



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

### Five Rivers Holdings

**Wellington Mews  
Wellington Street  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 1XY**

*Lead Inspector*  
**Mr Mike Williams**

*Key Announced Inspection*  
**11th September 2006      01:30**

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

| Reader Information  |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Document Purpose    | Inspection Report                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Author              | CSCI                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Audience            | General Public                                                                                                                                                                            |
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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>                                        | Five Rivers Holdings                                                              |
| <b>Address</b>                                                | Wellington Mews<br>Wellington Street<br>Cheltenham<br>Gloucestershire<br>GL50 1XY |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                                       | 01242 514194                                                                      |
| <b>Fax number</b>                                             | 01242 514239                                                                      |
| <b>Email address</b>                                          | roger.purton@five-rivers.org                                                      |
| <b>Provider Web address</b>                                   | www.five-rivers.org                                                               |
| <b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b> | Five Rivers Consortium (Family Placement) Limited                                 |
| <b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>             | To be appointed                                                                   |
| <b>Type of registration</b>                                   | Fostering Agencies                                                                |

# **SERVICE INFORMATION**

## **Conditions of registration:**

**Date of last inspection**      20th October 2005

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

Five Rivers Family Placement Service is an Independent Fostering Agency operating from six branches across the country and in Ireland. The head office is at Fordingbridge in Hampshire, and the main branch is in Salisbury.

The Cheltenham Branch has been operating since May 2000. At the time of this inspection, the branch provided foster placements for 29 children and young people, and had a total of 34 approved fostering households. The branch covers a wide geographical area, throughout Gloucestershire to Bristol/Bath and the Midlands area. The Registered Manager left the branch mid-August to set up another branch of the company. Prior to leaving, he spent two-weeks handing over to the new manager of the service, who is in the process of becoming the registered manager.

# SUMMARY

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

This inspection was carried out by one inspector over the course of four days. Pre-inspection information was received from the service's new manager and pre-inspection questionnaires from 12 foster carers, 8 young people and 3 placing social workers. During the inspection, the inspector: interviewed the fostering service staff team; interviewed the new manager; attended the Gloucester carers' group; and visited three foster placements in the Midlands area (to speak with the main foster carers and the young people in placement), after having inspected their case records and met with their supervisory social workers. In addition, a variety of documents were inspected in the service's office. Two of the foster placements visited had been approved by the service for about a year - and one young person had recently moved from the one placement to the other. The third foster placement had a young person in a long-term placement with long-term foster carers.

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

All three foster children visited told the inspector that their current foster placements were working very well for them. For their first annual review, new carers visited wrote that: "Overall we feel that Five Rivers [Cheltenham] are very supportive (no matter who you speak to), friendly and I am very happy with the way you operate." For the annual review of long-term carers visited, a social worker wrote that in summary: "I am very happy with [the child's] placement and the excellent care and support [the child] receives."

Specifically, this inspection found that the service continues to do well in relation to providing suitable foster carers and promoting contact. (The suitability of the new manager is to be assessed as part of their registered manager application.)

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

In their questionnaires, in response to the overall question about whether or not what the fostering service does to help them care for their foster children has changed in the last 12 months, 7 carers ticked that it had 'Not changed', 4 ticked that it was 'Better', and 1 said that they had not been a carer long enough to comment.

The staff team highlighted the following changes since the Commission's last inspection in October 2005: the establishment of a fostering panel for this branch of the service; the upcoming addition of two part-time family support workers; an additional part-time administrator; the re-establishment of a

carers' support group; and with the departure of the registered manager and his wife, the arrival of a new manager very experienced in managing local authority fostering services. One of the senior members of the staff team commented that they thought the latter change would definitely improve the service.

Specifically, since the last inspection this inspection found improvements in the following key standards: the above-mentioned fostering panel, and the service having sufficient staff/carers with the right skills/experience.

