



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

London Borough of Ealing Fostering Service

Fostering & Adoption

3rd Floor North

Town Hall Annexe

Ealing

London

W5 2BY

24th, 25th, 26th, & 31st January 2005

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Launched in April 2004, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is the single inspectorate for social care in England.

The Commission combines the work formerly done by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI), the SSI/Audit Commission Joint Review Team and the National Care Standards Commission.

The role of CSCI is to:

- Promote improvement in social care
- Inspect all social care - for adults and children - in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Publish annual reports to Parliament on the performance of social care and on the state of the social care market
- Inspect and assess 'Value for Money' of council social services
- Hold performance statistics on social care
- Publish the 'star ratings' for council social services
- Register and inspect services against national standards
- Host the Children's Rights Director role.

Inspection Methods & Findings

SECTION B of this report summarises key findings and evidence from this inspection. The following 4-point scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

'O' or blank in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

'9' in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not applicable.

'X' is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

Local Authority Fostering Service?

YES

Name of Authority

London Borough of Ealing Fostering Service

Address

Fostering & Adoption, 3rd Floor North, Town Hall Annexe,
Ealing, London, W5 2BY

Local Authority Manager

Ms Ghazala Sheikh

Tel No:

0208 825 8815

Address

Fostering & Adoption, 3rd Floor North, Town Hall Annexe,
Ealing, London, W5 2BY

Fax No:

0208 8256359

Email Address

sheikhg@ealing.gov.uk

Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)

NO

Name of Agency

Tel No

Address

Fax No

Email Address

Registered Number of IFA

Name of Registered Provider

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Date of first registration

Date of latest registration certificate

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

2nd, 3rd, 8th, 9th, 16th
December 2003 & 21st
January 2004

Date of Inspection Visit		24th January 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:30 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Mr Gavin Thomas	074996
Name of Inspector	2	-	
Name of Inspector	3	-	
Name of Inspector	4	-	
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.		Not used	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		Not required	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Ms Ghazala Sheikh – Registered Manager	

Introduction to Report and Inspection

Inspection visits

Description of Fostering Service

Part A: Summary of Inspection Findings

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection

Statutory Requirements from this Inspection

Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection

Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings

(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

- 1. Statement of purpose**
- 2. Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service**
- 3. Management of the fostering service**
- 4. Securing and promoting welfare**
- 5. Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers**
- 6. Records**
- 7. Fitness of premises**
- 8. Financial requirements**
- 9. Fostering panels**
- 10. Short-term breaks**
- 11. Family and friend carers**

Part C: Lay Assessor's Summary (where applicable)

Part D: Provider's Response

D.1. Provider's comments

D.2. Action Plan

D.3. Provider's agreement

INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Independent and local authority fostering services which fall within the jurisdiction of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) are subject to inspection, to establish if the service is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the Children Act 1989 as amended.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of London Borough of Ealing Fostering Service. The inspection findings relate to the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services published by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000, for independent and local authority fostering services respectively.

The Fostering Services Regulations 2002 are secondary legislation, with which a service provider must comply. Service providers are expected to comply fully with the National Minimum Standards. The National Minimum standards will form the basis for judgements by the CSCI in relation to independent fostering agencies regarding registration, the imposition and variation of registration conditions and any enforcement action, and in relation to local authority fostering services regarding notices to the local authority and reports to the Secretary of State under section 47 of the Care Standards Act 2000. The report follows the format of the National Minimum Standards and the numbering shown in the report corresponds to that of the standards.

The report will show the following:

- Inspection methods used
- Key findings and evidence
- Overall ratings in relation to the standards
- Compliance with the Regulations
- Notifications to the Local Authority and Reports to the Secretary of State
- Required actions on the part of the provider
- Recommended good practice
- Summary of the findings
- Report of the Lay Assessor (where relevant)
- Providers response and proposed action plan to address findings

This report is a public document.

