

FOSTERING INSPECTION

Responsible Cabinet Member(s) – Councillor Eleanor Lister, Social Services Portfolio

Responsible Director(s) - Margaret Asquith, Director of Social Services

Purpose of Report

1. To present a summary of the National Care Standards Commission's Inspection of Darlington Borough Council's Fostering Service (2004).

Information and Analysis

2. The National Care Standards Commission's Inspectorate undertook an Inspection of Darlington's Fostering Service over two weeks, commencing 24th February 2004. The Inspection was carried out by two Inspectors. This was the second annual Inspection carried out as part of the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000, the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the Children Act 1989 as amended.
3. A draft report was provided by the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) on 6th May 2004 and made final on 18th June 2004. This is attached at **Appendix A**. The Authority is required to produce an action plan as necessary. This is attached at **Appendix B**.
4. The inspection used eleven headings to cover the NCSC's thirty two standards and the position of the Fostering Service was set against them. This report is structured around the headings used in the Inspection Report.
5. The overall judgement for the Fostering Service was as follows :
 - This local authority provides a well-established fostering service, which places children with foster carers on both a long-term and a short-term basis.
 - The service actively recruits foster carers.
 - Documentation is in place as required, which demonstrates that the agency is functioning appropriately. Liaison with all other relevant agencies takes place on an ongoing basis.
 - The service is able to offer robust psychological support to children and foster carers and this service is of real benefit and value to service users and fostering social workers.

Summary of Standards

6. Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)

This standard area is fully met. A Statement of Purpose has recently been compiled and is attached at **Appendix C**. This is a comprehensive document, which clearly outlines in detail the aims and objectives and summarises the service's commitment to support partnership working, including ensuring Health and Education services are provided to children looked after.

7. Fitness to Provide or Manage a Fostering Service (Standards 2-3)

One of these standards is fully met and the other is almost met. Based upon discussion with staff and from available documentary evidence, there are no concerns regarding the suitability of the persons appointed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

8. Management of the Fostering Service (Standards 4-5)

Within this area, both standards are fully met. The reconfigurations of staff have established clear lines of accountability. The re-siting of the fostering team, which has resulted in the team being located alongside colleagues in intensive support and placed on the same floor as other Children's Services have significantly improved communication systems. Lines of communication between carers, staff and managers are now well established.

9. Securing and Promoting Welfare (Standards 6-14)

Within this area one standard is exceeded, six standards are fully achieved and two standards have minor deficiencies. The authority were able to cite good examples of diversity in terms of carers able to meet a range of children's needs, including those with dual heritage and the specialist recruitment of a carer for a child with a disability. Discussion with both frontline and senior staff confirmed the authority's commitment to listening to what children have to say about the services they experience. The Inspection Team were informed that last April, Darlington Borough Council was awarded Beacon status for the CAMHS services, which are used by both children and foster carers in the form of CLASP the (CAMHS Looked After Systems Project). This service is an asset to the authority and fostering team and necessitates partnership working between CAMHS and Social Services. A "Joint Education and Social Services Strategy for Improvement in Educational of Looked After Children" is in place, which outlines how the responsible authorities will ensure that children receive maximum educational attainment.

10. Recruiting, Checking, Managing, Supporting and Training Staff and Foster Carers (Standards 15-23)

Within this area one standard is exceeded, four standards are fully met and four have minor deficiencies. Policies are in place with regards to securing salaried staff, and provision of training supervision and terms and conditions of service. There is very good support available to foster carers. The Foster Care Agreement has been revised and now contains all of the required information as outlined within The Fostering Services Regulations Schedule 5. A comprehensive foster carer handbook is provided to each foster carer. Case files

examined included records of meetings with foster carers. Training is carried out at different times so as to enable attendance by all, in line with the authority's equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory framework. Approved foster carers are able to contribute to the initial induction training for prospective foster carers, which all applicants are expected to complete. Training concerning safe caring is provided.

11. Records (Standards 24-25)

Within this area both standards are met in the main, with a few minor deficiencies.

12. Fitness of Premises (Standard 26)

This standard is fully met. The fostering team have moved to a different office since the time of the last Inspection, which is more spacious and makes for a more open plan working environment. The team manager is also based alongside of the team.