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

See report's scoring of outcomes, requirements and recommendations, showing minor shortfalls (continued and new) relating to the following standards:

- Matching
- Protecting from abuse
- Promoting development and health
- Suitability to work with children
- Consultation
- Management and support of carers
- Supervision of carers
- Promoting educational achievement and
- Case records for children

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

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

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

## **CONTENTS**

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Statutory Requirements Identified During the Inspection

# Being Healthy

## The intended outcome for this Standard is:

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

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

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

12

Quality in this outcome area is adequate. This judgement has been made using available evidence including this visit to this service.

Young people 'Being Healthy' is achieved by the support and advice they receive from their carers, the training their carers have received, their health checks, and the availability of therapeutic services from the agency. However, the service could give a higher priority to ensuring that information on children's health needs is obtained and passed on to foster carers either before or once a placement is made.

## EVIDENCE:

In response to the young people's survey question 'Do you get support and advice about being healthy?' 4 young people said 'Always', 3 said 'Usually', and 1 said 'Sometimes'.

In pre-inspection data, the manager reported that 100% of children had received an annual health check in the last 12 months and that 2 were receiving a therapeutic service. A registered psychotherapist is based at Five Rivers' main branch in Salisbury, he is employed part-time to undertake pieces of work as and when needed, and is involved with one young person in placement with the Cheltenham branch. In recent months, the service has delivered foster carer training in 'Dealing with sex, sexuality and sexual development' and 'First Aid'.

Children's files include a Medical/Therapy section, and the service tracks Looked After Children documentation received from placing authorities to highlight what documentation has not been received so they can chase it. Lack of receipt of basic health information, which the agency then cannot pass on to the carer, means that sometimes young people's health needs are not

known. In pre-inspection data, the manager therefore identified that the agency could better follow-up placing authority health records.

# Staying Safe

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

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

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

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

3, 6, 8, 9, 15 & 30

Quality in this outcome area is adequate. This judgement has been made using available evidence including this visit to the service.

Young people 'Staying Safe' is achieved by the provision of suitable foster carers, and the agency's fostering panel; but is compromised by minor shortfalls in the service's matching, protection of young people from abuse, and recruitment procedures. (The suitability of the new manager is to be assessed as part of their registered manager application.)

## **EVIDENCE:**

The person managing the fostering service has recently changed. The registered manager left the agency mid-August to set up another branch of the company. Prior to leaving, he spent two-weeks handing over to the new manager of the service, a very experienced local authority fostering service team manager, who is in the process of becoming the registered manager. She has a Post Qualifying Award in Social Work. The new manager's personnel file contained all the information required of persons seeking to manage a fostering service, bar evidence that telephone enquiries had been made to follow up their three written references.

Health and safety checks are completed on foster carers as part of their approval process, and they are subject to annual reviews. All three fostering households visited provided a safe, healthy and nurturing environment, and each young person in placement had a room of their own.

The last inspection of the agency, in October 2005, reported a minor shortfall in relation to matching. This key standard was also the focus of the Commission's May 2006 inspection of Five Rivers' head office in Fordingbridge, following the internal transfer of a young person from a Five Rivers placement in Cheltenham to Salisbury. That inspection judged that "Insufficient information being obtained about young people affects 'matching', and can lead to unstable placements and children being placed at risk of harm." In response, Five Rivers developed a procedure for the 'Transfer of child/young person within Five Rivers'. But this inspection found that this procedure was not fully followed in the case of one young person visited who had recently transferred from one Five Rivers Cheltenham placement to another. The latter carer told the inspector that they had been given very little background information on the young person. The manager explained, and staff and carers confirmed, that a high percentage of placement requests are not pursued – in other words, the service is not under pressure to just put 'heads on beds'. From talking with supervisory social workers, it was evident that placement matching is done – for example, through information sharing with placing social workers and carers – but this is not evident from young people's and carers' files. (One of the workers described how matching criteria is "inside workers' heads".) The manager spoke about moving the service towards using matching grids that are kept on file. A carers group talked about vital pre-placement information available to the agency not being passed on to carers. And one of the carers visited did not know about a written profile on the young person placed with them – about their behaviour patterns that have been of concern – that was in their case file in the office.

