

Peterborough City Council Fostering

Inspection report for LA Fostering Agency

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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The fostering service is managed within Peterborough City Council's children's social care service. The service is due to be relocated from Midgate House to Bayard Place, which will co-locate the fostering service with all children's social care fieldwork teams. Since the previous inspection the management of children's services has been refined and significantly strengthened. Permanent appointments have been made to all management and most social work posts and clear lines of accountability are now identified. There have also been changes in the direct management of the fostering team with the appointment of a second team manager and a separation into two teams with designated responsibilities, one for recruitment and assessment and the other for support and supervision, for foster carers.

The fostering service is responsible for the recruitment, assessment, approval and support of foster carers. These foster carers provide a variety of placements: long and short term, family and friends, task centred, emergency, respite and parent and child. Within the fostering team dedicated workers have responsibility for supporting link carers for children with disabilities and designated workers within the 16 plus team assess and support carers providing supported lodgings placements to young people. A remand fostering scheme is separately managed within the youth offending service.

At the time of completion of the fostering dataset, in June 2008, the service was supporting 188 carer households providing placements to 245 young people.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

In general this was a positive inspection with demonstrated financial investment in, and management commitment to, improving fostering service procedures and practices and bringing about significant changes which will impact positively on outcomes for young people. Managers and staff demonstrate a commitment to providing looked after children with positive experiences and with stable and supportive foster placements. Foster carers consider that they receive good support to provide such placements: 'We have long term good working relationships with the service and have confidence in the social workers we deal with'; 'Respect and fairness for all is the cornerstone of the service we provide'. Staff involved in supporting looked after children's health and educational needs feel that these needs are well recognised by foster carers and that carers are now receiving better support from supervising and placing social workers to meet young people's identified needs in these areas.

Some shortfalls have been identified resulting in eight recommendations being made. Although foster carers are generally meeting young people's assessed racial, ethnic, religious and cultural needs well, written records demonstrating matching considerations are not sufficiently comprehensive. Foster carers are not retaining separate records relating to young people's health. The service has not always responded appropriately to disclosures by young people relating to historical abuse and is currently not always providing a timely response when potential environmental hazards are identified in carers' homes and this can put young people's safety at risk. Risk assessments, around young people's individual presenting behaviours, are not always appropriately incorporated into safe caring policies. Despite having a clear, written complaints procedure, which most young people say they are aware of, young people often seem to raise their concerns through their placing social workers and feel that, when they do this, they often do not get any response. The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) training, support and development standards for foster carers should have been implemented with all foster carers from April 2008 and Peterborough social work staff and carers have a poor awareness of these.

Improvements since the last inspection

The Peterborough City Council fostering service was rated as inadequate in September 2007. During that inspection four requirements and 10 recommendations were identified. At that time the inspectors noted that the fostering service had been under-resourced for some considerable time, had insufficient carers to meet the needs of young people requiring placements and had a serious staffing shortfall, which involved unqualified workers frequently carrying out tasks they were not fully equipped to perform. Many of the staff, including senior managers, were in temporary or acting posts and a number of agency staff were being utilised. A very large number of exemptions to the usual fostering limit were in place, resulting in some carers accommodating more young people than they were able to care for appropriately, and a number of young people had been placed illegally with unapproved family and friends carers. Foster carer recording was inconsistent and was not being monitored well by the service, expectations of carers were not clearly stated, either verbally or in written agreements, and the approval status of many carers was woolly and not subject to appropriate annual review. In many instances the service was unable to adequately demonstrate that young people were wholly safe in their placements.

During the last 10 months there has been substantial reorganisation and restructure within children's services, which has included the appointment of a permanent management team and a much needed increase in qualified social work staff. The fostering team has been split into two teams, pre and post-panel, each with a team manager lead and a dedicated social work compliment. There are now clear lines of accountability. The changes have been well received by staff, who are fully committed to them and enthusiastic about their potential to significantly improve outcomes for young people, and staff morale and commitment is high.