INSPECTION VISITS

Inspections will be undertaken in line with the agreed regulatory framework with additional visits as required. This is in accordance with the provisions of the Care Standards Act 2000. The following inspection methods have been used in the production of this report. The report represents the inspector's findings from the evidence found at the specified inspection dates.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

The fostering service of the London Borough of Ealing is located on two sites in Ealing and Acton. The service provides short-term placements, long term placements, kinship placements and short term breaks for children with special needs. The service consists of a Support Team, Access to Resources Team, Recruitment Team and Administration Team. All have separate managers who report to a Service Manager who has overall responsibility for the service. At the time of the Inspection there were 15 qualified social workers, (not including the manager) and 15 unqualified social workers. There was no evidence of any significant gaps in the service during this inspection. Similarly, the recruitment and retention of a wide variety of foster carers is a continual process to ensure that the service strives to meet the needs of the children it has to foster.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

Inspector's Summary

(This is an overview of the inspector's findings, which includes good practice, quality issues, areas to be addressed or developed and any other concerns.)

At the previous inspection two requirements were made. Both requirements have been implemented.

The findings on this inspection indicated that the fostering service is well managed. There was good coordination and communication between all of the teams. All staff spoken to were confident about their roles and how the service operates.

The systems in place were ultimately focused on the needs and welfare of the children/young people. Equally, the service continues to maintain and develop support systems for foster carers.

One of the achievements of the fostering service since the last inspection was the creation of additional posts within the team. They include, a training officer, psychologist, kinship worker and on going support from the substance misuse coordinator and LAC teachers.

The outcomes of the visits carried out at foster carers homes, indicated that the foster carers were generally satisfied with the support they receive. Individual comments were reported to the Registered Manager. The key issue raised by two foster carers was lack of communication and in one case, visits from the Social Worker. The foster children said they were happy in their placements and had no concerns with regards to the support they receive from their foster carers or the fostering service.

Eighteen foster carers and fourteen foster children completed questionnaires for the purpose of this inspection. Overall, the foster carers stated that they are supported and in their opinion, the Social Workers do a very good but under pressure. Some of the individual comments and opinions were as follows: there is lack of communication from Area Social workers, lack of support when the link worker is away. On one occasion, there was no response from the out of hour's team. More should be done to promote fostering for single mums and dads. The assessment of potential foster carers is too lengthy. Ten foster carers stated that the social work team is too stretched. Eight foster carers stated that they are never asked about their views of the fostering service. Two foster carers stated that there is lack in consistency. One foster carer stated that the training programme has improved and one foster carer stated that they find the support meetings and training educational.

Five children stated that they had not been given a copy of the children's guide. Nine children stated that they had not been given contact details for the CSCI. Two children stated that the fostering service has never asked their opinion of the fostering service. One child stated that they would like a stable social worker. The young person stated that their social workers inform them that they are staying but leave soon after. One young person stated that they would like a tutor to support them with their English language skills as a matter of urgency. One young person stated that they would like the fostering service to provide them with a bike and one young person stated that they found the Outer Limits day last year to be boring.

The children made positive comments about the support they receive from their foster carers.

In response to the questionnaires, the Registered Manager explained the following:

- There was a staff shortage within the last year and the service was dependent on agency staff for a period of time. This matter has now been resolved and further staff have been employed and consistency has been reinstated.
- All foster carers and children are issued with feedback forms at annual reviews. This is an opportunity for foster carers and children to comment on the fostering service.
- The LAC teachers provide support for young people at the Drop-In centre on a weekly basis. This includes support for language skills.

The Registered Manager agreed to address the comments and views raised by foster carers and children.

The Inspector takes this opportunity in thanking all those who co-operated and contributed towards this inspection.

Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)

This standard was assessed.

This standard was met.

Fitness to provide or manage a fostering service (Standards 2-3)

1 out of the standards was assessed.

This standard was met.

Management of the fostering service (Standards 4-5)

These standard were not assessed on this occasion.

Securing and promoting welfare (Standards 6-14)

7 out of the 9 standards were assessed.

All 7 standards were met.

Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers (Standards 15-23)

3 out of the 9 standards were assessed.

2 standards were met.

1 standard was almost met.

Records (Standards 24-25)

Both standards were assessed.

Both standards were met.

Fitness of premises for use as a fostering service (Standard 26)

This standard was assessed.

This standard was met.

Financial requirements (Standards 27-29)

1 out of the 3 standards was assessed.
This standard was met.

Fostering panels (Standard 30)

This standard was assessed.
This standard was met.

Short-term breaks (Standard 31)

This standard was assessed.
This standard was met.

Family and friends as carers (Standard 32)

This standard was assessed.
This standard was met.