The last inspection reported a minor shortfall in relation to protecting young people from abuse and neglect, because not all carers had completed safe caring policies. This inspection found that the first section of children's files is 'Safe Care Policy/Risk Assessment' and that the service provides a Safe Caring Family Policy for each foster home to complete. One of the cases tracked, however, had not completed such a policy. In another case tracked, an Individual Safe Caring Policy had been completed in addition to a family one, but it did not include the carers' practice – which they described to the inspector – in relation to keeping the young person safe after a serious incident, and neither policy was very comprehensive. One of the fostering households visited demonstrated their good practice in relation to caring for a child who has been abused, and made it clear that they don't use any humiliating forms of punishment.

The last inspection reported a minor shortfall in relation to staff's suitability to work with children, because of shortfalls in the recruitment of independent

social workers and some social work staff not having family placement experience prior to their appointment. The latter shortfall has been addressed by the staff's participation in appropriate training. The suitability of the manager to work with children has already been reported. In addition, the personnel file of the other member of staff recruited since the last inspection was inspected. It showed that both of their references had been verified by telephone, but a reference had not been obtained from their most recent employer (which the manager addressed during this inspection) and they had started work before receipt of their Criminal Records Bureau clearance.

The last inspection reported a major shortfall in relation to the service's fostering panel and required the service to establish a new panel to serve the Cheltenham branch. This has now been done and the new Cheltenham panel also serves Five Rivers' Ripley branch. This panel was not observed during this inspection because it was observed during the Commission's June 2006 inspection of the Ripley branch, when it was assessed as meeting this key standard. The manager of the Cheltenham branch confirmed – in response to points about the panel in the Ripley inspection report – that: panel endeavours to seek educational representation; a vice chair is being clarified; within the company's policies and procedures, panel procedures is a document in its own right; and panel procedures clearly state how decision making is managed in cases of disagreement.

# Enjoying and Achieving

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

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

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

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

7 & 13

Quality in this outcome area is adequate. This judgement has been made using available evidence including this visit to this service.

Young people are 'enjoying and achieving' as a result of the service valuing diversity, but the promotion of their educational achievement is driven more by their carers than the service itself.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Since the last inspection, the service has run a 'Workshop on Intolerance' for foster carers, and the service's part-time family support worker has attended Diversity training. The service's one foster child with 'Black/Black British' ethnicity is placed with a main carer who is 'Black', who spoke at the carers' group the inspector visited about meeting the child's individual cultural needs.

The service keeps track of education documentation they have received on children placed with them, which shows that in the majority of cases they have not received the majority of this documentation, and they therefore have to request it. In the case of the three foster children visited, the service had not received any education documentation for two of them, and just over half of it – a personal education plan, an individual education plan, a statement of special educational needs, and a school review – for one of them.

The inspector met a young person – and their current and previous main carers – who had recently transferred from one of the service's placements to another. They entered their previous placement while excluded from school

and only after two months started attending part-time educational provision. They moved placements to start at a new school – suggested by their new carer - on the first day of the new school year. After two weeks at the school, they had received three merits. While acknowledging that the service is not responsible for educational placements, on hindsight the previous carer was of the opinion that the service could have “most definitely” given them more help to get the young person into an educational provision sooner. Also the service put limited arrangements in place for the young person’s structured occupation during school hours. The supervisory social worker of the other carers visited reported in their 2005 annual review that they “...have nurtured and maintain excellent liaison with [their foster child’s] school and through this direct influence have prevented [them] being excluded...”. And they explained that the young person’s current school placement was pretty much down to the carers’ advocacy.

# **Making a Positive Contribution**

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

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

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

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

10 & 11

Quality in this outcome area is adequate. This judgement has been made using available evidence including this visit to this service.