The number of exemptions has been greatly reduced and those which continue are

closely monitored to ensure that carers are able to fully meet young people's identified needs. A comprehensive policy document has been written to detail how family and friends placements are assessed and managed and there is a designated kinship worker. There have already been improvements in the timescales for assessing kinship placements and there is good recognition that further improvements are still needed. There has been a clear focus on ensuring that foster carer reviews are undertaken in a timely manner and these reviews have looked carefully at the carers' approval status to ensure better clarity. Both fostering and placing social workers are very aware of their responsibilities to monitor carer records to ensure that these constitute a fair and accurate record of young people's placements. There has been a commendable focus on improving young people's safety in placement with a revision of household safe care policies, the introduction of a new bedroom risk assessment for young people sharing bedrooms, the use of safe care planning meetings where young people placed pose particular risks, a safer recruitment policy for fostering services staff and the employment of Business Synchronicity Limited to review and revise the systems in respect of foster carer assessment, approval, training and review.

Robust foundations have been established for significant continuing improvements to the fostering service and managers confirm that these will be built on by a period of consolidation to ensure the embodiment of the changes into full practical implementation.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's annual health assessments are conducted in a timely manner, with 91.4% completed on time during 2007/2008. Resulting health care plans are appropriately shared with young people and their carers as well as with fostering and placing social workers, and with the independent reviewing officer, to ensure that essential health information informs the young person's looked after children (LAC) review. All of the young people's files, examined during this inspection, contain copies of good, current health plans. Young people are provided with a health kit bag when attending for their annual health check and this encourages their attendance as well as providing useful equipment to encourage good personal hygiene. The LAC nurse confirms that young people are always given the opportunity, during their health assessment, to speak to the nurse without carers present so that they can discuss issues of concern confidentially if they wish. The health plans examined include a record of the views expressed by young people during the assessment. Close working relationships have been established between the LAC health team and the independent reviewing officers (IRO) with good efforts to co-ordinate the timing of annual health assessments to inform LAC reviews.

The LAC health team are actively involved in the provision of a good range of carer training, covering both general health and well-being and specific conditions such as aspergers and autism, and are also easily accessible to carers and young people for individual advice and support. The young people tracked and visited during this

inspection are in good health and are being supported and encouraged, by their carers, to access necessary health interventions. Young people's health needs are on the agenda for carer supervision and this ensures appropriate monitoring of how well these needs are being met. The LAC nurse feels that carer awareness of young people's health needs has improved and that, across children's services, the health of looked after children has achieved a much higher profile with good management support and valued support from the corporate parenting group. Placing social workers feel that carers meet young people's health needs well: 'In my experience foster carers have, without exception, ensured that the children in their care are provided with healthy, balanced meals'. A healthy care forum is now established to consider the health needs of all looked after children. Of the 13 young people returning questionnaires prior to this inspection 11 feel that they get good health support and advice from their carers.

A policy has been developed to provide guidance for carers on the safe storage and administration of medication and pro-forma medication recording sheets are now issued to all foster carers and their completion is checked as part of the carer supervision process. Carers spoken to during the inspection have good awareness of the new policy and are using the forms appropriately.

Carers are still not retaining a separate health record in relation to the young people placed, except in respect of medication, which can move with a young person and provide an ongoing accessible record for their future reference. The LAC nurse is aware that the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) has developed a health passport pro-forma, which would provide such a record, and is currently seeking funding from the corporate parenting group to implement this document for all young people in foster placements.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Senior staff in the fostering service are appropriately qualified and experienced and some good work has been undertaken, since the previous inspection, in securing the recruitment of additional qualified social workers and in ensuring that unqualified staff are not carrying out work requiring qualified social work skills. Personnel files are well retained and easily accessed and demonstrate that all required checks are thoroughly completed.

A number of the requirements and recommendations, identified during the last inspection, focussed on shortfalls in demonstrating that young people were safe in their placements and the service has prioritised this area for improvement during the last 10 months and has implemented a number of measures: a new health and safety checklist has been introduced and the safety of the foster carer household is assessed annually as part of the annual review process; a new bedroom risk assessment has been developed to consider the potential risks posed by bedroom sharing; additional fostering panels have been held to ensure that all carers have been reviewed and that their approval status is appropriate; all carer households

have a detailed fire plan; all carer households have a written safe care policy in place; there is an increasing focus on carers being required to demonstrate their competencies to provide placements for particular young people.

