



**Making Social Care
Better for People**

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

Children Of All Nations (COAN)

**Acorn House
74-94 Cherry Orchard Road
Croydon
Surrey
CR9 6DA**

Lead Inspector
Barry Khabbazi

Announced Inspection
14th November 2005 9:30

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

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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	Children Of All Nations (COAN)
Address	Acorn House 74-94 Cherry Orchard Road Croydon Surrey CR9 6DA
Telephone number	020 8405 9747
Fax number	020 8405 9747
Email address	
Provider Web address	
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Miss Angela Jacqueline Johnson
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Mrs Paulette Rose Murray
Type of registration	Fostering Agencies
No. of places registered (if applicable)	0
Category(ies) of registration, with number of places	

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection NA

Brief Description of the Service:

Children of All Nations is a small Independent Fostering Agency which was recently registered. The agency is based in the London Borough of Croydon but also serves the wider community. Children of All Nations aims to provide a fostering service to all groups in the community, but also intends to specialise in providing a service to children with learning disabilities.

SUMMARY

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

This was the first inspection for this agency since being registered.

As a result this report may contain a substantial number of requirements. If so the number of these should significantly fall at the next inspection when the provider will have had time to take into account advice from the inspector regarding how to meet the National Minimum Standards and Regulations, and then would have had the opportunity to take the action required in this report to meet them. Bearing the above in mind, the agency's pre-planning has been detailed and comprehensive.

In addition, as this was the first inspection for this agency, there were no children placed at the time of the inspection. Although this limited the inspection process, systems and procedures, in and out of the key Standards, were looked at in detail. This may also create additional requirements compared to other less new agencies who may have only had the essential key Standards assessed this year.

The agency was found to be professional and well managed and although this first inspection contains a number of requirements, most of these are of a technical nature {e.g. referring to written policies and procedures} and do not necessarily refer to poor care practice.

The provider and the manager took the inspector's advice positively and are committed to providing a high quality service.

The inspector is therefore confident that the requirements will be implemented in a timely fashion.

What the service does well:

The agency have demonstrated that pre-planning is one of its strengths, with comprehensive policies, procedures and pro- forma being produced. Many of the documentation already produced goes beyond the minimum required under the Fostering Standards and shows foresight in planning for the future.

The agency request three references instead of the required two.

This is currently a small organisation and it is the provider's aim to keep the agency small. This can create the benefit of all staff being well known to the foster carers and children, and foster carers and children are also well known to all staff.

The inspector expects that once children are placed further areas of good practice will be able to be identified.

What has improved since the last inspection?

This was the first inspection for this organisation and this section is therefore not completely relevant.

However, since the registration, the agency has developed comprehensive and workable policies, procedures and pro-forma, and has recruited foster carers. The agency is now in a position to provide a viable and well used service and to develop its services and raise standards further.

What they could do better:

The Statement of Purpose must record the service that can be provided and any limitations based on its resources. It must contain the qualifications and experience of staff, the number of foster carers, the number of children placed, the number of complaints and a statistical breakdown of complaints.

This is needed so that prospective foster carers and placing authorities have a better picture of the organisation and the services it has the resources to provide.

The Children's Guide needs to be also be converted into a format suitable for younger children and made available in different languages as required.

Fire protection equipment must be in place in foster carers' homes before any placements are made to ensure the protection of children placed.

The Restraints Policy must provide guidance on acceptable and unacceptable forms of restraint, and recording guidance. This will ensure that foster carers know their responsibilities and required actions in these situations.

One of the two references required must be from an employer, to ensure that any contradictions between these and references from friends can be identified.

All staff including the manager must have regular professional supervision and consultation provided by appropriately qualified staff. This is required to ensure consistent and professional practice.

The complaints procedure and the children's complaints procedure must contain details of how to make complaints to the Commission.

No panel member may start work until all the checks required are completed. In particular all references. This is required to ensure the protection of those placed.

The agency should ensure that all panel members are aware of all the policies affecting them. For example, the procedure which covers decision-making where all the members of the panel are not in agreement. This is required to ensure consistent and professional practice.

It is suggested only at this stage that consultation with the parents of those fostered could be improved by the use of questionnaires.