13. Financial Requirements (Standards 27-29)

All standards are fully achieved.

14. Fostering Panels (Standard 30)

This standard is almost met. Panel policies should detail and make clear the circumstances in which a carer's name would be removed from the foster carer's register.

15. Short-Term Breaks (Standard 31)

This standard is almost achieved. Discussions with staff confirmed that this is an area which still requires development.

16. Family and Friends as Carers (Standard 32)

This standard is fully achieved. Family and friends as carers are required to undergo assessment in the same way as any other prospective foster carer.

Outcome of Consultation

17. Foster carers and service users were consulted in the course of the Inspection and their views informed the outcome.

Legal Implications

18. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

19. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

20. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework

Decision Deadline

21. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter

Recommendations

22. It is recommended that Members :-

- a) Note the findings and recommendations of the report;
- b) Note the contents of the Fostering Services Action Plan to address "Good Practice Recommendations"; and
- c) Formally approve the Statement of Purpose.

Reasons

10. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-

- a) All regulatory requirements were met;
- b) "Good Practice Recommendations" were made to address minor deficiencies; and
- c) The Statement of Purpose meets all regulatory requirements.

Margaret Asquith
Director of Social Services

Background papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report except for those appended to this report.

Appendices:

Appendix A - Fostering Service Inspection Report (2004)

Appendix B - Fostering Service Action Plan

Appendix C – Fostering Service Statement of Purpose

Web Link

<http://www.csci.org.uk/RegisteredServicesDirectory/RSSearchDetail.asp?ID=0000043797&Type=>

**DARLINGTON BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

FOSTERING SERVICE

**ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS GOOD
PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Second Inspection under the Care Standards Act
2000**

Date of Inspection 24 February 2004

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

No.	Standard	Action	Timescale
1	FS7 FS8	Information about awards for achievements by children to be made clear in writing.	Ongoing
2	FS3	Liaison with Human Resources Management department will request that telephone enquiries are routinely made to follow up written references. This to be included within the "Policy Statement" on Recruitment and Selection.	June 2004
3	FS9 FS18	Supervision records for carers will evidence that individual safe care policies have been shared with children.	July 2004
4	FS9	The procedure concerning missing young persons to be reviewed and developed to identify any additional action to be undertaken/not undertaken by carers.	July 2004
5	FS10	The "Facilitating Contact Recording Sheet" for foster carers to be dated to denote when it was implemented. Also that it is subject to review and revision in line with quality assurance and document control procedures.	July 2004
6	FS11	The means by which children with communication difficulties are regularly consulted about their care and treatment will be more robustly evidenced, following liaison with Customer Care Officers, the Reviewing Officer and social workers for children placed with foster carers.	Ongoing
7	FS12	Foster carers to be provided with a written health record for each child placed in their care. Depending on age and understanding, each child to be made aware of the nature and contents of the record.	Immediate
No.	Standard	Action	Timescale

8	FS4	A system to monitor matters contained within Regulation 42 Schedule 7 will be finalised and monthly reports forwarded to the Commission.	July 2004
9	FS18 FS18 FS22	The Information Sharing (Whistle Blowing) policy will be made known to foster carers. A consistent, structured approach to a written supervision and appraisal system for carers will be developed. Carers will receive copies of records.	Immediate September 2004
10	FS21	A strategy in line with Standard 21.1 will be compiled and contained within a dated document and used as an induction tool for panel members. The document will be updated annually.	September 2004
11	FS32	The assessment and approval process of family and friends carers will be monitored for effectiveness.	Ongoing
12	FS31	Policies and procedures will be designed, and implemented in practice, to meet the particular needs of children receiving short-term breaks. (Birth parents where appropriate to remain central to the promotion of health and education needs).	September 2004
13	FS30	Panel procedures to be fully amended in line with the Commission's Inspection recommendations (Page 44 Inspection Report). Induction and periodic training for panel members to be developed.	September 2004
14	FS25	Fostered children and their parents to be informed about records kept about them and how these can be accessed.	Ongoing
No.	Standard	Action	Timescale