The safe care policies, examined during this inspection, are comprehensive, clearly dated and subject to appropriate review but are household specific rather than relating to the specific young people currently in placement. Although foster carers, supervising social workers and placing social workers demonstrate a sound awareness of the requirement for appropriate risk assessment in relation to individual young people's presenting behaviours, there is often no written record of these considerations in safe care plans or placement agreements. In completing the annual health and safety assessment of foster carers' homes, supervising social workers are required to identify shortfalls. Where shortfalls are identified, which have the potential to put young people in placement at serious risk, these are not always addressed in a timely manner. During this inspection it was necessary to prompt the fostering service to take immediate action in relation to a potentially very unsafe household situation.

At the time of the previous inspection 58 exemptions to the usual fostering limit were in place affecting 16 households. The number has been significantly reduced to 13, affecting eight households. All exemptions must now be signed off at senior management level, are only agreed subsequent to robust risk assessment and the fostering panel retains good oversight of the use of exemptions. Where exemptions are in place for young people in long term, stable placements they are being removed as those young people move on in a planned way. The fostering service has demonstrated an awareness that, having reduced the number of exemptions in place, it now needs to consider those carers who are approved to take placements from the emergency duty team in addition to having approval for the maximum (three) number of placements. This is work in progress and no recommendation has therefore been made.

The process for matching young people to placements capable of meeting their individual needs has improved. The responsibility for the appropriate matching of placements has been progressively devolved to the Access to Resources Team (ART). This team is now the central point for consideration of placements and has the responsibility for setting up placement planning meetings prior to, or within 72 hours of, a placement being made. The institution of timely placement planning meetings, ensuring the appropriate exchange of relevant information, provides a better grounding for successful and lasting foster placements. Threshold to care meetings have secured a reduction in the number of looked after children in Peterborough and the work undertaken by the ART team, in securing effective working relationships with a number of independent fostering agencies, has improved placement choice. The completion of foster carer profiles, by the fostering team, supports in-house matching of placements well. The ART team has a sound awareness of in-house shortfalls, in terms of foster placements, and is working creatively with independent providers to cover these, for example in securing access to a dedicated Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) bed and a remand bed through an independent agency. Placing social workers have noted an improvement in placement stability: 'Overall the

number of unnecessary placement moves seems to have been reduced. Measures have been put in place to prevent placement breakdowns and these are generally working well'. Although the ART team details that a summary of all activity and considerations informing matching decisions is put onto 'RAISE', the authority's electronic system, neither carers' nor young people's records currently demonstrate how carer skills have been considered against young people's individual, assessed needs.

The young people tracked and visited are appropriately placed with carers providing warm and comfortable accommodation and promoting positive outcomes. The collation of the views of 50 young people accessing the 'viewpoint' electronic questionnaire revealed that 97% felt settled where they lived and felt safe. Young people returning questionnaires are equally positive about their placements with 12 of the 13 saying that they feel safe and happy: 'My carers are just the best'.

Disclosures made by young people to their carers, relating to historical abuse and which should have been referred as child protection matters, have not always been appropriately managed. Records do not always demonstrate that referrals were made in accordance with the authority's child protection procedures or that young people were provided with appropriate support. Foster carers confirm that, at the time of the disclosures, the young people concerned received little input from professionals. In relation to two particular instances, identified during this inspection and which occurred some time ago, full written confirmation of the action taken by the authority was provided to the inspectors. Service managers recognise that poor resourcing and inadequate staffing, of the fostering service in particular and the looked after children's service generally, have resulted in young people not always receiving appropriate social worker input and in inadequate recording. There has been a recent review and strengthening of safeguarding procedures and an expansion of the service to ensure that all young people have an allocated qualified social worker and senior managers have given an assurance that, in the current climate, all serious allegations made by young people will be followed up appropriately.