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 or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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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 – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

Procedures, guidance for foster carers and appropriate specialist staff are in place to facilitate identifying children's needs and to promote the health and development of children.

EVIDENCE:

As no children are currently placed, procedures, policies and resources that facilitate identifying children's needs and promoting the health and development of children were assessed here.

The fostering agency was informed about health services and specialist services in the area. The agency benefits from a nurse and a doctor on the panel {see Standard 30} who provide expert medical advice.

Evidence was provided to confirm that foster carers were given information as to their responsibilities for promoting the health of the children placed. This was recorded in the hand book and is also covered by the supporting social worker. The agency also requires foster carers to supply information regarding health developments for reviews.

There are systems in place to facilitate foster carers to provide details of the health needs of the child placed.

Once a child is placed the assessment of the written health record for each child placed in their care can be evaluated.

Each foster carer has received training in health and hygiene issues and first aid training is planned.

The foster carers' role in promoting the health of any child placed is covered in the Foster Carers Hand book. This includes registering a child with a doctor and dentist, taking a child to any health appointments including opticians when required, giving attention to day to day health issues including diet, hygiene and health promotion, and acting as an advocate on the child's behalf.

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 – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

All people providing and managing the service are suitable.

The fostering service provides suitable foster carers.

The match of children to carers could not be assessed as no placements have been made at this time.

The fostering service's policies and procedures protect children from abuse and neglect, but more information could be provided to foster carers to facilitate further protection.

The people working in the agency are generally suitable to work with children but could not be proven to be fully suitable as some vetting was not available.

The fostering panel is generally organised efficiently and effectively.

EVIDENCE:

The provider and manager are suitably qualified and experienced to run the service. The manager has a diploma in social work, a higher education social work award and is an approved social worker under the mental health act. The manager has over 5 years management experience and over 10 years experience working with children.

The staffing records for all staff were seen and it was evident that the recruitment process for staff remains clear and appropriate records are retained from the interviews. In addition where providing transport is a possibility copies of the foster carers' MOT and insurance were in the files examined.

Enhanced Criminal Record Bureau checks were in place for all staff. There were some references missing but a requirement has been made more appropriately under Standard 15 and will not be repeated here under Standard 6.

Foster carers had been informed that they might be interviewed as a part of the inspection process. The foster homes visited were indeed healthy and nurturing environments and could accommodate all who lived there. There was a health and safety policy in the handbook giving foster carers some guidance of their responsibilities in this area. However, smoke detectors had not been fitted as required under the agency's health and safety assessment. As children could be placed imminently, the following requirement is set under Standard 6:

Fire protection equipment must be in place in foster carers' homes before any placements are made.

Standard 8, Matching children to carers, could not be assessed as no placements have been made at this time.

Training for foster carers includes training for caring for a child that has been abused, managing behaviour and safe caring skills. Supervising staff are appropriately trained to promote and safeguard the welfare of children, which is monitored at each supervisory visit.

There is a written procedure for reporting children missing from home. There were policies available regarding control, and discipline, {which foster carers are required to sign} and there was an anti-bullying policy. However, the restraint policy did not provide guidance regarding acceptable measures of restraint or recording requirements in these circumstances.

The following requirement is set under Standard 9 to address this:

The Restraints Policy must provide guidance on acceptable and unacceptable forms of restraint, and recording guidance.

The staff files and recruitment records were all inspected and it was evident that the recruitment process for staff is clear and appropriate records are retained from the interviews. Enhanced Criminal Record Bureau checks were in place for all staff. Copies of qualifications were also copied on files.

All files had copies of proof of identification but some references were missing, i.e. only personal references from friends were available on two foster carers files and no official employment references.

The following requirement is set under Standard 15 to address this shortfall: One of the two references required must be from an employer.

Written panel procedures were available and inspected. The panel members were suitable and a person with direct experience of fostering, a teacher, a nurse and a doctor are on the panel.

All panel members had Enhanced Criminal Record Bureau checks but one had started without the agency receiving all the required references.

The following requirement is set under Standard 30 to address this:

No panel member may start work until all the checks required are completed. In particular all references.

In addition the chair of the panel was not aware of the procedure that covers decision-making where all the members of the panel are not in agreement. The following recommendation is set under Standard 30 to address this: The agency should ensure that all panel members are aware of all the policies affecting them. For example, the procedure that covers decision-making where all the members of the panel are not in agreement.