15	FS6	An audit will be carried out to conclusively establish if overcrowding/sharing of bedrooms is a significant problem.	Ongoing and to be kept updated
16	FS8 FS9	Risk assessments for EACH child placed to be routinely completed in liaison with the child's social worker.	Ongoing
17	FS13	Expectations of foster carers in relation to the education of Looked After children are made clear, including alternative plans when a young person/child is not in receipt of full-time education.	Ongoing
18	FS16	Disciplinary procedures to be amended in accordance with recommendation 18 of the Inspection Report (page 35). Evidence to be obtained from the Human Resources Management Department that this has been actioned. All relevant staff to be informed.	June 2004

D.1 Registered Person's or Responsible Local Authority Manager's comments/confirmation relating to the content and accuracy of the report for the above inspection.

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 24 February 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limited your comments to one side of A4 if possible

The Fostering Service Inspection on 24 February 2004 provided a clear and objective assessment of the current service provision. No factual inaccuracies appear in the report.

It was pleasing to note that Inspectors had observed when the Standards had been exceeded and also the potential to exceed certain others.

The detailed and comprehensive feedback by the Lead Inspector provided a sound basis for continuous improvement.

The attached Action Plan to address good practice recommendations will be implemented through a team development programme and liaison with relevant others.

Mary Sweeney
Children's Accommodation Manager

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

FOSTERING SERVICE



INTRODUCTION

It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and the Fostering Services Regulations (2002) that each fostering service should have a Statement of Purpose.

This Statement of Purpose provides information about Darlington Borough Council's Fostering Service. It will be made available to:

- Any person working for or with the Fostering Service.
- Any foster carer or prospective foster carer.
- Any child placed with a foster carer by the Fostering Service, and
- The parent of any such child.

A summary of the Statement of Purpose will be included in the Children's Guide issued to children and carers in each foster placement.

The Statement of Purpose will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Darlington Borough Council's fostering service intends to achieve the best possible outcomes for looked after children referred to the service.

It will provide high quality foster placements that enable the personal, emotional, social, educational and career development of young people, to be maximised to their full potential.

The fostering service aims to:

- Be committed to and prioritise the needs of children and young people placed with foster carers.
- Recruit, train, assess and provide the number and quality of foster carers needed to offer good, safe foster care placements within the local community.
- Value diversity by recruiting and training foster carers who respect, promote and reflect the ethnicity, race, culture and religious identity of the children placed in their care.
- Listen and respond to the needs, wishes and experiences of young people in foster care placements.
- Work with others to ensure that the needs of children and young people are met by being placed with carers who have the required range of skills and experience.
- Ensure a range of placement choice by working closely with independent fostering agencies.
- Inform children and young people in foster care of the complaints procedure and assist them in making a complaint if they so choose.
- Enable children and young people to contribute to the annual reviews of their foster carers and to make any concerns known to managers/fostering social workers.
- Work with allocated (children and families) social workers to ensure that children's and young people's views about their foster carers are listened to and taken into account, especially at children's Looked After Reviews.
- Work with others to ensure the implementation of Darlington's Joint Education and Social Services Strategy for the Education of Looked After Children.
- Work with others to ensure positive health outcomes for children in foster care placements.
- Work with the Leaving Care Team to ensure that young people are supported to make the transition from foster care to independent living and to maximise training and employment opportunities.

- Train prospective foster carers and post-approved carers to a very high standard, assisted by a skilled training co-ordinator.
- Ensure that carers are enabled to meet the emotional and mental health needs of young people through the provision of a comprehensive training programme by the co-ordinator of CLASP (CAMHS Looked After System Project – recently awarded Beacon Status).
- Enable carers to participate in a wide range of training opportunities, including NVQ Level 3 “Caring for Children and Young People”, when appropriate.
- Allocate a fostering social worker to every carer to ensure continuous support.
- Have a “duty worker” available in the Fostering Team during the day. The Emergency Duty Team will offer support and assistance at weekends and in the evenings.
- Include the views of carers in the planning and running of services.
- Seek the views of children and young people in all aspects of their care and the services provided by the fostering services.
- Keep up to date with research developments and implement suggestions for good practice and better service quality.
- Employ highly qualified, well-motivated staff who are dedicated to the recruitment, training, assessment and support of foster carers focusing solely on the needs of children looked after in foster placements.

PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS OF CARE

In accordance with the National Care Standards Act 2000, Darlington Borough Council is committed to developing its Fostering Service and ensuring its practice complies with the requirements of the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards and the Fostering Services Regulations (2002).

The Fostering Service pursues excellence and compliance with the best practice guidance of the UK National Standards for Foster Care (1999).

In addition, the Fostering Service will work closely with others to ensure that:

- Care planning is clear and outcome focussed.
- There is a reduction in the number of looked after children by means of effective planning for their return home, where appropriate.
- Placement stability is achieved through Permanence Planning.
- Black and minority ethnic children and young people are placed with carers who respect and promote their cultural, racial, linguistic and religious identities. The

Fostering Service will continue in its efforts to recruit, train and assess black, minority ethnic and dual race foster carers.

- Children/young people and carers participate more in service planning.
- Effective partnerships are developed with children's services agencies and independent fostering agencies.

Darlington Borough Council's Fostering Service has full membership of "The Fostering Network" and BAAF (British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering), enabling the sharing of good practice, standards and principles.

SERVICES PROVIDED

The Fostering Service is an integral part of Darlington's Children's Services and is located within the Children's Accommodation Team. Wherever possible, the Fostering Service will provide placements for children with Darlington Borough Council's approved foster carers. When that is not possible, provision may be negotiated with other authorities or voluntary or independent agencies.

The following placements are provided:

- Pre-adoption placements (mainly for infants).
- Emergency placements.
- Short-term and respite placements.
- Long-term placements.
- Mother and baby placements.

Pre-adoption Placements

Where adoption is the plan for a child, they may be placed in a pre-adoptive foster care placement, pending completion of the adoption process.

Emergency Placements

Placements are sometimes made at times of crisis for families or when a child's safety can only be ensured by providing foster care. Such placements are made in close liaison with the allocated social worker, the foster carer, the fostering social worker, the duty team manager (or Emergency Duty Team if the emergency occurs out of hours). Children in emergency foster placements are sometimes subject to Police Protection Orders, Emergency Protection Orders or Interim Care Orders.

Short Term and Respite Placements

Short term and respite placements enable families who are caring for a child to have a short period of time apart to resolve crisis situations or address serious problems, including health needs, for example. Similarly, children may need a short break from their usual carer. The benefits of a short term or respite placement would be identified and assessed by the child's allocated social worker, who would then make a request to the Fostering Team.

Long Term Placements

Children and young people are sometimes cared for in long term placements because they cannot return home to their families and it is not appropriate for them to be adopted. The reasons for the long term placement would be explained to the child in an age appropriate way.

Support for Children and Foster Carers

- Each child in foster care is visited regularly by their own allocated social worker from the Children and Families Team.
- Children's Care Plans are reviewed after one month, three months and then every six months to ensure they are up to date in meeting children's needs.
- Children in foster care placements are issued with an information pack that includes a children's guide to the fostering service, information on how to access an independent advocate, how to complain and how to contact the National Care Standards Commission.
- Every foster carer is reviewed each year (in accordance with Fostering Services Regulations) to ensure that children placed with them receive care of a high quality and safe standard.
- Foster carers have their own allocated fostering social worker who meets with the carer to offer practical assistance, advice and guidance to enable them to do the best they can for any child placed with them.
- Foster carers can access out of office hours support from qualified social workers by contacting the Emergency Duty Team.
- Foster carers can meet with the Children's Accommodation Manager on request to discuss any concerns.
- Frequent training opportunities are available to foster carers throughout the year, to build on skills and meet with other carers.
- Foster carers who look after children with complex needs can access individual advice and training from staff at CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)

The Fostering Service works closely in partnership with colleagues to enable a child to benefit fully from their placement in foster care and to support their carers in providing good quality care.

Our partners include:

- **Education Department** – providing educational support to all Looked After Children.
- **Designated teachers** – every school has a designated teacher for Looked After Children.
- **Health Services** – ensuring the health needs of children are met and that medical, dental and optical checks are carried out as required.
- **Customer Services Manager** – maintains contact with Looked After Children.
- **Independent Visitors Scheme** – trained volunteers who will visit children at their request.
- **National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)** - contracted to advocate on children's behalf.