The fostering panel was not observed during this inspection. In response to a recommendation made during the previous inspection, comprehensive panel guidelines have now been developed and these contain a good range of information and detail how decisions will be made if the panel members are not in agreement. There is a new panel chair who has good, relevant experience and a demonstrated awareness of the training needs of panel members, particularly those who have been recently appointed, and of the quality assurance role of the panel. The chair meets regularly with the service manager, children in care services and feels that there has been a notable tightening up of fostering service procedures in relation to assessment, approval and review of foster carers and a demonstrated commitment to improved support and training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Some positive work has been undertaken to address the ethnic imbalance, noted during the previous inspection, within the fostering service staff team and the carer population. The fostering team is now more representative of the diversity of the Peterborough population and the service has also established closer liaison with multicultural groups within the city and elsewhere, working specifically with New Link, a service which supports new immigrants to the Peterborough area, to advise them of the fostering task and to support the recruitment of prospective carers. Local Mosque leaders have also been approached to help work with children who need support around their cultural identity. Placement planning meetings are generally being used well to identify young people's specific individual needs, including any particular support needs related to their ethnic origin, culture or religious beliefs. However, where potential shortfalls in the matching of placements are identified in relation to ethnicity, the placement planning meeting does not always clarify how these shortfalls will be addressed, although subsequent carer supervision records do clearly detail how these needs are being appropriately met. One placing social worker described a particularly successful placement, with a relatively new carer, where a young person with a learning disability is being consistently supported to develop skills and self-confidence which are greatly enhancing functioning capacity and life chances to promote exceptionally positive outcomes: 'In a very short time this carer has promoted reading ability and facilitated a notable reduction in medication needs'.

There are good foster carer training opportunities around promoting young people's educational achievement and the carer training pack includes a range of useful books and leaflets. The education section of the foster carers' manual has been revised to provide better advice and information for carers to clarify their role in promoting young people's attendance at school and encouraging them to achieve well. The Education Team for Looked After Children (ETLAC) is actively involved in training carers and in supporting and advising both carers and young people to improve young people's educational outcomes. ETLAC workers will be involved in the induction programme for newly appointed fostering service social workers to emphasise the importance of monitoring that carers are actively promoting education. Some good initiatives have been promoted by the ETLAC team such as the reading buddy project, the ability to borrow story sacks for life story work with young children and the provision of computer training for carers. Young people's access to computers is being extended through improvements to the laptop for children scheme at a local level and by accessing computers for pupils monies at a national level. A 'celebrity led' evening of celebration is held to recognise and celebrate the achievements of children in care and is also attended by foster carers and the event assists in raising the aspirations of young people and the profile of education. This year young people are involved in planning this event.

The collation of the views of 50 young people accessing the 'viewpoint' electronic questionnaire revealed that 100% of those young people go to school every day,

95% have somewhere quiet to do their homework and 95% are encouraged to participate regularly in hobbies and sports.

The ETLAC team is responsible for convening Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings for LAC and for ensuring the appropriate involvement of foster carers and young people in compiling the plans. PEP are in place for over 95% of looked after children and, impressively, of the 219 young people in foster placements at the time of this inspection only one is without a current school placement and there are no exclusions. All the young people tracked during this inspection are achieving well educationally and some have gained awards for their achievement. Their carers are proud of their success.

A new policy has recently been developed to establish better clarity and to provide support for young people aged over 18 who remain in education and wish to remain in their foster placement. The continued funding of such placements is now better guaranteed and this is actively supported by reviewing officers.

National Minimum Standard 31 relates to short breaks. No link foster carers have been tracked during this inspection. The scheme was viewed positively by placing social workers and carers at the time of the previous inspection and placements were deemed to be carefully planned and to be meeting young people's identified needs well. This standard has not been inspected on this occasion.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The young people visited and tracked during the inspection are being well supported, by their carers, to retain contact with families. Carers are required to retain records of the impact of contact on young people and these records are reviewed by their supervising social workers. Foster carers of young people in permanent placements are able to make decisions about young people's overnight stays with friends and delegation of this responsibility is increasing. Sometimes young people's requests for contact appear to be responded to very slowly but this is often because there are specific safety concerns to be investigated before arrangements can be put in place. Where risk assessment determines that contact needs to be supervised this is arranged by the placing social worker. Foster carers sometimes feel that they do not receive information, following supervised contacts, in a timely way and that it is important that this information is always shared quickly as it can impact on the young people's subsequent behaviour and on their interactions with the rest of the foster family.

The majority of young people consulted feel that they are listened to by their carers and by social workers and that their views are seen as important: 'J gives me choices and listens to what I want to do and what I have to say'; 'They listen to me and take good care of me'; 'When I have a problem I can talk to my carers about anything'. There are good pro-forma for young people to complete for their own LAC reviews and for foster carer annual reviews and those for LAC reviews are in colourful booklet

form and are age-appropriate. Young people are also actively encouraged to submit their views electronically through 'Viewpoint', an electronic online questionnaire facility, and young people's views expressed this way are accessible to the fostering service managers and are collated by the children's participation officer into an annual report. The first of these reports has highlighted some areas of concern with 19% of young people being unaware what a Personal Education Plan is, 64% of young people not having overnight stays at friends' houses and 63% not having a bank account. Action plans are currently being developed to address these shortfalls, with foster carers, as general training issues. During the last year 94% of LAC gave their comments for their LAC reviews. A quarterly newsletter for LAC keeps them updated about what is happening in Peterborough and provides additional opportunities for consultation.

A designated IRO chairs all young people's LAC reviews and this brings consistency for young people with someone who progressively develops a knowledge of their care history. There is good flexibility within the independent reviewing service for young people's views to be obtained in ways appropriate to their individual needs and preferences. The introduction of the child care review policy clarifies roles and responsibilities in preparing for and attending reviews and there are now better formal processes for the IRO to bring any concerns, arising from a young person's review or from consultation with young people, to the attention of senior managers.

The 'total respect' course is held three times each year and involves young people assisting with foster carer pre-approval training and this year the authority has begun to actively involve young people in the recruitment and selection process for social care staff. Young people have been included on interview panels and a payments system has been introduced for children and young people's participation in training and interviewing. The National Youth Advisory Service (NYAS) has been commissioned, since July 2008, to provide an independent advocacy service for young people. A children in care council is currently being developed to enable a representative group of young people to have planned meetings with the corporate parenting group and with senior managers to enable them to influence fostering service and child care practice. The Children's Participation Officer (CPO) has requested volunteers through the newsletter and has sought nominations from social workers but recruitment is currently proving difficult. Some carers say that the CPO works especially well with individual young people: 'The service the CPO provides for young people is outstanding and thoroughly enjoyed by one of my children'.

All young people are provided with information about how to make a complaint and those consulted confirmed their awareness of the procedure. Sometimes young people raise concerns with their social workers, which they consider to be complaints but which are not making their way into the complaints process, and say that they do not always feel that they receive any response.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

There are no key standards under economic wellbeing. National Minimum Standards under this outcome area were inspected during the previous inspection and this aspect of provision was judged to be satisfactory.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The fostering service Statement of Purpose has been recently reviewed and updated and has been signed off by the corporate parenting group. It clearly details the service structure and range of fostering services provided. A range of young people's guides clarify the implications of being looked after by Peterborough City Council and of being in foster care.

A commendable amount of work has been undertaken in the last 10 months in restructuring the fostering service and in recruiting additional qualified staff to support effective service delivery. The management structure of children's services has been refined and strengthened providing better accountability. There has been significant financial investment in developing the fostering service, which has been split into two teams, pre and post-panel, each with a designated team manager and team of qualified social workers. Staff morale is good and individual staff members are clear about their roles and feel well supported. Staff are developing skills in their own areas of work and the ART team has developed effective systems for working positively with the fostering team. Associate professionals, operating within the local authority, note improved working relationships, which are having a positive impact on outcomes for young people: 'I have worked with foster carers who have not been allocated a support worker but this has greatly improved this year'; 'I've never experienced such a dramatic change right across a service. There is a real commitment at all levels'; 'A professionalisation has taken place'. The imminent proposal to co-locate the fostering team and children's social care teams will further support improved communication.

There has been a proactive campaign to recruit additional foster carers, which commenced in December 2007 and has involved articles in newspapers and periodicals, billboard posters and radio announcements as well as innovative measures such as leaflets distributed with pantomime tickets and adverts on coasters in hotels. A consistent approach has been maintained to keep carer recruitment high on the agenda and this is beginning to pay off with increased enquiries and a number of carers currently going through the assessment process.

