



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

SWIIS Foster Care Ltd

Victoria Square House
2nd Floor, 81 New Street
Birmingham
B2 4BA

21st September, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 6th, 13th
& 19th October, 2004

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?

NO

Name of Authority

Address

Local Authority Manager

Tel No:

Address

Fax No:

Email Address

Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)

YES

Name of Agency

SWIIS Foster Care Ltd

Tel No

0121 643 4609

Address

Victoria Square House, 2nd Floor, 81 New Street,
Birmingham, B2 4BA

Fax No

0121 643 7040

Email Address

Registered Number of IFA

E540002022

Name of Registered Provider

SWIIS Foster Care Ltd

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Mr Andrew James Burns

Date of first registration

28th May 2004

Date of latest registration certificate

28th May 2004

Registration Conditions Apply?

YES

Date of last inspection

February
2004

Date of Inspection Visit		21st September 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Ann Appleby	135667
Name of Inspector	2	Llynn Woods	
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.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection			

Introduction to Report and Inspection

Inspection visits

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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 SWIIS Foster Care Ltd. 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 Provider of Swiis Fostering Care Limited was registered in Ealing in July 2002. The Birmingham Branch was registered on 28th May 2004. The aim of the Fostering Service is to provide good quality foster carers from diverse cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Swiis aims to provide short and long term placements for children and young people between the ages of 0-21 years of age. This includes young mothers with babies, and assessment placements, and children with mild to moderate learning or physical disability. The service is not registered to provide remand placements or children with moderate to severe learning or physical disability. The premises for the service are central to Birmingham and easily accessed by public or private transport. A move to independent premises is intended for the near future. Foster carer's receive regular supervision from the social work support team. The service provides additional support workers to complete 1-1 work with children. A team of Teachers are employed to support children's education, and a health advisor has been appointed, to address the health care needs of children and young people.

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.)

All those involved with this inspection were open, welcoming and responsive to the inspection process and inspectors. The Care provided to young people was of a good quality, with promotion of the young people's wishes and involvement incorporated into policy and practice. There are some areas of the service, which need strengthening to meet the standards. At the time of this inspection the registration inspection report had not been received. However, the Provider and manager had worked positively on the verbal feedback received, to improve on areas of the service to meet minimum standards.

The summary of findings is addressed consecutively following the standards within the body of the report.

Statement of Purpose. (NMS Standard 1). The statement of purpose and children's guide are in place, a small adaptation to the statement of purpose would improve clarity to service users.

Fitness to Provide and manage a fostering service (NMS Standard 2-3). The manager has social work and management qualifications, and extensive experience in management of fostering services. Overall the service is managed effectively.

Management of the fostering service. (NMS Standards 4-5). The service is developing and managed well with the resources available. The Provider is processing practice development to strengthen areas in the management structure and monitoring processes.

Securing and promoting welfare. (NMS Standards 6-14). All information from this inspection indicates that the foster carers provide good quality warm and nourishing environments for children and the children feel well cared for. There are some areas of practice which need strengthening including, safe care, specialist health service links and obtaining relevant information and background information for children.

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

The range of staff recruited reflects the cultural diversity of the area. Carers are recruited with a range of skills and life experience. The service is aware of the need to promote further recruitment of carers, which reflect the diverse culture, ethnic and religious population of the area. There is a range of fostering experience and good specialist support provided by a team of teachers, health advisor and support workers.

Records. (NMS Standards 24-25).

The records policy has been reviewed to make information more accessible and there are areas, which need attention to bring them up to the standards. However the manager was aware of a number of them and in the process of clarifying practice issues.

Fitness of premises for uses as fostering service. (NMS Standards 26).

The premises were fit for the provision of the service to function efficiently. All records were securely retained and appropriate insurances were in place. Alternative venues were being sought for training and support groups.

Fostering Panels. (NMS Standards 30).

The Panel is of a good standard and meets the requirements of membership, access to advice, good rigorous review and clarity of recommendations reflected in the minutes.