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)

The following statutory Reports or Notifications are to be made under the Care Standards Act as a result of the findings of this inspection:

Report to the Secretary of State under section 47(3) of the Care Standards Act 2000 that the Commission considers the Local Authority's fostering service satisfies the regulatory requirements:

NO

Notice to the Local Authority under section 47(5) of the Care Standards Act 2000 of failure(s) to satisfy regulatory requirements in their fostering service which are not substantial, and specifying the action the Commission considers the Authority should take to remedy the failure(s), informing the Secretary of State of that Notice:

NO

Report to the Secretary of State under section 47(4)(a) of the Care Standards Act of a failure by a Local Authority fostering service to satisfy regulatory requirements which is not considered substantial:

NO

Report to the Secretary of State under section 47(1) of the Care Standards Act 2000 of substantial failure to satisfy regulatory requirements by a Local Authority fostering service:

NO

The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:

Under Section 47(5) of the Care Standards Act 2000, the Commission considers the Local Authority's Fostering Service fails to satisfy regulatory requirements and that they are not substantial. Section 47 of the Care Standards Act 2000 has been repealed and is therefore no longer relevant for the purposes of this inspection report. However, this system has been replaced by new letters based on the Secretary of State being notified about failures to comply with Regulations under 81(4) of the Health and Social Care Act 2003. In the case of this service one regulatory requirement was forthcoming from this report. This requirement was discussed with with the Registered Manager who told the Inspector that the necessary action would be taken to ensure this requirement was met.

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

YES

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Identified below are areas not addressed from the last inspection report which indicate a non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000 and Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

Action is being taken by the Commission for Social Care Inspection to monitor compliance with the above requirements.

COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)

(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)

Providers and managers of registered independent fostering agencies must comply with statutory conditions of their registration. The conditions applying to this registration are listed below, with the inspector's assessment of compliance from the evidence at the time of this inspection.

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector	Gavin Thomas	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	_____	Signature	_____
Regulation Manager	Ged Durkin	Signature	_____
Date	16/03/2005		_____

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The appropriate Officer of the Local Authority or the Registered Person (as applicable) is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how requirements are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Identified below are areas addressed in the main body of the report which indicate non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children Act 1989, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002, or the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. The Authority or Registered Person(s) is/are required to comply within the given time scales in order to comply with the Regulatory Requirements for fostering services.

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement	
1	Reg 20 Schedule 1(2)(a)	FS15	A valid CRB check must be in place for all staff.	31/3/05

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

Identified below are areas addressed in the main body of the report which relate to the National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice issues which should be considered for implementation by the Authority or Registered Person(s).

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action

* Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix e.g FS10 refers to Standard 10.

PART B INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS

The following inspection methods have been used in the production of this report
 London Borough of Ealing Fostering Service

Number of Inspector days spent	4
Survey of placing authorities	NO
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	NO
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	YES
• Contact with parents	NO
• Contact with supervising social workers	YES
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	NO
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	YES
Interview with panel chair	YES
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	NO
Date of Inspection	24/01/05
Time of Inspection	10.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	29

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the CSCI assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards have been met. The following scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The scale ranges from:

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

"0" in the "Standard met?" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

"9" in the "Standard met?" box denotes standard not applicable.

"X" is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- There is clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and the fostering service ensures that they meet those aims and objectives.

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

There is a clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and of what facilities and services they provide.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

A Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide were in place. The Registered Manager confirmed that elected members have approved both documents. The content of the Statement of Purpose was in keeping with the criteria as set out in Regulation 3 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The fostering service is provided and managed by those with the appropriate skills and experience to do so efficiently and effectively and by those who are suitable to work with children.

Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.4)

The people involved in carrying on and managing the fostering service possess the necessary business and management skills and financial expertise to manage the work efficiently and effectively and have the necessary knowledge and experience of childcare and fostering to do so in a professional manner.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	0
This standard was not assessed on this occasion.		

Standard 3 (3.1 - 3.4)

Any persons carrying on or managing the fostering service are suitable people to run a business concerned with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
The contents of the Registered Manager's personnel file were examined. All checks carried out were in keeping with the criteria as set out in Schedule 1, Regulation 20 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.		

Management of the Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The fostering service is managed ethically and efficiently, delivering a good quality foster care service and avoiding confusion and conflicts of role.

