



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

**Partners in Parenting Limited**

**Avondale  
132 Rampton Road  
Willingham  
Cambridge  
CB4 5JF**

*Lead Inspector*  
Lindsey Blickem

*Key Announced Inspection*  
17th October 2006      10:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# SERVICE INFORMATION

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Name of service</b>  | Partners in Parenting Limited                                      |
| <b>Address</b>  | Avondale<br>132 Rampton Road<br>Willingham<br>Cambridge<br>CB4 5JF |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                                       | 01954 781642   |
| <b>Fax number</b>   | 01954 781691   |
| <b>Email address</b>  |  |
| <b>Provider Web address</b>                                   |  |
| <b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b> | Partners in Parenting Limited                                      |
| <b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>             | Neil Anthony Fernandez   |
| <b>Type of registration</b>                                   | Fostering Agencies   |

# SERVICE INFORMATION

## Conditions of registration:

**Date of last inspection**      10th October 2005

## Brief Description of the Service:

Partners in Parenting is a small Independent Fostering Agency that has been set up to provide an efficient and personalised fostering service to Local Authorities. Partners in Parenting is a company Limited by Guarantee and not having a share capital.

The members of the company are Elaine Barry, Neil Fernandez and Steve Holland all of whom are directors of the company with Mr Fernandez and Ms Barry holding executive roles within the company and acting as the Registered Manager and Responsible Individual respectively. At the time of inspection the number of foster carers with the agency was twenty-one. Partners in Parenting provide foster families for children of all ages and the types of placements offered include Emergency and Respite placements, placements for sibling groups, Rehabilitation to the child's birth family or previous placement, placements for children with physical and or learning disabilities and placements for children requiring a family on a long-term basis.

Partners in Parenting are based in the village of Willingham, which is easily accessible from the M11 and the A14.

# **SUMMARY**

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

This inspection was undertaken with Paula Edwards, Contracts Unit, Cambridgeshire County Council. Two young people's cases were tracked as a part of this inspection and included talking to two sets of foster carers, the two young people and the support social workers. Interviews were also held with the responsible individual and the registered manager. Questionnaires were sent to young people, foster carers and placing social workers. A good number were returned completed and informed the inspection findings. Foster carers case files were inspected as were records relating to children and young people. Paula Edwards attended the fostering panel held on The 10th November 2006.

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

Foster carers working on behalf of Partners in Parenting offer young people a very high standard of care.

Young people's education is extremely well supported and encouraged.

Foster carers provide placements for young people that are healthy and nurturing.

Young people's potential and individual interests are encouraged in a very positive way.

The standard of Form F assessments seen at the time of the inspection were extremely high.

The calibre of staff working for the agency was highly impressive.

The fostering panel continued to operate efficiently and effectively.

The agency remains extremely well managed.

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

The agency has continued to recruit a very high standard of foster carers.

The agency has provided a consistently high standard of service to foster carers and young people.

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

The management team were considering developing new ways of effectively consulting with young people.

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

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# 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 the outcome area is excellent. Foster carers provided young people with excellent health care.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Both fostering households seen during the inspection provided healthy and nurturing environments for the children and young people. Young people were encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles and good social networks. It was commendable that young people relatively new in placement had quickly settled into the local community and had a circle of friends.

Young people's health needs were regularly reviewed as part of the support social worker's supervisory visits and carers ensured that young people attended routine medical appointments.

Partners in Parenting had been able to provide successful specialist placements for young people with severe health issues.

# 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 excellent. Young people were provided with safe and nurturing placements.

### **EVIDENCE:**

There was no change in the suitability of the management team since the last inspection.

The two sets of foster carers seen during the inspection provided excellent care for the young people living with them. The carers were very attentive to the young people in their care and ensured that each young person was provided with a nurturing family environment where their individual potential was explored and encouraged.

Appropriate health and safety safeguards were in place within each of the foster carers homes, which were reviewed regularly by the support social worker.

A number of carers reported through the completed questionnaires that at times there was inadequate or misleading pre placement information about a young person. The management team acknowledged that this was, at times, a problem. The referral process was relatively robust although it relied heavily upon placing authorities furnishing the service with accurate information. It

would seem therefore that the comments made by carers in relation to pre placement information was more a reflection on placing authorities than on the fostering service.

