had been updating a children's comments leaflet for use at carers' reviews.



# 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):

29

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

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

The service has an appropriate system for paying allowances and expenses to carers.

## EVIDENCE:

Clear and detailed information about payments was seen in the carers' handbook. A carer confirmed that she had recently received new information about payments to add to the handbook and was now better informed about what can be claimed for.

# 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):**

17, 20, 21, 24

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

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

The service has a sufficient number of experienced and qualified staff and uses appropriate methods for recruiting and assessing potential carers.

The service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.

The service keeps appropriate case records for the children it places.

## **EVIDENCE:**

At the time of the inspection, the team was fully staffed with appropriately qualified and experienced social workers and other team members.

Staff reported that their caseloads were manageable and that they received excellent support from the team manager and assistant team manager. Inspection of records and discussions with staff indicated that they receive good levels of supervision and training and peer support.

Carers' files showed that appropriate assessments had been carried out. The team has an appropriate strategy for recruiting a range of carers. Records were seen that evidenced this.

The carers' handbook contains clear information about the training opportunities, support and supervision that carers can expect.

Carers reported improved support and working relationships with team staff since the last inspection. One carer had used the out of hours service and found it useful to speak to a familiar member of staff.

Two carers reported improved levels of training and support within the therapeutic care scheme. Social workers involved, now receive the same training as the carers and a core group of people involved in the scheme now meet regularly to discuss issues and development.

One carer had recently completed a BTEC Level 4 course in working with traumatised children, which was funded by the service.

The children's case files were seen to contain all of the necessary information. Carers receive a good level of information about the children placed with them.

Carers are supported to record significant life events for children. One carer showed a photo album that was made for a child that was recently adopted.

# 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>	3
<b>9</b>	3
<b>15</b>	3
<b>30</b>	3

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

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

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	FS13	Meet with therapeutic carers to further discuss their experiences working with education and their ideas for improvements.

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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

### National Enquiry Line

Telephone: 0845 015 0120 or 0191 233 3323

Textphone: 0845 015 2255 or 0191 233 3588

Email: [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk)

Web: [www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)

© This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI