

inspection report

Fostering Services

**London Borough of Greenwich
Fostering**

50 Wellington Street
Woolwich
London
SE18 6PY

21st February 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 Greenwich

Address

50 Wellington Street, Woolwich, London, SE18 6PY

Local Authority Manager

Mary Moralee

Tel No:

020 8921 2749

Address

147 Powis Street, Woolwich, London, SE18 6JL

Fax No:

020 8921 2790

Email Address

Mary.Moralee@greenwich.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

16/2/04

Date of Inspection Visit		21st February 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Sue Grindlay	136395
Name of Inspector	2	Elizabeth Brunton	
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.		NA	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		NA	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Mary Moralee	

Introduction to Report and Inspection

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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**
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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 Greenwich Fostering. 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.
<p>Greenwich Fostering Service aims to provide fostering placements for children and young people, who, for whatever reason, cannot live with their families of origin. Placements are made based upon the assessed needs of the child and taking into account such factors as family contact, racial and cultural background, language, education and health needs. In order to offer a range of placements to meet the needs of the department, the fostering service recruits and assesses foster carers according to the Fostering network Competencies model. Once registered, carers are given training and support to help them deliver the high standard of care required by the department. The department also places children with a number of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) who are Pan London approved. The Fostering Service has three teams, Access to Resources (ART), Recruitment, Assessment And Monitoring (RAM) and Family Placements. The teams work together to carry out the functions of the service.</p>

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.)

This is the third inspection undertaken using the National Minimum Standards. The department is stable in respect of management and continues to offer a good service to looked after children in Greenwich, despite the obstacles of recruiting carers and the dismal premises. The Inspection has therefore covered the Key Inspection Standards and some additional standards where it has been found necessary.

1. Statement of Purpose (Standard 1) This standard was met

The Statement of Purpose has been reviewed as is seen appropriately as a working tool for the department. The new children's guide is bright and accessible. A version for younger children is being planned.

2. Fitness to Provide or manage a fostering service (Standards 2 and 3) These standards were both met

The fostering service is managed effectively by skilled and experienced managers.

3. Management of the Fostering Service (Standards 4 and 5) These standards were not assessed at this inspection

4. Securing and Promoting Welfare (standards 6 to 14) 8 standards were assessed. All were met and 2 were exceeded

The fostering service provides a high standard of care for the looked after children it places, and the specialist workers in education and health contribute positively to good outcomes for children.

5. Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers (Standards 15-23) 7 standards were assessed, all were met, 1 was exceeded

Recruitment and training of carers and staff is rigorous, to ensure a high calibre of workers. Carers are well supported by skilled staff.

6. Records (Standards 24 and 25) 1 standard was met, 1 was not met

Computerised records appear to be useful and comprehensive. File records were not always up to date.

7. Fitness of premises for use as a fostering service (standard 26) This standard was not met for the third time

The premises do not meet the requirements of service nor enable the statement of purpose to be delivered satisfactorily.

8. Financial Requirements (Standards 27-29) 2 out of 2 standards assessed were

met

The service operates within the financial requirements of the local authority.

9. Fostering Panels (Standard 30) This standard was exceeded

The Panel is conducted with a view to safeguarding the welfare of looked after children.

10. Short term breaks (standard 31) this standard is not relevant

11. Family and Friends as carers (Standard 32) This standard was exceeded

The fostering service has developed this area of work and has put support in place to underpin the care.

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:

YES

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:

Not Applicable.

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NO

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Identified below are areas not addressed from the last inspection report that 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	<u>Sue Grindlay</u>	Signature	<u></u>
Second Inspector	<u>Elizabeth Brunton</u>	Signature	<u></u>
Regulation Manager	<u>Vacant</u>	Signature	<u></u>
Date	<u>3/3/05</u>		

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.	27(2)(a)	FS6	The Registered Person must ensure that issues around smoking are addressed during the assessment process and at the panel and that an appropriate policy around smoking for carers is developed.	25/4/05
2.	22(1)	FS25	The Registered Person must ensure that quarterly management checks are made on all foster carer files to ensure that files are kept up to date.	25/4/05
3.	23(1)	FS26	The Registered Person must ensure that more suitable premises are found to enable the Fostering Service to implement its Statement of Purpose.	25/4/05

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
1.	FS9	It is recommended that a Safer Caring policy be developed by each foster carer with help from their supervising social worker.
2.	FS12	It is recommended that an extended First Aid course be provided for foster carers.

3.	FS17	It is recommended that dates of medical checks for carers are reviewed to ensure they have not been overlooked.
4.	FS19	It is recommended that joint training be arranged for foster carers and staff members of the fostering team.
5.	FS21	It is recommended that foster carers be consulted about the content and structure of support group meetings.
6.	FS23	It is recommended that the training log records which partner, if it is a couple, attended training.
7.	FS24	It is recommended that carers should hold a copy of any legal order in respect of the child in their care.
8.	FS25	It is recommended that the child protection co-ordinator be asked to make a file note to show that she has been consulted about any complaint or allegation against a foster carer.
9.	FS30	It is recommended that training be provided to the districts in assessing carers under regulation 38.

* 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

Number of Inspector days spent	5
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)	YES
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	NO
• 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	NO
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	21/2/05
Time of Inspection	9.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	32

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) |

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"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
The Statement of Purpose sets out comprehensively the aims and objectives of the Fostering Service. A Young People's Guide has been devised and this is colourful, easy to read and accessible for young people in placement. It gives the telephone number of the Commission along with other useful contacts for young people. A parents' guide and a version of the Children's Guide for a younger age range are being developed.		

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?

3

This standard was met at the last inspection and the managers remain in post.

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

This standard was met at the last inspection and the managers remain in post.

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:

0

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

0

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

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

10

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

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

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

5

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

2

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

0

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

0

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

Carers are assessed before approval using a competency model. This identifies their strengths and the assessor ensures that evidence is provided that the carer is aware of safer caring and has the ability to promote a healthy lifestyle. These competencies continue to be part of the annual review. Foster carers seen were giving excellent care and this was confirmed by young people in placement, and by children's and supervising social workers. All homes seen provided suitable accommodation. Foster carers were aware of health and safety issues. There were annual health and safety checks of the home on files and these included checks on car insurance. The Inspectors noted that there was no comment on a Form F nor in Panel minutes of one couple's heavy smoking, although it was highlighted in medicals by the agency medical advisor, and this is therefore a requirement. **(Requirement 1)**. One supervising social worker summed up one of her carers in the following way, *"She's a warm and welcoming person. She wants to do things the right way and she likes children"*. One foster carer said that she had challenged some new carers, who had been unable to grasp the concept of safer caring, and they had decided not to foster because of this. The carer believes that the process is necessarily rigorous, and, in this case, the couple had thanked her for her honesty about the task.

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

Greenwich is a multi-cultural borough and an important emphasis of the fostering service is valuing diversity. All the department's policies promote diversity and reflect anti-discriminatory practice. Placements case-tracked were same-race and care was given in line with young people's racial and cultural backgrounds and needs. The Inspectors noted that there were dedicated support groups for black and Asian carers. One supervising social worker said, *"I think we do pretty well because we are strict with our standards"*, and when asked to expand on this, said, *"We don't advocate transracial placements"*. Where a perfect match is not possible, resources are put in place to compensate for any deficiencies. For example one child receives religious instruction in a placement where his religion is not practised. At the last inspection it had been suggested that asylum seekers were routinely placed out of borough. This is no longer the case. If the young person has links with the borough, they may be placed in-house. The Inspectors were told that some Vietnamese children were placed with carers where a Vietnamese community already existed.

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 fostering service aims to recruit a range of carers to meet the needs of children needing placement, and careful matching is done at the point of referral to ensure the carers are able to meet the needs of the child. The manager stated that some carers still complain that they wait between placements, and this was borne out by the response to the questionnaires. One carer said, *"The reasons for this are not always clear"*. However the department is striving to make their processes transparent to carers. Recruitment drives target particular groups, for example, a recruitment evening held during the inspection targeted carers for babies.

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

There are clear guidelines in the Foster Carers' Handbook to ensure that children are cared for appropriately. Carers seen were very aware of protection issues and the importance of safer caring and social workers confirmed this. Although safer caring forms part of the assessment there are no written safer caring guidelines for each foster home and this is a recommendation (**Recommendation 1**). Carers seen rarely used sanctions and were aware of permitted sanctions. Supervising social workers visit regularly to monitor the placement, and carers are given support and advice to help them manage challenging behaviour. The Inspectors noted that, in one case, there was no evidence on file that a Panel recommendation for a piece of work with a carer on behaviour management had been carried out. Safety checks on the home are done regularly. Children are told how to complain, and their own social worker will see them regularly to make sure they are happy in their placement. There is a child protection policy for the department, and the procedures for dealing with an allegation have been simplified. All staff attend ACPC training and all foster carers are expected to attend child protection training following their approval. All complaints are now discussed with the Child Protection Co-ordinator although there was no evidence on file to show that this was the case where, for example, the matter had not been taken further, so this is a renewed recommendation under standard 25.

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

Proximity to family members is one of the matching criteria, and the frequency of contact is determined at the placement planning meeting. Foster carers who responded to the questionnaire were clear that they had a responsibility to promote contact for the child with his or her family. One said that her job was to, *“support the child physically and emotionally, and to report anything unusual”*. Others spoke of the importance of photographs and telephone calls. All the carers seen were excellent at supporting and promoting child's contact with parents, siblings and extended family. Some were helping the child to develop new birth family links and one advocated strongly for the child to see his brother.

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

Children and their parents normally attend their review, and there is a consultation process that takes place in order to establish their views before the meeting, and they will participate during the course of the review. Children's opinions are sought through discussion with their placing social worker or with the supervising social worker. Young people placed said carers listened to them and took notice of what they said. One young person said of his placement, *“It's all been good. [The carer] speaks to me nicely”*. Another child responded to the question in the questionnaire, 'What is the best thing about fostering for you?' by saying, *“You get to be with a loving family”*.

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?**

4

The Fostering Service in Greenwich is fortunate to have the services of a Designated Nurse for looked after children, who keeps a database of all children coming into the system, and logs their medical history. For children with many changes of placement, and where contact with birth families is eroded, this information gathering is vital. The Nurse arranges for a comprehensive initial assessment by a paediatrician, and runs her own 'surgery' at the Waterfront Leisure Centre each Friday. She also takes part in a multi-disciplinary professionals group about looked after children, and this includes some casework discussion. Carers seen were attentive to health care needs and were giving very good care and social workers confirmed this. Carers had health care information about children placed and medical consent. Carers had had basic training in first aid but one carer requested a full 3 day course and it is suggested that this be offered for those who wish it (**Recommendation 2**). One carer takes the child she has in placement to counselling, and while he is seen, she too has the opportunity to talk to someone about the issues he

presents. This standard is exceeded.

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?

4

There is a great deal in place to support the educational development of children who are looked after in Greenwich. An educational advocate liaises with schools to support children out of school and help them to integrate back, while the Achievement support officer for children in care helps to narrow the attainment gap between children in the care system and those who are living with their own families. The achievement support officer has undertaken training for foster carers and new social workers, and has also trained designated teachers and this crucial awareness raising has done much to promote the educational opportunities for looked after children in Greenwich. The department has given computers to young people to assist them. Projects, awards gifts and grants are all incentives for young people to excel. Social workers said that young people had made excellent progress educationally since being in their placements. Foster carers had given very good care, had attended all Personal Education Plan reviews and other meetings, helped with home work, arranged extra tuition or Saturday school, and helped to build children's confidence in their abilities. Carers and children seen as part of the inspection were proud of their achievements. This standard is exceeded.

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?

3

Staff in the fostering service have all been recruited according to the human resources guidelines. Staff files looked at had evidence of a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau check, and references had been taken up appropriately. Staff have a range of knowledge and experience of social work, childcare, counselling and psychology.

Total number of staff of the agency:

31

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

4

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**

The department is still struggling to recruit an adequate number of foster carers. Only eight were registered in the last twelve months, and two of these were for supported lodgings carers. Recent recruitment drives have targeted specific groups, for example before Christmas, carers for teenagers were sought, and more recently, carers for babies and young children. The scheme to recruit short-term carers for children with disabilities has been abandoned through lack of carers. One manager told the Inspector that the principle stumbling block to recruitment generally is lack of space in the home. The second reason why carers drop out is the prospect of giving up work. Against this backdrop, the number of family and friends carers has been raised, and this is a very positive step. A large number of children are placed with Independent fostering agencies (IFAs) and the department scrutinises these carefully to ensure they meet the requisite standards. There are no block contracts but the department will negotiate for a fee reduction if they use a number of placements from the same agency. Staff spoken to thought there were a sufficient number of staff. There was evidence on files of a thorough assessment of carers and all the necessary checks had been done. However, the Inspectors were unable to find a full record of a carer's fairly recent criminal offence being discussed with him either during the assessment or at Panel, according to the minutes. However, the manager has confirmed that these matters were fully dealt with. Greenwich has a policy of 2 yearly updates of medicals for carers. However one carer had not received an update medical for 7 years, and it is recommended that these are checked to ensure they have not been overlooked (**Recommendation 3**).

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?	3
<p>The training programme is very comprehensive, and links with Lewisham and Southwark mean the range of opportunities for training is greatly increased. Some evening courses have been offered in the last year, as had been requested, and a Men in Foster Care course was run over a weekend. There have not been any joint training sessions for staff and carers and as this was recommended at the last inspection, it is a renewed recommendation (Recommendation 4).</p>		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5) All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Staff receive regular supervision and the lines of accountability are clear and unambiguous. Staff spoken to said that they receive support from colleagues, not just in their own team but across the fostering service, and one said that there was, <i>"a lot of support compared to in the district"</i>. There is an annual Performance Review and Development Scheme for all staff members.</p>		

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?	4
<p>Supervising social workers visit carers regularly, and they have a supervision agreement as well as an agenda for discussion that includes record keeping, incidents, training needs and any financial issues. The carer is left with a copy of the notes made at the session, and a typed copy is then sent. Carers seen felt well supported by the supervising social workers. Two carers complained about the poor support for the child from placing social workers and the delays in placing children for permanency. Two carers suggested that the fostering team could be more 'proactive' in chasing them up. Two carers also mentioned frequent changes of supervising social worker. One said she had had five workers in four years. A range of support groups are provided, attendance is monitored and reward/incentive payments made accordingly. One carer, who attended regularly, thought support group meetings were rather boring and could be more focused. It is recommended that carers are consulted about the content and structure of support group meetings (Recommendation 5). The availability of a counselling service out-of-hours telephone support are valued. Annual foster carer reviews were seen on all files seen and the use of a different worker gives some objectivity to the task. A key development this year has been the setting up of a Foster Carers Support Group. This is run on the principle of carers helping other carers, and an elected carer is the co-ordinator. The co-ordinator takes referrals from supervising social workers or the team manager and allocates a carer for the task, which might be caring for a child while the carer attends training, or escorting a child to school or to contact. These are one-off events and</p>		

the co-ordinator asks both carers to evaluate the experience. So far 27 carers have signed up for this project, and it appears to be highly successful. In the words of the co-ordinator, *“people are more open about asking for help”*. A support group for men in foster care has been set up, and the manager hopes it will eventually be self-run. These initiatives mean that the standard is exceeded.

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?

3

Training needs are addressed at each supervisory visit, and at the annual review. Carers are encouraged to be proactive in identifying their own training needs. One carer said that in her view standard are higher now than before, and there is a more professional approach, or as she put it, *“it’s more business-like how they address it to you”*.

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?

3

There is a comprehensive training programme for carers, both pre and post approval, and individually tailored training on a one-to-one basis can be arranged by supervising social workers working from the skills to foster pack. The programme is distributed in September for the forthcoming year. Carers seen had accessed a lot of training and were very positive about the courses offered. The record of training was seen on files, but where the couple fostered it was not clear which partner went and this is a further recommendation (**Recommendation 6**). Training undertaken is monitored at annual reviews and goals set for the forthcoming year. The new fostering support group can make arrangements to care for children to enable carers to access training. One carer commented in the questionnaire that she had turned up to three training sessions but the trainer did not! The Inspector notes that 42 foster carers have undertaken the NVQ3 and a further 11 are working towards it. This is exemplary. The department has tried to engage birth children in support groups but they have not been motivated to attend. The last fostering conference had ‘Resilience’ as the topic. Supervising social workers discuss training after the event, to help carers identify what they have learnt, and to discuss how to apply their knowledge. It is noted that Friends and Families carers can now access training resources in the same way as other foster carers.

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

The fostering department holds a case record for each looked after child, and this is placed in a locked cabinet adjacent to the carer's own file for easy access. Some files did not have Looked After Children records and the Inspectors were told that these are accessible on the IT system. One carer seen did not have copy of the Care Order and this is a further recommendation (**Recommendation 7**). Carers keep a diary of significant events and also support children placed in recording significant life events as they happen, with photographs to supplement life story work. At the last inspection it was noted that the fostering section could not access the district's records on the computer database CAFIS. This has now been reviewed and supervising social workers can now access the information but cannot write to it. This means that the supervising social worker can be up to date with developments on the case. One supervising social worker showed the Inspector a file note written during the placing social worker's supervision the day before and recording a decision on that case!

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?

1

The department has comprehensive and well-organised files for foster carers, with a front sheet listing the contents. Records were legible; many typed, usually dated and signed. The service has a number of excellent systems in place to log significant events and provide data on placements. This means that the computerised systems are up to date, but print-outs on files are not always current. For example, training records on carers' files were not up to date, although the administrative records on the computer were comprehensive. Other file information such as name of current placement were in some cases, wrong, and on one file the list of children in placement had not been updated since November 2002. Information on complaints was incomplete. Where a complaint had been resolved there was no written evidence of this on the file, nor was there an endorsement on file from the Child protection Co-ordinator that a case would not be dealt with as Child Protection. This is a further recommendation (**Recommendation 8**). Some foster carer files seen had not been checked regularly by managers, though there was a written expectation in the front of the file giving frequency, and this auditing function must be carried out to ensure accurate information is recorded on the file (**Requirement 2**).

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			X
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			X
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			X
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			8
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			15
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	174	Maximum £	260

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?
The state of the premises used by the fostering service has been a cause for concern over the last two inspections, and this must be re-iterated again. Staff are remarkably long-suffering about this. Indeed one foster carer said in answer to the question about whether staff do a good job, <i>"Yes, considering they have to work in a grotty office space"</i> . Staff were pleased to inform the Inspector that they had new desks. All staff members have their own desk and computer. The Inspectors were told that the main team room is to be re-decorated and re-carpeted. However, these are cosmetic changes to what is essentially an unsatisfactory working environment. In the pre-inspection material the manager states that Health and Safety issues for staff are a matter of ongoing discussion. However the Inspector was told that there had been no accidents in the department. This is hard to believe. One member of staff told the Inspector that when carers come to the office with babies, they have to carry the pram upstairs. This means that the office is also inaccessible for those with a disability. Once again the Inspection has highlighted the disgraceful kitchen and toilet facilities, stained flooring and gloomy interview room. This must be a restated requirement (Requirement 3).	1

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?

3

The department has an allocated budget as part of the Social Services. Payments to carers are made on time, and there is regular monthly monitoring of the expenditure.

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?

0

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**

Payments to carers are made on time and are adequate. They exceed the recommendation from the Fostering Network and are to be reviewed. Carers receive a bonus for a successful year at their annual review if they have attended training as required. The manager has discretion for an additional fee in certain circumstances, for example a child out of school or on remand.

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?

4

The Panel was conducted in a professional manner and had a good cross section of experienced professionals. Members contributed equally to the discussion, and the chair collated questions for the carers. Carers who attended panel were put at their ease, and one new carer thanked the Panel as she left and said that her experience had been a positive one. The Panel were appropriately cautious and further evidence of their rigour is in the fact that six requests for a long-term link were declined or deferred last year. One member at one point said, *"Maybe I'm being a bit picky"*, and a colleague replied, *"We need to be picky because we're placing vulnerable children"*. When carers come to the Panel for review, a signed copy of the Notice of Approval (Review) is placed on the carer's file. At the end of the Panel business, members were given a helpful analysis of the Panel's activity over the past twelvemonths. It was noted that a number of Regulation 38 reports had been returned for further information or clarification. The Inspector was told that these reports are compiled by social workers in the district, and there are guidelines to help them. One social worker subsequently told the Inspector that she had found the report difficult to do, even with the guidelines, as the focus of her work until that point had been the child not the carer. The manager has suggested that the threshold may be different for these carers, and in order to avoid wasting the Panel's time it is recommended that there be some discussion about thresholds, and training for district social workers in this important area (**Recommendation 9**). The standard is exceeded for the fostering panel.

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?
This standard is not relevant.	

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?

4

This area has been a key development over the past twelvemonths, and eight new carers have been approved under this standard. One new staff post is to be created and the two workers are going into the Family Placements Team and the RAM team respectively. Support is now being offered to these carers to *'bring them into the fostering fold'*. The manager states in her pre-inspection report, *"carers have...responded with relief...that they now have direct communication with a nominated supervising social worker"*. Assessments are made using the formal competencies as used for ordinary foster carers. Family Group Conferences are being developed in Greenwich and in some cases these can lead to a formal assessment. Despite the development work still to be done, there has been a huge shift in recognizing the importance of these placements and validating the carers, and this standard is therefore exceeded.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor

Signature

Date

PART D**PROVIDER'S RESPONSE****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 <enter date(s) of inspection here> and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

☐

Comments were received from the provider

☐

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

☐

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

☐

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

☐

Action plan was received at the point of publication

☐

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

☐

Other: <enter details here>

☐

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 _____ of _____
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 _____

Signature

Designation

Date _____

Or

D.3.2 I _____ of _____
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.

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