- **Leaving Care Team** – preparing young people from 16 years of age who are Looked After to take steps towards independence by planning, training for employment or further education. Young people are allocated their own personal advisor from the team, who will ensure that a Pathway Plan is completed and implemented to work towards positive outcomes for care leavers.
- **The Children with Disabilities Team** – providing individual social workers for children with disabilities who are cared for in foster placements, to ensure appropriate skills, equipment and services are in place.
- **The Mulberry Centre** – providing services in child psychiatry, child psychology and therapeutic social work.

Number of Children in Foster Placements

At 01 February 2004, Darlington Borough Council had **77** children looked after by its Local Authority foster carers.

70 children were placed with mainstream carers and **7** with “Friends and Families” carers.

Number of Foster Carers

At 01 February 2004, Darlington Borough Council had **49 sets of approved foster carers comprised of:**

- 10** approved for long term only
- 12** approved for short term and respite
- 5** approved short term/emergency
- 2** approved for short term only
- 3** approved for respite only
- 6** approved for short term/respite/emergency
- 4** approved for short term/pre-adoptive/respite
- 1** approved for mother and baby
- 6** sets of Friends and Families carers approved for named child only, long term (Form F2 completed)

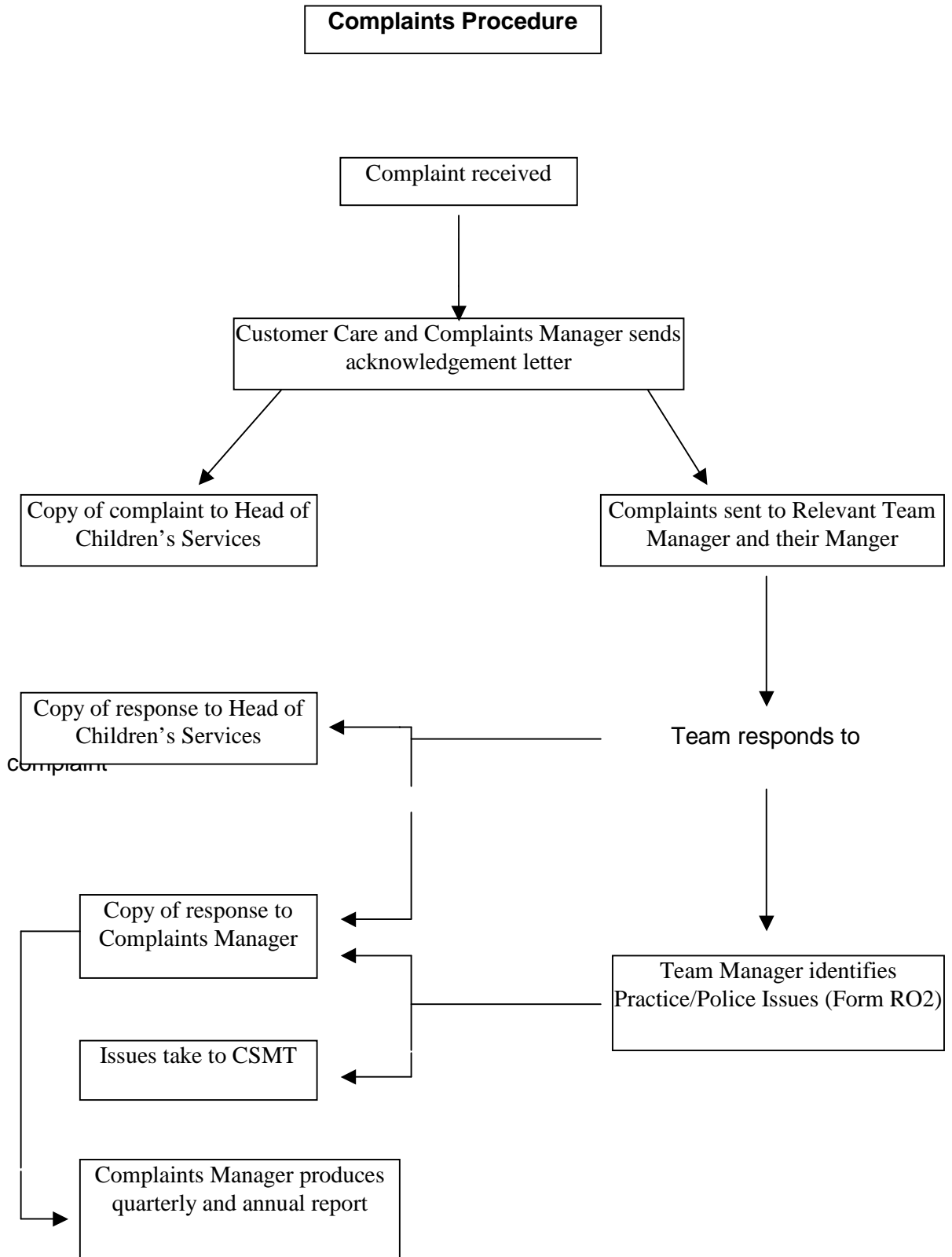
In addition to

- 13** sets of Families and Friends Carers agreed (not Form F2)

COMPLAINTS

Children in foster care placements and their carers are encouraged to use the Complaints Procedure if they are unhappy about any aspect of service provision. There are statutory procedures that govern the way complaints are dealt with and the Manager for Customer Services has the responsibility for ensuring that people who make a complaint are treated respectfully and fairly and that their complaint is fully investigated.

At 01 February 2004 there had been no formal complaints in the previous year from children in Darlington Borough Council’s foster care placements or from foster carers.



SUMMARY OF THE PROCEDURES FOR FOSTER CARER RECRUITMENT, INITIAL TRAINING, ASSESSMENT, APPROVAL AND REVIEW

Recruitment

Darlington Borough Council Fostering Service has a commitment to equal opportunities and welcomes diversity by valuing applications to foster from all appropriate members of the community whatever their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or ability. It seeks to provide a range of services for children and young people by recruiting foster carers from a wide range of backgrounds who can meet the needs of children and young people requiring foster care placements in the local community.

Darlington Borough Council will use a variety of methods in the recruitment of carers, which include:

- Specific advertising for carers for individual children in local/national press.
- Local radio advertising promoting foster care.
- Campaigns in local information centres, shopping centres, libraries etc.
- Posters, leaflets, banners, car stickers etc widely distributed in the local area.
- Word of mouth via existing foster carers, encouraging others to get involved.
- Involvement in national campaigns run by Fostering Network.

Application, Assessment and Approval

- An initial enquiry about fostering from a member of the public can be taken by e-mail, letter or telephone. The Fostering Team aims to respond within one working day and an initial referral form can be completed by telephone.
- An information pack and introductory letter to the Fostering Service is then sent within one further working day.
- An applicant will be contacted after one week if they do not respond to the letter, to ascertain if they wish to continue the process.
- An applicant who is interested in proceeding will be visited within 14 days and an initial screening report will be completed by the fostering social worker. If the fostering social worker has any concerns about the suitability of the applicants at this early stage, a letter will be sent explaining that the service is not proceeding with their application and the reasons for this decision will be outlined.
- If the screening visit is positive, applicants are then invited to participate in a “Choosing to Foster” course within three months.
- On completion of the course, a Form F assessment will be undertaken by a fostering social worker. Ideally this report will be presented to Fostering Panel for a decision within three months.
- Applicants will receive verbal notification of Panel’s decision as soon as possible.
- Written notification of Panel’s decision will be sent to applicants within 14 days of the Panel meeting, following ratification by the Head of Children’s Services.

Fostering Panel

Darlington Borough Council has a written procedure that outlines the handling of the function of its Fostering Panel, in accordance with Standard 30 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2002). Policies and procedures are readily available on request.

Review of Foster Carers

The Fostering Service has a duty to carry out annual reviews of all its approved foster carers to ensure that carers and their households continue to provide a suitable service to children looked after by the Local Authority and that their terms of approval continue to be appropriate.

The reviewing process enables confirmation that the foster care provision continues to be of a high standard and that children receive good quality, safe care.