The two placements tracked through this inspection were very well matched to the foster carers. There had been a small number of placement disruptions since the last inspection although these had been managed sensitively and appropriately by the fostering service. The potential for disruptions were recognised at the earliest opportunity to allow for alternative arrangements to be made in a planned and sensitive manner.

Foster carers received training in child protection and there were clear expectations upon them in relation to reporting or managing child protection concerns. The fostering services child protection protocols were appropriately robust and managed effectively when activated.

The one personnel file seen during the inspection contained all the required recruitment and vetting checks.

The fostering panel observed as part of this inspection was extremely well managed and the discussions between professionals sitting on panel were robust. The panel provided an invaluable quality control mechanism for the fostering service.

# 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 & 31

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. Foster carers promoted education for young people in the most positive and effective way.

## **EVIDENCE:**

There was one specific example of carers acknowledging and encouraging young people to explore their own cultural heritage in a positive way. This was despite the carers coming from a different cultural background. The general attitude displayed by carers was one of treating each child as an individual with unique potential that must be encouraged.

All the young people seen during the inspection had successful educational placements. Both sets of foster carers seen during the inspection had had difficulties sourcing educational placements for the young people in their care, with persistence the carers had managed to find each of the young people good schools. The carers are to be commended for their hard work and positive attitude towards education.

The fostering services short term break policy was unchanged since the last inspection.

## **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 good. Young people were supported and encouraged with contact arrangements and were provided with good opportunities for consultation.

### **EVIDENCE:**

There were clear expectations on carers to promote contact between young people and their families. There were examples of carers enabling and facilitating high levels of contact.

The majority of young people who completed the questionnaire felt listened to by their foster carers and that their views were responded to. Each young person able to was given the opportunity to feed back to the fostering service about his or her placement during the annual review process. It was a clear expectation upon support social workers that young people should be spoken to during supervisory visits.

The fostering service had provided other opportunities for young people to express their views such as a texting service and activity days.

The management team were considering other ways of consulting young people in a meaningful and effective way.

# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

- The fostering service prepares young people for adulthood.(NMS 14)
- The fostering service pays carers an allowance and agreed expenses as specified.(NMS 29)

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

29

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. Foster carers were supported very well financially by the fostering service.

## EVIDENCE:

Partners in Parenting continued to pay carers a very favourable fostering allowance compared with other local independent fostering providers. There was provision for the service to make extra ordinary payments to carers to provide young people with positive experiences.

# 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 & 24

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. Foster carers were provided with excellent support and the quality of foster carer assessments were outstanding.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The quality of foster carer assessments was outstanding. The fostering service is to be commended for producing such consistently excellent work. This was a clear reflection on the high calibre of staff working within the service.

Both sets of carers seen during the inspection and those carers who responded through the questionnaire reported receiving a high level of support from their support social worker. It was apparent that each carer was provided with support geared towards their particular needs. Each support visit was recorded and the children's and carer's files were very well maintained.

The format of foster carer support groups had changed since the last inspection. It was clear that the new format was not working well and the service were reviewing this situation. It was recognised that there was a need to experiment with the format in a measured way.

The majority of carers reported that they found training very useful although there were some comments that it was at times difficult to get to training events. The service had tried to implement some flexibility with the times of training events although it appeared very difficult to get to a position where all carers were satisfied with the arrangements.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services have been met and uses the following scale.

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

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion  
 "N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

| <b>BEING HEALTHY</b> |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i>   | <i>Score</i> |
| <b>12</b>            | 4            |

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

| <b>ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING</b> |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i>            | <i>Score</i> |
| <b>7</b>                      | 3            |
| <b>13</b>                     | 4            |
| <b>31</b>                     | 3            |

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

| <b>ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b> |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i>                  | <i>Score</i> |
| <b>14</b>                           | X            |
| <b>29</b>                           | 4            |

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

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

**STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

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

| No. | Standard | Regulation | Requirement | Timescale for action |
|-----|----------|------------|-------------|----------------------|
|     |          |            |             |                      |

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

These recommendations relate to National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice for the Registered Provider/s to consider carrying out.

| No. | Refer to Standard | Good Practice Recommendations |
|-----|-------------------|-------------------------------|
|     |                   |                               |

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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