Foster carers generally feel that they have effective and supportive relationships with their supervising social workers and carer supervision and annual review is now undertaken in a more professional way. Foster carers made some very positive comments: 'Respect and fairness for all is the cornerstone of the service we provide';

'The service provides advice and assistance when needed as well as practical support in the way of supplying equipment and allowances for child care'. Placing social workers also felt generally positive about the foster placements they visited: 'I have been very privileged to work with a number of children and young people, in excellent foster placements, who are well supported and have made significant progress'.

A comprehensive training programme is accessible to carers and the fostering service has a clearly stated expectation of minimal annual attendance which is well supported by the fostering panel and through the annual review process. The fostering service has employed the services of Business Synchronicity Limited, from April 2008, to streamline the process of foster carer assessment and approval and also to develop the post-approval foster carer support process and systems for annual review. These consultants have worked closely with fostering service staff to improve timescales for the approval process and to link all proposed developments with the capacity to demonstrate carer competence. Although there has been a good focus, in the work undertaken, on introducing a focussed competency framework for foster carers, there is little awareness, either with foster carers or with social work staff, of the children's workforce development standards and no indication that these are being appropriately implemented with carers currently going through the approval process. These standards should be implemented from April 2008.

Informal foster carer support, previously provided by a group of experienced carers, has been much reduced as some of those carers have moved on and some carers miss this support. The service is currently consulting with its carers about their preferred informal support mechanisms. All carers are members of Fostering Network and are able to access independent advice through this organisation. The process for managing allegations has been reviewed and updated and an 'allegations against staff and carers' policy has been introduced which ensures clarity of action in all circumstances and the reduction of time taken to investigate any allegations. There is a clear distinction, within the policy, around the difference between a complaint and an allegation to ensure the correct course of action is taken following any negative comment made by young people, carers or professionals and there is clear designated responsibility for the management of complaints and allegations and for the collection and analysis of relevant data. As detailed under positive contribution, some of the concerns raised by young people, with their social workers, are not making their way through to the formal complaints procedure and are therefore not always being appropriately responded to.

Records relating to carers and young people are well retained and are regularly audited. Carers receive training about the records they should keep in relation to young people's placements and their records are monitored by their supervising social workers as part of the supervision process.

Policies, procedures and systems relating to the assessment, approval and support of family and friends carers were inadequate, at the time of the previous inspection, to demonstrate that the young people in these placements were always safe. The profile of family and friends care has been raised and there are now more timely

assessments and approvals, better checks on carers and family members and improved support and supervision for carers. There has recently been a training day specifically aimed at family and friends carers and those carers are being actively encouraged to take advantage of a wider range of training opportunities. Managers are aware that there are still shortfalls, in relation to family and friends placements, particularly in relation to the timely institution of crucial checks on carers, such as Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and, where young people are already in placement, to securing immediate emergency approval whilst an assessment is conducted.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- provide carers with a written health record for each young person placed in their care to be updated during placement and move with the young person. The administration of any medication should form part of this health record (NMS 12.4)
- ensure that records of placement decisions consider the child's assessed racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic needs, matching them as closely as possible, and demonstrate how any shortfalls will be addressed (NMS 8.5)
- record appropriate consideration of the risks posed by the specific individual behaviours of young people placed, within safe caring guidelines, to fully demonstrate that carers are equipped to provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment to those young people (NMS 6.1, NMS 9.3)
- ensure that written records demonstrate that placement matches have been achieved by means of information sharing and consideration involving all relevant professionals, the child, his/her family and other children in placement and that placement agreements record any shortfalls and how these will be addressed (NMS 8.2, NMS 8.3, NMS 8.4)
- ensure that foster homes are free from avoidable hazards that might expose young people to risk of injury or harm (NMS 6.6)
- protect every child or young person from abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation ensuring that all young people's allegations are responded to in accordance with local authority safeguarding procedures (NMS 9.1)
- ensure that young people receive prompt feedback on any concerns or complaints raised and that all staff are clear about their individual responsibilities in relation to implementing this (NMS 11.5, NMS 25.2)
- raise awareness, of foster carers and social work staff, and ensure appropriate implementation of the CWDC training, support and development standards for foster carers which all carers are expected to work towards from April 2008 (NMS 19.2).