The review helps to determine whether placements have been appropriate in terms of the capacity of the carer to meet the needs of individual children. It also provides reassurance to families of children in foster placements that good care standards are being maintained and that the carer's performance is monitored independently by the Foster Panel.

Reviews may be carried out at any time, if there has been a complaint or disruption of a child's placement.

Training after Approval

Darlington Borough Council's Fostering Service is committed to ongoing training and development for foster carers. Some of the subject areas may expand on those covered in the initial (pre-approval) training. Courses may be held during the day, evenings or weekends, depending on local need and availability. The training will be linked to NVQ 3 "Caring for Children and Young People", where appropriate.

Details of the comprehensive range of training available can be found in the Fostering Service's procedure "Recruitment, Assessment, Training and Support for Foster Carers".

The Fostering Handbook

Darlington Borough Council has produced a handbook for foster carers providing placements for Looked After Children. The handbook provides information and guidance to carers in all aspects of the fostering task.

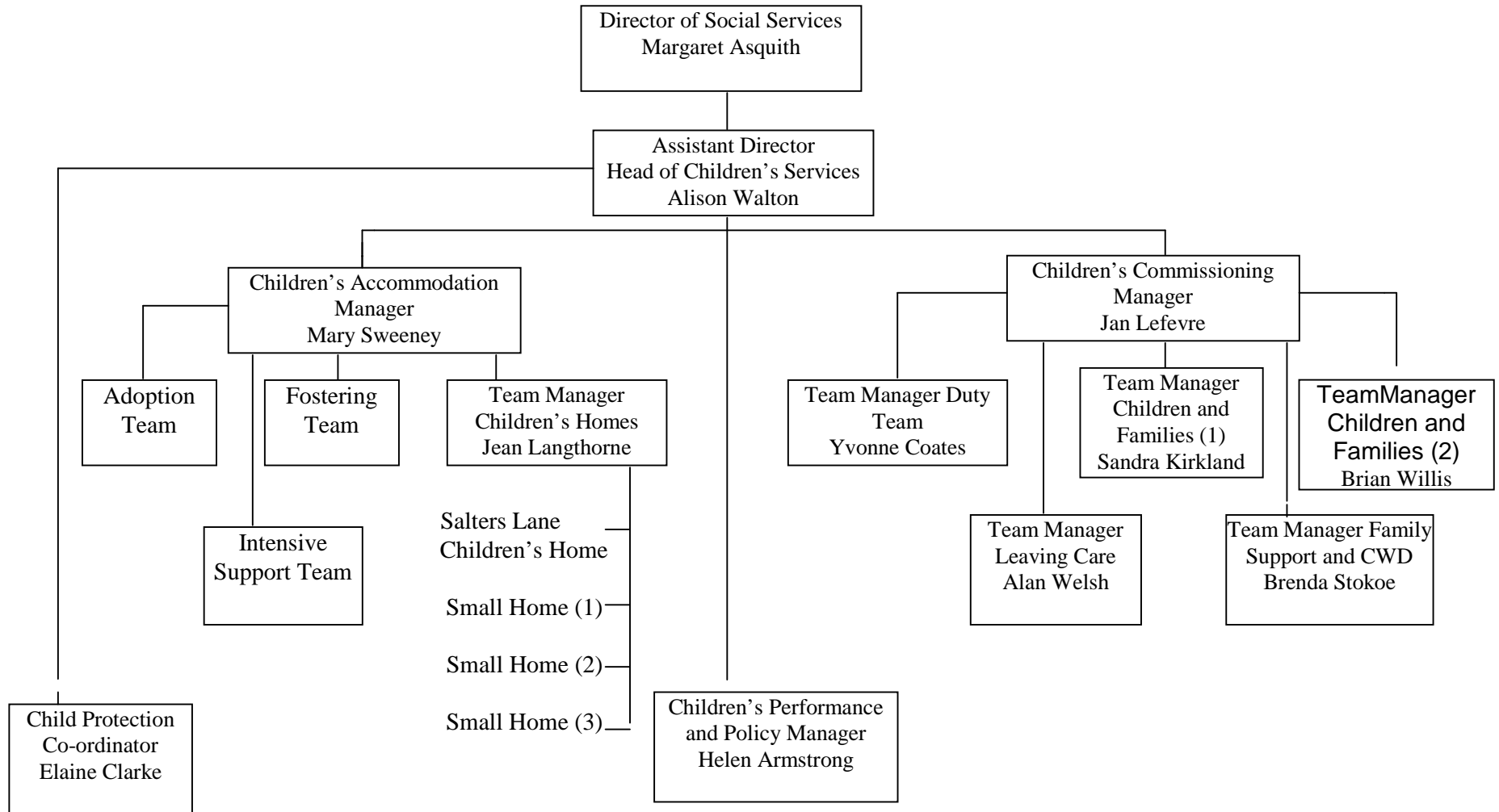
It also contains further details of the terms, conditions, policies and procedures referred to in this Statement of Purpose.