Standard 4 (4.1 – 4.5)

There are clear procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the fostering service and ensuring quality performance.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This standard was not assessed on this occasion.

Number of statutory notifications made to CSCI in last 12 months:

X

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

X

Referral to Secretary of State of a person working for the service as unsuitable to work with children.

X

Serious illness or accident of a child.

X

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

X

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

X

Serious incident relating to a foster child involving calling the police to a foster home.

X

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

X

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

X

Number of complaints made to CSCI about the agency in the past 12 months:

X

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

X

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)

The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This standard was not assessed on this occasion.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The fostering service promotes and safeguards the child/young person's physical, mental and emotional welfare.

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

The fostering service makes available foster carers who provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

As previously reported, all foster carers go through a thorough assessment to ensure that they have the necessary personal qualities, experience and skills before their applications are presented to the fostering panel for approval. All foster carers have all the appropriate policies and procedures contained in a comprehensive handbook that is issued by the fostering service. In addition, foster carers have regular support meetings and each has a minimum of a three weekly visit from their Link Worker. Ongoing training is also provided for foster carers. The Inspector, accompanied by a colleague, visited a randomly selected group of four carers and also spoke to some of the children in their care. Six of whom were interviewed. The foster carers said that they are fully supported by the fostering service. A supervising social worker was carrying out a visit at one of the foster homes at the same time as the Inspectors. The foster children said they were happy with their accommodation and had established positive relationships with their foster carers. The four foster carer homes visited, were clean and homely.

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

The fostering service ensures that children and young people, and their families, are provided with foster care services which value diversity and promote equality.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Ealing Borough Council has an Equality and Diversity Policy. The Registered Manager said there were no changes to this policy. The Children's Services Division, (of which the fostering service is a part), has a Monitoring of Racist Incidents & Equalities Standard. The fostering service continues to recruit and retain as diverse a range of foster carers as possible. The recruitment and assessment team leader explained the different methods used for recruiting foster carers. The Inspector was informed that there is demand to recruit white UK foster carers within the borough. Foster carers continue to receive training on anti-discrimination and racial awareness. The Registered Manager confirmed that additional funding is still made available to carers with mixed heritage placements for matters such as skin and hair care needs and to cover any additional expense incurred when attending religious festivals or cultural events. The trans racial policy has now been finalised and implemented.

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)

Local authority fostering services, and voluntary agencies placing children in their own right, ensure that each child or young person placed in foster care is carefully matched with a carer capable of meeting her/his assessed needs. For agencies providing foster carers to local authorities, those agencies ensure that they offer carers only if they represent appropriate matches for a child for whom a local authority is seeking a carer.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The Registered Manager explained that foster carers are provided with as much information as possible when children are placed in their care. A social worker in the Access to Resources Team is now responsible for reviewing the processes for obtaining and sharing information in relation to individual children placed in foster care. The Access to Resources Team coordinates the matching processes to ensure that children are best placed with foster carers who have the skills and provisions to meet their assessed needs. Foster carers spoken to did not express any concerns with regards to the needs of children placed in their care. Examples as given by members of the management team of the matching processes, indicated that these systems were robust and proving to be successful. However, staff did explain that on going efforts are made to increase the numbers of white UK foster carers within the borough.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

The fostering service protects each child or young person from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The Registered Manager said that there were no known instances of children in foster care being bullied. The policy on allegations and complaints was reviewed in April 2004. The Registered Manager confirmed that all foster carers have been issued with a revised copy of this policy. Thorough procedures were in place for acting on suspected or known allegations of abuse towards a child. Four child protection cases were investigated since the last inspection. Foster carers and the social work team are required to attend child protection training. Child protection is included in the NVQ training programme. In house training is also provided via preparation groups and on going support meetings. The previous inspection report made reference to the "Blue Print" project. The Registered Manager said that this project has now come to an end. The Peer Monitoring Scheme is still in operation. The Outer Limits day hosted by the London Borough of Ealing for Looked After Children, gives children/young people and opportunity to express their views on the provisions of service. This includes their views on being looked after by foster carers. Young people are given the opportunity to be members of the corporate parenting panel. The Registered Manager said that positive feedback has been received with regards to young peoples contribution to the panel. The Registered Manager confirmed that there have been no changes to policies on safe caring and bullying.

Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:

X

%

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)

The fostering service makes sure that each child or young person in foster care is encouraged to maintain and develop family contacts and friendships as set out in her/his care plan and/or foster placement agreement.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Foster carers are informed of the arrangements for a child/young person to maintain contact with parents/significant others prior to or at the point of placement. In situations where contact is proving difficult, mutual venues are agreed with specific dates and times. These contact arrangements are normally supervised by a Social Worker. Where appropriate, foster carers receive allowances to cover transport/travel expenses. One foster carer spoken to did express concerns with regards to the Area Social Worker failing to keep to the visiting arrangements. As a result, the foster children were unable to have their post delivered to relatives in time for Christmas. This was brought to the attention of the Registered Manager.

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.5)

The fostering service ensures that children's opinions, and those of their families and others significant to the child, are sought over all issues that are likely to affect their daily life and their future.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Foster carers and children were in receipt of the complaints procedure. In addition to this, a range of methods was in place for foster carers and children to express their views and opinions. These include reviews, corporate parent meetings, Outer Limits days and Rising Star days. Social workers and link workers consult with foster carers and children regularly.

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)

The fostering service ensures that it provides foster care services which help each child or young person in foster care to receive health care which meets her/his needs for physical, emotional and social development, together with information and training appropriate to her/his age and understanding to enable informed participation in decisions about her/his health needs.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

All children/young people placed with foster carers are required to undergo medicals. Children/young people are provided with health related information and guidance. Specialist health professionals provide information to children/young people. They include the Psychologist, the substance misuse coordinator and Looked After Children nurse. A Training Officer's post was established for the fostering service within the last year. Identifying and arranging appropriate support and information for carers and children/young people with regards to health is included is part of the responsibility of the training officer. Social workers and link workers work with children/young people to promote healthy lifestyles. The Drop-In centre holds weekly sessions where young people may seek guidance and on health matters.

Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.8)

The fostering service gives a high priority to meeting the educational needs of each child or young person in foster care and ensures that she/he is encouraged to attain her/his full potential.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

0

This standard was not assessed on this occasion.

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)

The fostering service ensures that their foster care services help to develop skills, competence and knowledge necessary for adult living.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

0

This standard was not assessed on this occasion.

Recruiting, Checking, Managing, Supporting and Training Staff and Foster Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The people who work in or for the fostering service are suitable to work with children and young people and they are managed, trained and supported in such a way as to ensure the best possible outcomes for children in foster care. The number of staff and carers and their range of qualifications and experience are sufficient to achieve the purposes and functions of the organisation.

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

Any people working in or for the fostering service are suitable people to work with children and young people and to safeguard and promote their welfare.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The Registered Manager said that the fostering service did have a short fall in permanent staff during the last six months. Agency staff were being used to cover vacancies. This has now improved and all vacancies have now been filled with permanent staff. Of the five staff files examined, two did not have valid CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) disclosure checks. It was not possible to establish if the CRB checks had been carried out or misfiled. All staff must have a valid CRB check in place. The files examined for four carers were well maintained and included evidence that recruitment checks had been carried out.

Total number of staff of the agency:

32

Number of staff who have left the agency in the past 12 months:

X

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

Staff are organised and managed in a way that delivers an efficient and effective foster care service.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This standard was not assessed on this occasion.

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.7)		
The fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff and recruits a range of carers to meet the needs of children and young people for whom it aims to provide a service.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
At the time of this inspection, the staff team was made up of sixteen qualified social workers and sixteen unqualified social workers. One hundred and thirty-two foster carers were registered with the service. These included foster carers providing long term, short term and kinship care. All staff are employed via the London Borough of Ealing's recruitment and selection procedures. The Inspector met with a range of staff including managers, senior social workers, social workers, link workers, kinship worker, teacher, psychologist, business support staff and the training officer. All staff presented themselves in a professional manner and highlighted the respect and support they have for each other. The Inspector was informed that the new posts created within the last year are proving to be an asset to the team, the foster carers and children/young people. In particular, the Psychologist, input from the LAC teachers and the misuse of substance coordinator.		

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)		
The fostering service is a fair and competent employer, with sound employment practices and good support for its staff and carers.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	0
This standard was not assessed on this occasion.		

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)		
There is a good quality training programme to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	0
This standard was not assessed on this occasion.		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)		
All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	0
This standard was not assessed on this occasion.		