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 – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

The fostering service does value diversity. The fostering service's policies and procedures promote educational achievement.
Standard 31 does not apply to this agency.

EVIDENCE:

The agency has a diversity policy and provides additional guidance in this area in the foster carers handbook. This is also covered in the initial training, 'Skills to foster' and in the recruitment process.

There are no children with or without disabilities currently receiving a service from this organisation. Children of All Nations aims to provide a service to all groups in the community, but also intends to specialise in providing a service to children with disabilities. The provider and manager's backgrounds contain generous experience in this area and should therefore facilitate good practice in meeting the needs of children with disabilities in the future.

Examination of policies and procedures indicated that systems are in place to support the children in their education and that they would be given opportunities and encouraged to take part in activities and interests.

The panel has a teacher on it who can provide educational advice.

The fostering agency provides guidance and support to its foster carers about their responsibilities to the education of children via the Foster Carers Handbook. This is also covered during supporting social worker visits and supervisions. Foster carer interviews identified that foster carers attend school functions and parents/carer evenings and pass on relevant information to reviews.

Standard 31 does not apply to this agency.

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 – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

The fostering service's policies and procedures promotes and supports contact arrangements.

The fostering service's policies and procedures promotes consultation.

EVIDENCE:

There is guidance in the Foster Carers Handbook about how to work with birth parents. Agreements on contacts are arranged in conjunction with the placing social worker and form part of the placement agreement. Contact can occur in the foster home where appropriate. Evidence from interviews indicated that the agency would ensure foster carers or designated staff would accompany children to other settings when required to ensure that contact takes place. The agency also have a room available to support supervised contact where required.

Guidance in the importance of listening to the views of children is provided in the Foster Carers Handbook.

Evidence from foster carers indicated that they have an understanding of their role in promoting regular contact with their birth families where this is appropriate. Foster carers are expected to record and maintain records of the outcomes of birth parent visits or contacts.

Procedures are in place to ensure that consultation is supported through one to one discussions between the foster carer or social worker and the child. Children's views are brought to reviews and questionnaires are also to be used.

It is suggested only at this stage that consultation with the parents of those fostered could be improved by the use of questionnaires.

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 – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

The fostering service's policies and procedures generally prepares younger people for adulthood.

The fostering service pays foster carers an allowance and agreed expenses as specified.

EVIDENCE:

The supervising social worker addresses issues pertaining to independence throughout the fostering period with increasing emphasis as preparation for independence becomes more imminent.

There is guidance for foster carers regarding promoting independence in the Foster Carers Handbook. A younger person will need to be placed before Standard 14 can be fully assessed.

Discussions with foster carers and examination of procedures confirmed that systems are in place to ensure that foster carers receive allowances and agreed expenses, and that they had clear initial information regarding procedures for this.

There is a written policy on fostering allowances and this available in the Foster Carers Handbook/ Family Placement foster carers package.

Management

The intended outcomes 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, and 24 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

There is a clear statement of aims for the service but no Children's Guide.
The fostering service is monitored and controlled as specified.
The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.
There are no staff to manage efficiently and effectively at present.
Foster carers are provided with supervision and practical support
Foster carers are currently attending appropriate training.
Administrative records are well and safely maintained.
The premises used for offices are suitable for the purpose.

The fostering service is currently financially viable.

EVIDENCE:

The Statement of Purpose is a comprehensive document and contains all the elements required except those identified in the requirement below.

The Statement of Purpose must record the service that can be provided and any limitations based on its resources. It must contain the qualifications and experience of staff, the number of foster carers, the number of children placed, the number of complaints and a statistical breakdown of complaints.

There was no Children's Guide and as children could be imminently placed the following requirement is now also set under Standard 1.

A Children's Guide to the service must be produced and this must be available in alternative formats and relevant languages.

There is no indication that staff employed in the service are fostering children from the agency. The policies and procedures that were available provide appropriate guidance for the manager, staff and foster carers. Foster carers continue to be visited by their supporting social worker on a regular basis and a report is generated in respect of the visit. The service makes known to both the foster carers and the placing authorities the level of charges and the financial allowances paid.