For further information contact:

The Fostering Service
Social Services Department
Darlington Borough Council
Central House
Gladstone Street
Darlington
Co Durham
DL3 6JX

Tel 01325 346200

**MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**



NUMBERS, QUALIFICATIONS AND RELEVANT EXPERIENCE OF STAFF

Alison Walton – Assistant Director/Head of Children’s Services and Fostering Service Agency Decision Maker

Qualifications: BA (Hons) Degree Sociology and Social Administration; Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW); Diploma in Management Studies.

Relevant Experience: Acting Head of Children’s Services; Manager (third-tier) Child Care Social Work teams; Child Protection Conference Chair; Team Manager Child Care team; Team Manager Generic Social Work team; social worker – Adult Mental Health; residential social worker.

Mary Sweeney – Children’s Accommodation Manager

Qualifications: BSc (Hons) Degree Sociology; Diploma in Social Work/Diploma in Higher Education (DipSw/DipHE); NVQ 4 Management; NVQ Internal Verifier Award; NVQ Assessor Award; Teaching Diploma.

Relevant Experience: Children’s Accommodation Manager; Children’s Homes Manager; Children’s Homes Assistant Manager; Senior Residential Social Worker; Intensive Support Worker; Residential Social Worker; Older Persons’ Carer.

Janet Field – Fostering Social Worker (Job Share)

Qualifications: Diploma in Social Work/Diploma in Higher Education (DipSw/DipHE); Child Protection/Achieving Best Evidence Certificate; PQ (Level One).

Relevant Experience: Fostering Social Worker; Field Social Worker (Children and Families); Child Protection Social Worker (Initial Assessment); Therapeutic Social Worker (CAMHS); Childminder.

Lisa Gorman – Fostering Team Administrator/Fostering Panel Administrator

Qualifications: NVQ in Business Administration (Level 3)

Relevant Experience: Fostering Team Administrator; Clerical Officer (Customer Care); Clerical Support Officer (Directorate/SSD)

Christine McGavin – Fostering Social Worker (Job Share)

Qualifications: MA (Hons) Sociology/Social Administration; Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW)

Relevant Experience: Fostering Social Worker; Fostering Social Worker (Agency); Project Coordinator, After School Care Group; Childcare Development Officer; Manager Family Centres (Education Service); Manager Family Centre; Deputy Manager Family Centre; Field Social Worker (Children and Families); Deputy Manager/Manager Residential Unit for Adolescent Girls; Respite Foster Carer for Teenagers (six and a half years).

Gill Smith – Fostering Social Worker

Qualifications: BA Humanities (Hons); Higher Education Certificate in Counselling and Neuro-linguistic Programming; Module from Degree, Special Educational Needs; Connexions PA; Diploma in Social Work/Diploma in Higher Education (DipSw/DipHE)

Relevant Experience: Fostering Social Worker; Behaviour and Attendance Support Service Multi-discipline; Multi-discipline school based project (The Challenge of Disaffection); Attendance Project; Bridge Project.

Hilary Tillotson – Fostering Social Worker

Qualifications: CCA/Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work; PQ1 (Post Qualifying); NVQ Assessor's Award; Diploma in Social Work (DipSw); Certificate of Education (FE); BA Degree Humanities/Social Sciences; Diploma in European Humanities.

Relevant Experience: Fostering Social Worker; Partnership Working with CAMHS (involved in Beacon Status Award); Family Worker (Durham); Lecturer in Prison Service (New College, Durham).