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:

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	YES
Swiis foster Care is registered to provide placements for children and young persons within 0-21 years of age for short and long term placements. To also provide placements for assessment and, for young mothers with babies. The provider will need to apply for a variation of registration if Swiis wish to place children with severe physical or learning disability or, make remand placements available.		
Comments The statement of purpose would benefit by identifying local registration details on the Branch specific information, to clarify placement provision.		

Condition	Compliance	YES
The facilities for the administration and financial and petty cash should be provided to ensure the essential administrative functions can operate independently by 31 st May.		
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	YES
Newly appointed foster carers should not have their original approval changed or take placements outside the original approval range, until the Panel, following their first year of practice, has formally reviewed them.		
Comments Panel chair reported this had improved the service.		

Condition	Compliance	YES
Placements for assessments and mother and baby placements should only be made with foster carers who have been assessed and specifically approved and trained to foster these client groups.		
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	YES
The Manager should confirm in writing to the Commission the dates when Swiss foster care has agreed with relevant Local Authorities to assume responsibility for the approval of the carers employed by Swiis.		
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	YES
The Provider or a delegated responsible individual must ensure that the Management of the Fostering service is supervised and monitored and that the Commission are able to access records of the supervision and monitoring.		
Comments		

Lead Inspector	Ann Appleby	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	Lynn Woods	Signature	_____
Locality Manager	Neil Arculus	Signature	_____
Date	13/06/05		

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	42(1) Schedule 7	FS4	The provider must ensure the monitoring of the service occurs in practice and this can be evidenced.	Action Plan to be submitted with timescales
3	12(1) & 17(2)	FS9	The Manager must ensure that foster carers and social workers training and practice are strengthened to recognise when children's behaviour or, bullying become child protection concerns. Also, record when safe care guidelines have been discussed with social workers and children NMS 9.3	Action Plan to be submitted with timescales
4	13(1) &17(2)	FS9	The Provider and manager must ensure the behaviour management policy includes risk assessments and written behaviour management programmes inclusion in care planning, and these are reviewed.	By 1 st June 2005 and on-going
5	14 & Schedule 6(6)	FS10	The Manager, as far as possible, must ensure that placing authorities comply with their responsibilities regarding risk assessments and provision of agreed contact arrangements. In the absence of these risk assessments the agency must conduct their own	By 1 st June 2005

6	17(1)	FS14	The manager must ensure the provision of policy and practice documents and training and information to carers, to promote young peoples preparation for adulthood.	By 1 st July 2005
7	28(2) & (5)(b)	FS18	The manager must provide written clarification with foster carers about the difference between paid holiday and respite care.	By 1 st July 2005
8	34(1) & (3)	FS23	The manager must ensure that foster carers have the skills and training to meet the needs of the children placed.	Action Plan to be submitted with timescales
9	22 & Schedule 2	FS25	The manager must ensure the foster children's register complies with schedule 2	By 1 st May 2005

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	FS1	Development of the Statements of purpose in other formats including languages and children with communication difficulties would be valuable.
2	FS10	It is recommended that if contact is to be in a foster carers own home and the placing authority fails to undertake a risk assessment then the service would undertake this process to ensure the safety of all persons involved.
3	FS24	The Manager may wish to consider if a process of earlier written requests for information on children needs to be put in place.

* 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	8
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	YES
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• 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 (Not all key staff were interviewed)	NO
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	YES
Date of Inspection	21/9/04
Time of Inspection	2.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	100

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?
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The statement of purpose is in place and reflects the services provided. Since registration the service has made all required improvements to ensure the statement of purpose meets the standards. Improvements include separate paperwork for the local branch that can be included with the corporate documentation and amended as necessary.

The children's guide is in a child friendly format and gives information about the services available, contact numbers for independent support, and refers to complaints and representations. In order to further develop the statement of purpose in line with the NMS it is suggested that the development of formats in other languages and for those with communication difficulties would be valuable.

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
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The provider is a qualified social worker has a background with extensive experience including in fostering services. He has a commitment to a holistic approach, and providing good quality foster placements for children and young people.

The manager of the fostering service is a qualified social worker and holds a recognised Msc. in social service management. He also has extensive experience in management of fostering services and evidentially, is committed to developing a progressive service. There are clear processes in place for keeping the financial matters under review.

The service has been very successful and developed rapidly. The Managers is creating and working on systems to ensure that support effective leadership, are in place. For example appraisals and a training and development programme for staff, clarity of the process for carers respite support, were areas identified as needing organising.

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?	4
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The personnel file was checked for the manager and checks completed complied with schedule 1. The manager confirmed that police checks would be completed every three years. Examination of records along with a conversation with the manager highlighted that he had a wealth of experience and knowledge of working with children. The manager has demonstrable experience along with a good track in safeguarding children's welfare. He has since become the regional manager for the service and continues to oversee practice.

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?

2

There are regular meetings between managers of the branches and peer monitoring of the service occurs. Reviews of finances are in place and the managers are regularly apprised of the financial status. The procedures for monitoring of the service were in place but needed to be firmly established in practice, with the elements of monitoring supervision evidenced. This issue was raised at the registration inspection and the Provider has responded positively with the provision of Responsible Individual to be appointed in the near future. This will ensure the practical and regular monitoring of the service is in place, and developments can be supported practically.

There are clear roles for the manager and staff of the fostering service and accountability for the tasks undertaken. The manager confirmed the job description for some staff, have now been reviewed in light of current practice and development of the service.

The service has proper financial procedures in place, which are kept up to date.

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

8

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.

0

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

1

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.

1

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

1

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?****3**

The manager has a job description setting out duties and responsibilities and does not hold a similar position in another organisation. There are deputising arrangements in place and the level of delegation and responsibility are clear. Overall the fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently within the resources available.

However, the growth of the service and the positive developments of support services, have had an impact on the range of responsibilities of the manager. This has produced some conflicting pressures on the time available to maintain regular oversight of all areas of the service. Positively, this has now been addressed and the appointment of a responsible individual in the near future will alleviate some of these pressures.

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

The evidence provided by children, social workers, records and direct observation confirm that, overall the standard of foster carer's homes is of a good quality. The environments are warm, safe and healthy places, well decorated with ample space provided for young people. The assessments include issues relating to the environment and specific requirements reflecting safety issues, which may be needed before a placement is made. The manager confirmed that health and safety checks and safe transport and insurance are checked at annual reviews. Health and safe caring issues are covered in preparation and training and there is ongoing support available from the health advisor. Carers were aware of the inspection and the foster care agreement confirms the need to co-operate with inspections by the CSCI.

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

The Manager confirmed that Swiis have positively sought to recruited and approved carers with a diverse range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. They have been less successful in recruiting as many carers as they would wish to reflect the diversity of ethnic mix in the area. The foster service promotes respect for the diverse cultures and promotes equality issues in relation to sexuality, gender and disability. The manager confirmed the service is reticent to make any placement, which is not culturally appropriate for children and young people. Carers and staff met, and survey information from placing social workers, children and carers, confirms the positives gains for children with culturally appropriate placements. A number of placements for asylum seekers have been made. Additional support systems have been sought to assist the children and carers.

The evidence from carers, staff, and children met, confirmed children are assisted to develop skills to deal with discrimination in any form. However, children have clearly met with discrimination, (Refer to NMS 9). Children met, confirmed they valued the support provided by carers and Swiis workers, when this has occurred.

Children and young people met and questionnaires returned confirmed they are actively encouraged to pursue talents, interests and hobbies irrespective of ability and enjoy a range of interests and pursuits.

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
<p>There is good evidence from this inspection that Swiis endeavour to match children appropriately to placements, taking account of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds, based on the referral information. The matching process can be affected by the quality of information provided to Swiis by placing Authorities and the service is very aware of this factor. Placements meetings strive to take account of know previous concerns. Introduction to foster carers is facilitated wherever possible however, numbers of children do not have this opportunity.</p> <p>The evidence of records, carers and staff met during the inspection indicates Placing authorities do not always provide full information.</p>		

