

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

Five Rivers Family Placement Service

**43a Oxford Street
Ripley
Derbyshire
DE5 3AH**

Lead Inspector
**Jenny Thornton
Nancy Bradley**

Announced
9th May to 13th May 2005

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

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

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

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

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

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

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SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of service	Five Rivers Family Placement Service
Address	43a Oxford Street, Ripley, Derbyshire, DE5 3AH
Telephone number	01773 745360
Fax number	01773 512972
Email address	fpsripley@five rivers .org
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Five Rivers Family Placement Ltd
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Ms Madeleine Hall
Type of registration	Independant Fostering Agency
No. of places registered (if applicable)	N/A
Category(ies) of registration, with number of places	Listed in the conditions of registration

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

The Fostering service provides placements for children and young people aged between 0 and 18 at the time of placement.

The fostering service provides short, medium and long term placements.

The range of needs of children placed can include the following categories:

Children with Physical disabilities

Children with learning disabilities

Children with emotional or behavioral difficulties

Children with mental disorder

Children with present drug dependence

Children with present alcohol dependence

Children with sensory impairment

Within six months of registration the registered manager commences N.V.Q Level 4 in management (or an alternative management qualification that matches the competencies required by the N.V.Q Level 4.)

Within one month of registration the Agency provides a copy of the written risk assessment of the premises.

Within one month of registration the Agency provides an up-to-date report from Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service as to required fire precautions for the premises.

Date of last inspection New service

Brief Description of the Service:

The fostering service is part of Five Rivers Family Placement Limited, which has 8 branches throughout England and Ireland. The Derbyshire office has been in operation since November 2004, and provides short, medium and long term placements for children and young people aged between 0 to 18 years. The range of needs of children placed are listed in the conditions of registration. A total of 13 children and young people were placed with the Derbyshire office. The service had 12 approved foster carers. The fostering service recruits, registers, and provides ongoing support to new and existing carers.

SUMMARY

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

The Inspection was announced and took place over 5 days. This was the first inspection since the Agency was registered in November 2004.

As part of the Inspection 6 carer's and 8 young people were visited. The Responsible Individual and 3 staff employed by the Agency were interviewed. Records were examined and questionnaires were received from foster carer's, young people and Placing Authorities using the service.

What the service does well:

The Agency has good systems in place and is well managed. The Derbyshire branch of Five Rivers Agency provides a personal service to foster carers and young people. Staff work well as a team and in partnership with other agencies. The recording of information by staff and foster carer's was of a consistent high standard.

All foster carer's felt valued and well supported by the Agency. Foster carers received regular supervision, which was clearly recorded. The Agency has a clear pre and post approval-training programme to ensure that foster carer's have the appropriate skills to care for young people. There are clear procedures in place for the assessment of new foster carers, which ensures that appropriate people are recruited. The standard of assessments for new foster carer's was very detailed.

The Agency has clear arrangements in place to communicate with foster and young people. The Agency promotes young people's safety and contact with family, friends and significant others. The Agency actively supports young peoples achievements in education. Arrangements are in place to ensure that young people are well supported; as a result there has been no placement breakdowns.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The Agency has not previously been inspected.

This inspection showed that the Agency has made good progress towards meeting National Minimum Standards and the Fostering Regulations.

What they could do better:

The Agency needs to further develop ways in which it consults with young people. The Agency needs to put in place individual risk assessments for all young people using the service. The Agency needs to continue to request all essential information from Placing Authorities to ensure young people's needs are appropriately met.

The Company needs to put in place a clear training programme for staff to enhance their skills. Arrangements need to be strengthened to ensure the Manager receives regular supervision.

The Agency needs to continue to recruit a range of foster carers from multi cultural background to meet the needs of young people. The Agency needs to further develop the mentoring support scheme for new foster carers. The Foster Carer's Agreement requires updating to include all the essential information.

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

The full report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Standards

Statutory Requirements Identified During the Inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- 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 outcomes for standard(s) 12

The Agency promotes young people's health needs and procedures are in place to obtain essential information relating to their health needs.

EVIDENCE:

Young people said that their health needs were being met, and records supported this. Foster carer's had a clear understanding of their role in promoting young peoples' health needs. Young people were registered with a G.P. and were supported to attend health appointments. The records showed that the Agency had clear arrangements in place to obtain all essential information relating to the young peoples' health needs. Young people had a health record. The Agency had identified that two young peoples immunisation details were incomplete, and that signed consent to receive emergency treatment had not been obtained for one young person. This information had been requested on several occasions from the young people's social workers.

Foster carers said that they had received training on health and hygiene issues as part of the pre-approval training, and were required to complete a first aid course as part of the post approval-training programme. Records showed that the majority of foster carers had completed first aid training in their previous employment.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes 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, and 15 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 3 6 8 9 15

The staff team have the appropriate experience and skills to support young people and foster carers. Procedures are in place, which promote young peoples safety and welfare, and to ensure they are protected.