The Registered Manager is responsible for the day to day running of the service. The Registered Manager and provider have responsibility for the planning and development of the fostering service.

Strategic management and development of the whole organisation is the responsibility of both the provider and manager.

The manager of the fostering service has a job description.

There are no staff to manage efficiently and effectively at present. However, the organisation is about to expand and employ more staff and policies and procedures are in place to facilitate this.

The manager/director does not have professional supervision, although the manager/director does receive support. Both this manager/director and the provider/director provide each other with support. Once staff are employed, a top down supervision hierarchy can be implemented. At present however, this is not possible. The following requirement is therefore set under Standard 16 to address this:

All staff including the manager must have regular professional supervision and consultation provided by appropriately qualified staff.

Evidence from the foster interviews and written responses from the foster carers' questionnaires illustrated that foster carers continue to be aware of the roles of the supervising social workers and the support systems in place. Foster carers receive regular visits and supervision, including unannounced visits. Supervision visits for foster carers occur initially every two weeks and then monthly or as required.

The agency has a whistle blowing policy. There is a clear strategy for working with foster carers and this is recorded in the Foster Carers Hand book. This includes arrangements for training, supervision, encouraging self help groups, support services, information and advice, out of hours support, respite care, assistance in dealing with education and arrangements for reviews. The Foster Carers Handbook also covers policies, procedures, guidance, legal information and insurance and tax details as required under Standard 22.5.

Generally good written guidance is made available foster carers. However, the complaints procedure and the children's complaints procedure did not contain details of how to make complaints to the Commission.

The following requirement is set under Standard 22 to address this:

The complaints procedure and the children's complaints procedure must contain details of how to make complaints to the Commission.

Foster carers have been attending provided training.

Mandatory minimum core training is identified, and attendance in all training is facilitated by, for example, providing support for childcare.

Those foster carers who do not engage in identified and continual training will be referred to panel for consideration of termination of their foster carer status.

As no children are placed at present, children's case records { Standard 24} could not be assessed at this time.

All the records are kept securely and staffing records are stored separately. All records are locked in filing cabinets in a locked room with security supported access to the building. All computers are password protected. Written entries on the files made by staff in the unit were legible and professional.

The agency has provided foster carers with an access to files policy, and a policy regarding how to keep information and what information foster carers are required to keep, and the agency has implemented a system for keeping records of complaints which can produce statistical information to assist monitoring of trends.

The premises used for the agency's offices are suitable for the purpose. There is security supported access to the offices, there is a main office and a smaller office that can also be used for small meetings and support groups. In addition, larger rooms are available for larger groups.

Conversations with the director and financial information provided confirmed that the fostering service is currently financially viable. Although there are currently no placements, the director was confident that the agency could continue without placements until October 2006. Although placements and therefore income is expected imminently.

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>
12	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
3	3
6	3
8	N/a
9	2
15	2
30	2

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

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	2
2	3
4	3
5	3
16	2
17	3
18	3
19	X
20	3
21	3
22	2
23	3
24	N/a
25	3
26	3
27	3
28	X
32	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	1.4	3	The Statement of Purpose must record the service that can be provided and any limitations based on its resources. It must contain the qualifications and experience of staff, the number of foster carers, the number of children placed, the number of complaints and a statistical breakdown of complaints.	30/04/06
2	1.5	3	A Children's Guide to the service must be produced and this must be available in alternative formats and relevant languages.	31/01/06
3	6.6	11	Fire protection equipment must be in place in foster carers' homes before any placements are made.	31/12/05
4	9	13[1]c	The Restraints Policy must provide guidance on acceptable and unacceptable forms of restraint, and recording guidance.	28/02/06
5	15	20 Schedule 1[3]	One of the two references required must be from an employer.	31/12/05
6	16.8	21[4]	All staff including the manager must have regular professional supervision and consultation	31/01/06

			provided by appropriately qualified staff.	
7	22	18	The complaints procedure and the children's complaints procedure must contain details of how to make complaints to the Commission.	31/01/06
8	30	20 Schedule 1[3]	No panel member may start work until all the checks required are completed. In particular all references.	07/12/05

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	30	The agency should ensure that all panel members are aware of all the policies affecting them. For example, the procedure that covers decision-making where all the members of the panel are not in agreement.

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