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6)		
The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>There was a range of skills, experience and qualifications within the staff team. The staff team were confident about their roles and gave good examples with regards to the methods of support in place for children/young people and foster carers. Foster carers who were interviewed said they were fully supported by their link workers/supervising social workers. A range of views and opinions were received via the questionnaires. One foster carer said the monthly support groups and training are educational. Ten foster carers said that the numbers of social workers are not enough and resources are stretched. One foster carer was of the opinion that single mums and dads should be made more aware of fostering opportunities. One foster said that there is lack of consistent support when their link worker is away. Two foster carers expressed concern with regards to the lack of communication from Area Social Workers. One foster carer indicated that they did not get an immediate response when they contacted the out of hour's emergency service. These comments were brought to the attention of the Registered Manager.</p>		

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)		
The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	0
This standard was not assessed on this occasion.		

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

The fostering service ensures that foster carers are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care and meet the needs of each child/young person placed in their care.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This standard was not assessed on this occasion.

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- All appropriate records are kept and are accessible in relation to the fostering services and the individual foster carers and foster children.

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

The fostering service ensures that an up-to-date, comprehensive case record is maintained for each child or young person in foster care which details the nature and quality of care provided and contributes to an understanding of her/his life events. Relevant information from the case records is made available to the child and to anyone involved in her/his care.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

All records maintained by the service were stored appropriately. The content of four files examined were in good order. Policies and procedural guidance were in place for access to records and methods of recording. Foster carers are made aware of recording procedures in the preparation training. Foster carers are provided with resources for recording significant events with children/young people.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

The fostering service's administrative records contain all significant information relevant to the running of the foster care service and as required by regulations.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

All files examined contained a wealth of information. Systems were in place for monitoring the quality of records. The Registered Manager, team managers and the London Borough of Ealing – Quality Assurance Manager, audit the records. Children/young peoples files and carer's files are now filed separately.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:	150
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:	281
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:	173
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:	27
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:	9
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	95.13
Maximum £	292.26

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- The premises used as offices by the fostering service are suitable for the purpose.

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

Premises used as offices by the fostering service are appropriate for the purpose.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There have been no changes to the office accommodation. The fostering service currently operates from two sites. The Recruitment and Assessment team and Kinship team are based in Acton Town Hall. All other teams are based at the London Borough of Ealing Town Hall Annex. Both offices were judged to be sufficient for the numbers of staff. Additional meeting rooms are available when required. Public car parking facilities are within walking distance of the office based at the Town Hall annex in Ealing. The office in Acton is well served by local bus routes.

Financial Requirements

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The agency fostering services are financially viable and appropriate and timely payments are made to foster carers.

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.3)

The agency ensures it is financially viable at all times and has sufficient financial resources to fulfil its obligations.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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	0
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This standard was not assessed on this occasion.

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.7)

The financial processes/systems of the agency are properly operated and maintained in accordance with sound and appropriate accounting standards and practice.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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	0
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This standard was not assessed on this occasion.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)

Each foster carer receives an allowance and agreed expenses, which cover the full cost of caring for each child or young person placed with him or her. Payments are made promptly and at the agreed time. Allowances and fees are reviewed annually.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Inspector met with the Business Support Services Team Manager and the Business Support Officer. The Business Support Services team are responsible for processing all payments. Foster carers spoken to said they receive their allowances on time. Additional payments are made to foster carers for children/young peoples birthdays and special occasions such as Christmas, religious/cultural festivals and holidays. The current allowances have been reviewed. A new banding system for allowances will be introduced in April 2005. Foster carers were invited to a meeting where these changes were addressed.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- **Fostering panels are organised efficiently and effectively so as to ensure that good quality decisions are made about the approval of foster carers, in line with the overriding objective to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in foster care.**

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

Fostering panels have clear written policies and procedures, which are implemented in practice, about the handling of their functions.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Inspector was an observer at the fostering panel meeting, which was held in council chambers on 31st January 2005. The panel chair was also interviewed at the end of the panel. The panel was conducted in a professional and structured manner. All cases heard were thoroughly examined and all members of the panel were given the opportunity to comment on each of the cases. The elected councillor was unable to attend this panel. The panel had a vacancy for a user of foster care. Members of the panel consisted of a chair, vice chair, panel advisor, a foster carer, secretary and representatives from health and education. The panel chair confirmed that formal recruitment processes are carried out when recruiting members for the panel. The chair has a wealth of knowledge and years of expertise in the social care profession. He is independent to the fostering service and the London Borough of Ealing. The panel chair was of the opinion that quality assurance and monitoring systems have improved. This includes the quality of reports presented to the panel. The chair was also of the opinion that the fostering service has good systems in place for recruiting, retaining and supporting foster carers.