Young people 'Making a Positive Contribution' is achieved through the service's promotion of their contact, but not through the service's current level of consultation with them.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Each of the three carers visited had positively promoted their foster child's family contact – for example through transporting and telephoning - in line with agreed arrangements. Where a carer was not making headway with the placing social worker with contact for their foster child, their supervisory social worker was assisting. Each child's file has a section on contact. Supporting contact is due to be part of the role of the service's increased family support worker provision.

The last inspection reported a minor shortfall in relation to the service's consultation with children, recommending that they continue to develop consultation systems to ensure that the opinions and views of children are sought on all matters affecting them. Although foster children are formally consulted as part of their carers' annual review and for their own Looked After Children review, the new manager acknowledged that the service currently does not have consultation groups for either foster children or birth children, and that they need to engage with them more actively. She had already written to carers about the 'Involvement of Birth Children and Fostered Children [aged 15 or over] in our Interview process'.

# **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):**

(The Commission does not consider Standards 14 & 29 key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.)

**EVIDENCE:**

# Management

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

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

**The Commission considers Standards 17, 21, 24 and 32 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.**

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

17, 21, 22 & 24

Quality in this outcome area is adequate. This judgement has been made using available evidence including this visit to this service.

‘Management’ is effective in relation to the agency having sufficient staff/carers with the right skills/experience, but not fully effective in relation to management and support of carers, supervision of carers, and case records for children. If management performance in two areas – complaints practice and

children's case records – is not addressed, it is likely to lead to an overall judgement of 'poor' for this outcome area in the future.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The Commission's last inspection reported a minor shortfall in relation to the sufficiency of staff because there had been a significant staff shortage. This is not the case now, with the service's staffing resources having grown. The service's team members are now: an experienced fostering service manager, who joined at the end of July 2006; two senior supervisory social workers; one supervisory social worker; one part-time family support worker (to be joined by another two in October 2006); and one full-time and one part-time administrator (allowing the former to undertake the administration role for the fostering panel). It is envisaged that each of the service's three different geographical areas will be covered by a supervisory social worker working with a family support worker, allowing the former to focus more on the social work tasks of recruiting, assessing and supporting carers.

The last inspection also reported a minor shortfall in relation to the management and support of carers, recommending the development of a system to monitor carers' annual reviews and of foster carer support groups across the agency's area. This inspection found that out of the three cases tracked one carer's annual review was significantly overdue - despite the agency's new tracking system - and the service was only running a support group in Gloucester (to which Cheltenham/Bristol/Bath carers are also invited). Four carers (one from Bristol) and three staff attended the Gloucester group the inspector observed. The service is therefore looking at developing another support group in the Midlands area, which two Midlands carers visited said they would welcome. All three carers visited were more than satisfied with the support they had received from their supervisory social workers. One explained that it was because they knew "the 'back up' wasn't there" that they didn't foster with another agency. Two had used the agency's out-of-hours support service and found that it worked well when they needed it. The inspector found that respite care support for carers was variable, with two carers commenting – when the inspector contacted them to follow up points in their questionnaires - that it was hard to arrange locally and it had to be arranged by them. Communication between the agency's and the children's social workers is facilitated by the former sending the latter a copy of the 'Compulsory Monthly Summary' written by carers.

The last inspection reported a minor shortfall in relation to supervision of carers, recommending that the service amend its complaints procedure to clarify certain matters. The new manager explained the issues in question during this inspection. In May 2006, the Commission received a complaint about one of the agency's foster placements, from a placing social worker on

behalf of two children who had been in the placement. The social worker had previously complained to the agency about the matter in February 2006. The carers' supervisory social worker explained that part of the reason for the delay in the service dealing with this complaint was due to them reporting on the matter to their manager at a time when the manager had to temporarily absent himself from the agency. The worker acknowledged that in hindsight he could have been more pro-active regarding the complaint knowing his manager's situation. The manager wrote to the social worker and the Commission about the complaint in June 2006, acknowledging that one issue still needed to be completed, but this issue was still on-going at the time of this inspection. Supervising social workers meet regularly with foster carers – unannounced occasionally – but this was not always evident from records of supervisory meetings in foster carer's files.