EVIDENCE:

The Agency follows detailed procedures when recruiting new staff and foster carers. Records showed that necessary checks had been carried out to ensure that staff and foster carer's were suitable to work with children. The required information and documents had been obtained for the three staff employed. Although one staff's file highlighted a gap in their employment history, which the Manager said she had followed up on interview but had not been recorded.

The social work staff have many years experience in the field of social care and fostering, and have appropriate knowledge and skills to support young people and foster carers.

The Agency had made good progress in completing individual risk assessments on young people recently placed. The Registered Manager planned to complete a risk assessment for all young people.

Foster carers home visited were found to be safe and homely. Several young people said that they were felt part of the family and had a say in decorating their bedroom.

Foster carers said that they had a say as to who is placed with them, as to whether they felt they have the skills to meet the young persons needs. Initial information received from social workers about young people was often brief. However it was clear from discussions with foster carers and staff that considerable work goes into ensuring that young people are appropriately placed with fosters carers capable of meeting their needs. The importance of ensuring young people are appropriately, placed with foster carers is stated in the Agency's policies and procedures. The Agency supports young people and foster carers to meet and to get too know each other, prior to making a decision about whether they consider the placement is in their best interest. Newly approved foster carers had completed an information book about their family and home, for young people's consideration.

The Agency has clear procedures in place to promote young peoples' safety and welfare. Conversations with young people and returned questionnaires indicated that young people felt safe in their foster home. Foster carers confirmed that they had received training on safe caring, prior to and following their approval. The Agency had made good progress in completing individual safe caring policy on young people; staff and foster carers said that all relevant persons were involved in completing this. A copy of the policy is made available to the young person's social worker. Individual safe caring policies were not signed or dated.

Since the Agency was registered in November 2004 there have been no reported incidents of poor care involving a young person in a foster carer's home.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes 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 standard(s) 7 13

The Agency is relatively new and has made good progress in recruiting foster carers from a variety of backgrounds to meet the diverse needs of the young people. The Agency needs to continue to recruit foster carers from different backgrounds, to meet the demand for placements.

High priority is given to young peoples' educational needs to help them achieve their potential.

EVIDENCE:

Young people said that they are encouraged to follow their personal interest and hobbies.

The Manager said that the Agency was continuing to recruit a range of foster carer's, to meet the demand for placements and young peoples' needs, such as young people with a physical or learning disability, or from a multi-cultural background.

The young peoples' educational achievements were well documented. However two young people did not have a fully completed personal educational plan. Young people said that foster carer's gave them help and support with their schoolwork and education. It was clear from discussions with foster carer's that they have developed good relationship with local schools and attend parent evenings and events.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes 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 standard(s) 10 11

Contact with family and friends is actively promoted and supported. Young people feel that their views are listened to and acted upon. However the Agency needs to develop more formal ways of obtaining young peoples' views on the service.

EVIDENCE:

Young people said that they have regular contact with family and friends where there are no restrictions on contact. Young peoples' records set out their contact arrangements. It was clear from discussions with foster carer's that they supported young peoples' contact with family and friends.

Young people said that they are listened to and are asked about issues involving their care and the service; this was mainly done on an informal basis. The Manager acknowledged the need to put formal procedures in place to obtain young peoples' views about the service. The Manager was in discussion about setting up a support group for young people using the service.

Young people said they felt able to raise any concerns and knew how to make a complaint, and felt that issues were acted upon.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes 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)

The Commission considers Standards 29 the key standard to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 14 29

Importance is given to helping young people to develop daily living skills in preparation for independent living.

Foster carer's allowances are paid promptly and cover the full cost of caring for young people.

EVIDENCE:

The Agency has provided clear guidance for foster carer's to assist young people with daily living skills. Foster carer confirmed that they had received training on preparing a young people to move onto independent or semi-independent living. One young person had an after care worker and a pathway plan preparing her for independent living, although there were on immediate plans for her to move on. It was clear from discussions with the young person that she was being supported to develop her daily living skills.

Foster carer's confirmed that they had received clear information as too what allowances included. Foster carers considered that the amounts paid covered the full cost of caring for the young people living with them, and said that payments are paid promptly. Records showed that payments and allowances are reviewed annually.

Management

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- There is a clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and of what facilities and services they provide.(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 cares 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, and 24 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 1, 4, 5, 16, 17 20,21, 22, 23, 24, 26

The service is well managed and the procedures and management support in place ensures staff and foster carers are able to fulfil their roles.

EVIDENCE:

The Agency has a detailed Statement Of Purpose and Children's Guides', which clearly shows the services provided. These contained the required information.

The Agency provides two Children's Guide for the different age groups. These were in an appropriate language and attractively set out with age appropriate pictures, which is to be commended.

Procedures were in place to monitor the care and services provided, and to ensure that the Agency is well managed. The Manager had produced a clear annual plan which set out how the priorities for this year. The Agency has identified the need to appoint a Regional Director to support the Registered Manager and the development of the service.