Short-Term Breaks

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- When foster care is provided as a short-term break for a child, the arrangement recognises that the parents remain the main carers for the child.

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.2)

Where a fostering service provides short-term breaks for children in foster care, they have policies and procedures, implemented in practice, to meet the particular needs of children receiving short-term breaks.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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The fostering service continues to provide a Family Link service that provides short-term breaks for families with children with disabilities and a sitting service for children in the child's home. Sitters are employees of the London Borough of Ealing. There were nineteen sitters at the time of this inspection. The Inspector interviewed the family link worker (deputy team manager) and the team leader for the recruitment and assessment team who have lead roles in promoting and recruiting carers for short-term breaks. The team leader gave examples of how the service promotes and encourages the scheme within the community. Thorough procedures were in place to ensure that carers with the relevant skills and/or experience meet children/young people's needs. The Inspector was informed that there was a shortage of short-term break carers. However, continuous efforts are made to promote and recruit to these vacancies. Short-term break carers are recruited, trained and supported in the same way as for long-term foster carers. Recruitment records examined were satisfactory and in keeping with the criteria as set out in Schedule 3 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.	
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Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- **Local authority fostering services' policies and procedures for assessing, approving, supporting and training foster carers recognise the particular contribution that can be made by and the particular needs of family and friends as carers.**

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

These standards are all relevant to carers who are family and friends of the child, but there is recognition of the particular relationship and position of family and friend carers.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The fostering service now has a kinship worker in place. The kinship worker is also a qualified social worker. The kinship worker is directly accountable to the recruitment and assessment team leader. The kinship worker post was established in May 2004. Thorough procedures were in place for ensuring the suitability of prospective kinship carers. These included viability assessments and long-term assessments. The kinship worker carries out Regulation 38 assessments. Good practice systems were in place for supporting kinship carers. The kinship worker explained that she will be focusing on three main elements of developing the kinship project which includes, a review of how the needs of Looked After Children's are met, identifying measures to prevent children/young people being looked after and developing a training programme/support groups specific for kinship workers. The Inspectors visited a kinship carer at home. The kinship carer confirmed that she is fully supported by the service. This includes telephone contact and home visits.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

A Lay Assessor was not present on this inspection.

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

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 24th, 25th, 26th & 31st January 2005 of London Borough of Ealing Fostering Service and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

We are working on the best way to include provider responses in published reports. In the meantime, responses received are available on request.

Action taken by the CSCI in response to the provider’s comments:

Amendments to the report were necessary

 NO

Comments were received from the provider

 YES

Provider comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report

 NO

Provider comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate

 YES

Note:

In instances where there is a major difference of view between the Inspector and the Registered Provider responsible Local Authority fostering service Manager both views will be made available on request to the Area Office.

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

Status of the Provider’s Action Plan at time of publication of the final inspection report:

Action plan was required

 YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

 YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

 N/A

Other: <enter details here>

 N/A

Public reports

It should be noted that all CSCI inspection reports are public documents. Reports on children’s homes are only obtainable on personal application to CSCI offices.

D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

Registered Person's or responsible Local Authority Manager's statement of agreement/comments: Please complete the relevant section that applies.

D.3.1 I Ms Ghazala Sheikh of London Borough of Ealing Fostering Service confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that I agree with the statutory requirements made and will seek to comply with these.

Print Name Ghazala Sheikh
Signature Ghazala Sheikh (Signed)
Designation Operations Manager
Date 11/03/05

Or

D.3.2 I Ms Ghazala Sheikh of London Borough of Ealing Fostering Service am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:

Print Name _____
Signature _____
Designation _____
Date _____

Note: In instance where there is a profound difference of view between the Inspector and the Registered Provider both views will be reported. Please attach any extra pages, as applicable.

Commission for Social Care Inspection
33 Greycoat Street
London
SW1P 2QF

Telephone: 020 7979 2000
Fax: 020 7979 2111

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120
www.csci.org.uk

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