Separate case files – with a comprehensive index of contents – are opened for each child placed, and the files for each of the children visited were inspected. As the agency's spreadsheet for tracking Looked After Children documentation showed, a significant amount of this documentation was not in children's case records, leaving the agency to send letters to chase it. Carers are paid for returning monthly reports on the foster child to the agency, which aide the recording of significant life events for the child. As reported under 'matching', one of the carers visited did not know about a written profile on the young person placed with them – about their behaviour patterns that have been of concern – that was in their case file in the office.

(Key standard 32 is not applicable to this service.)

# 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> |
| <b>12</b>          | 2            |

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

| ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i>     | <i>Score</i> |
| <b>7</b>               | 3            |
| <b>13</b>              | 2            |
| <b>31</b>              | N/A          |

| MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i>             | <i>Score</i> |
| <b>10</b>                      | 3            |
| <b>11</b>                      | 2            |

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

| MANAGEMENT         |              |
|--------------------|--------------|
| <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>          | X            |
| <b>21</b>          | 2            |
| <b>22</b>          | 1            |
| <b>23</b>          | X            |
| <b>24</b>          | 2            |
| <b>25</b>          | X            |
| <b>26</b>          | X            |
| <b>27</b>          | X            |
| <b>28</b>          | X            |
| <b>32</b>          | N/A          |

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

YES

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

| No. | Standard      | Regulation              | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Timescale for action |
|-----|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1.  | FS12          | 17 (3) (a)              | The fostering service must make it an even higher priority to ensure that full health information is obtained, in relation to any child placed, from the placing authority and passed on to the foster carers, either before or once the placement is made.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 31/01/07             |
| 2.  | FS8 &<br>FS24 | 33 (b)                  | The fostering service must ensure that a child is only placed with a particular foster parent if this is the most suitable placement having regard to all the circumstances. (To this end: the service's procedure for the internal transfer of a child must be followed where applicable; placing authority information on the child – for example in Looked After Children documentation – must be known to the service and potential carers; and 'matching' must be evident from children's and carer's files). | 31/01/07             |
| 3.  | FS15          | 20(3)<br><br>Schedule 1 | The fostering service must not employ a person until they have established that they are fit for the purpose.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 01/01/07             |
| 4.  | FS13          | 16                      | The fostering service must promote the educational                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 31/01/07             |

|    |      |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |          |
|----|------|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
|    |      |        | attainment of children placed with foster parents, in particular by: obtaining all relevant education documentation; and in the case of children excluded from school, supporting carers to get them educational provision, and putting in place arrangements for their structured occupation during school hours. |          |
| 5. | FS30 | 24 (4) | The service's fostering panel must appoint a vice chair, who will act as chairperson in the absence of the appointed chairperson.                                                                                                                                                                                  | 31/01/07 |
| 5. | FS22 | 18     | The fostering service must take action in response to any complaint made in line with its written procedure/timescales for considering complaints.                                                                                                                                                                 | 01/01/07 |

## 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.  | FS3               | The fostering service should make telephone enquiries to follow up written references on all persons working for the service.                                                                                                                       |
| 2.  | FS9               | The fostering service should ensure that written safe caring guidelines are in place for all foster homes and are sufficiently comprehensive.                                                                                                       |
| 3.  | FS11              | The fostering service should continue to develop consultation systems to ensure that the opinions and views of children are sought on all matters affecting them.                                                                                   |
| 4.  | FS21              | As part of the management and support of carers, the fostering service should ensure that: annual reviews take place; foster carer support groups are developed across the area the agency serves; and respite care is available where appropriate. |
| 5.  | FS22              | The fostering service should ensure that foster carers' files include records of all supervisory meetings.                                                                                                                                          |

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

Gloucester Office

Unit 1210

Lansdowne Court

Gloucester Business Park

Brockworth

Gloucester, GL3 4AB

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120

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

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

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