The Agency has a clear complaints procedure. Foster carer's and young people said that they were aware of this. The Manager confirmed that no complaints have been received about the service since it was registered.

The Registered Manager had started a management course to further develop her skills. Staff worked well together and felt well supported by the manager. There have been no changes to the staff employed at the Agency since it was registered, resulting in consistency for foster carer's and young people. Staff reported that their training and development needs were supported. Interviews with staff and records showed that staff had attended various training in the last year, and that staff's training and development needs were planned through their annual appraisal and monthly supervision. Staff received information on various training courses, although the Agency did not have a clear training programme for staff.

The office premises were refurbished to a good standard prior to registration of the Agency. The premises are considered appropriate for their purpose. A security system was installed; the Manager acknowledged the need to review procedures for when staff worked alone in the office such as out of hours. The premises were adequately insured and public liability insurance was provided; the insurance certificate was in the holding Company's name, instead of the Company to which the Agency is registered. The Inspectors are taking advice on this matter.

Staff confirmed that the Agency had introduced regular managers meetings, for all managers within Five Rivers Family Placement Ltd, which has proved beneficial in jointly reviewing practices and procedures. The Manager confirmed that the Agency's policies and procedures had been jointly reviewed through the managers meetings. These have yet to be printed.

The Agency was registered in November 2004 with four foster carers; the number of carers had now increased to twelve. Further foster carer's were being assessed to meet the current demands of the service. Clear procedures are in place relating to the assessment of potential foster carer's. The assessments examined on this inspection were detailed, and contained supporting information relating to foster carer's previous experience and skills.

Both social workers had recently attended training to further strengthen the assessment process.

Records showed that necessary checks had been carried out to ensure that foster carer's were suitable to work with children. The Agency's procedures required that staff checked the proof of foster carer's identity, but did not require that copies of relevant documents were saved on their file.

Foster carer's records showed that they received a good level of support. Foster carer's confirmed this. Foster carer's said that the out hours service works well. The Agency has established a local foster carer's group which foster carer's said provided a good level of support and training. Minutes of the meetings supported this. The Agency was setting up a mentor support scheme to support less experienced carers. This scheme was in the early stages of development and not all newly approved carers were linked with a named experienced foster carer.

All foster carer's felt valued for the role they undertake. Discussion with foster carer's and records showed that carer's received regular supervision visits from their support worker, which carers found beneficial. Records of supervision visits clearly set out the purpose of the visit and issues discussed, and had been signed by the foster carer, support worker and the manager.

The Agency employs a training officer, which ensures a good level of training for foster carer's. The Agency has a clear pre and post approval-training programme for foster carer's. Records showed that foster carer's had attended a good range of training and development. Foster carers were encouraged to attend a national training course in childcare. A number of the carers had attended alternative training.

The recording of information by staff and foster carer's was of a consistent high standard. Records looked at on this inspection were clearly set out and indexed. This related to both foster carer's and staff records. Foster carers had received training on the importance of keeping good records, and kept appropriate records in their home. Foster carer's were required to complete a monthly report on young people's progress, which was sent to the Agency and made available to young people's social workers. The reports contained a good level of information.

There were good examples of information being shared with other agencies. Clear arrangements were in place for requesting and following up essential information about young people from their social workers. The Agency had identified some shortfalls in information and had requested this several times, but it had not been received. Details of this are covered in the report.

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. Where there is no score against a standard it has not been looked at during this inspection.

4 Standard Exceeded (Commendable) **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)
2 Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls) **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

"N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	3

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

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

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

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

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

N/A

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action
1.	3	20	The Agency must provide a satisfactory written explanation of any gaps in employment for staff.	31 July 2005
2.	12	15	The Agency must ensure that signed consent is obtained for all young persons to receive emergency treatment.	31 July 2005
3.	16	21	The Agency must ensure that the Registered Manager receives regular recorded supervision.	31 August 2005
4.				

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.	12	All foster carer's should receive basic training on first aid prior to their approval.
2.	12	The agency should continue to promote that all young people have complete immunisation details.
3.	6	Individual risk assessments should be completed for all young people.
4.	8	All foster carers should complete an information book about their family and home. This should be made

		available to young people prior to them moving in.
5.	9	Individual safe caring policies should be signed and dated.
6.	17	Resources should be put in place to enable the Agency to increase the range of foster carers to meet children/young people's needs.
7.	11	The Agency should develop ways in which it obtains young people's views about the service.
8.	13	The agency should continue to promote that all young people have a completed personal educational plan.
9.	17	The Agency's procedures should require that copies of relevant documents pertaining to a foster carer's identity are kept on their files.
10.	22	The Agency should further develop the mentor support scheme to support less experienced carers.
11.	19	The Agency should put in place a staff training and development programme to enhance staff's skills.

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