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?	2
<p>Pre and post approval training for foster carers covers safe caring and involves all members of the household. Caring for children who are abused, managing behaviour, recognising signs of abuse and developing children's self esteem are all included in training. The evidence from staff and carers met, and records seen at this inspection suggests further training in the area of child protection is required. The impact of children's behaviour on other children or adults and recognition of when it became a child protection concern, was not consistently, acted upon by staff or carers. Similarly, a bullying policy is in place, this would benefit by clarifying at what point bullying becomes a child protection issue. Children met, reported discrimination and bullying issues remaining unresolved. The problems continued to have a serious effect on them, despite support and intervention by carers and Swiis staff.</p> <p>Evidence from this inspection identified instances when containment or restriction of children's freedom, was clearly required to keep children safe. However, the agreed programme for this was not identified or included in care plans, with a process of review aimed at more socially acceptable behaviour and natural sanctions. The behaviour management policy would benefit by including information on the importance of ensuring placing authorities agree to programmes to reduce risk, and that these are written up and signed off and included care plans.</p> <p>Foster carers confirmed safe care issues were discussed with all members of the household. However, there was no written record evidenced on children's files inspected, to confirm these had been discussed with the child's social worker. The no corporal punishment policy is clearly stated in foster carer agreements and policy guidance on managing behaviour is included in the Foster carer handbook. There are clear policies on reporting children missing and recording of allegations against foster carers, which are monitored by the Manager and forwarded to the Provider. Swiis ensure all information available on children, is passed to foster carers, whom they consider to be professional colleagues.</p>		
Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:	95	%

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

The pre approval training for foster carers, stresses the importance of children and young people maintaining contact with the families and friends where possible. There was good evidence at this inspection the children and young people are encouraged to maintain contact. Carers and Swiis support children to represent their wishes as part of the planning process. Considerable efforts are made to facilitate contact wherever possible. Although, the fostering service has experienced difficulties with placing authorities to maintain their responsibilities in the organisation of contact.

During the inspection a number of children reported they were unhappy with agreed contact arrangements. It was clear that these concerns reflected on the placing agencies arrangements and not the fostering service. However, it has been recommended and agreed that if contact is to be in a foster carers own home and the placing authority fails to undertake a risk assessment then the service would undertake this process to ensure the safety of all persons involved.

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

There is good evidence from children and carers met and questionnaires returned the foster service ensures children are consulted in all areas of their daily lives and plans for them. The importance of listening to children's views is stressed during the assessment and pre approval training of carers. This is incorporated into policy and practice, with children's views sought for their own reviews, about their care by foster carers which is also incorporated into foster carer reviews. In addition the children's views are sought about developments of the foster service and requested when a placement ends. Children are verbally informed of the complaints process, and they are encouraged to problem solve any concerns at the informal stage. Changes made in the children's guide since registration has simplified the process for children. Additionally, the inclusion of a number of independent agencies to support children has improved the process.

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

The importance of health care for children is included in the pre and post approval training for foster carers. The evidence from children, foster carers, and staff met and questionnaires returned, support the importance placed on children's health care and informed participation in their health needs. Carers do register children with GP's, and ensure dental and eyesight tests are completed. Swiis have employed a health care advisor to progress chase health records, develop links with health services, and provide information and further training to carers. In addition there is provision in this role to provide health education to children and young people.

It was noted during the inspection that the service does have on-going problems at times in gaining permissions for treatment and information from placing authorities but has a strategy in place to address this problem.

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?**

3

Swiis place `considerable effort into meeting the educational needs of children placed in the service. A team of teachers provide additional support to children and carers, and work collaboratively with schools and colleges. The relevant information on children's education is not always provided to Swiis by placing authorities. Children tracked identified children whose educational needs were delayed due to the lack of support by placing authorities. This was ameliorated by the input of the Swiis teaching teams efforts to progress statements of educational need and retrieve Personal educational plans from previous schools. Carers are expected to provide space and support to children to complete homework and to encourage attendance and achievement within education. Systems for monitoring the educational attainment of children across the service are in place.

There was good evidence of children being encouraged to pursue leisure interests and activities, from the children, staff, carers and met and questionnaires.

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?

2

Swiis carers are expected to promote children's age appropriate, development of skills and knowledge, which promote their independence. There is an expectation that children will be consulted, and their involvement in making decisions about their lives, is essential to their welfare needs being met. Children met and those placed with Swiis at the time of inspection, were not of an age where Pathway Plans were being considered.

The manager confirmed there was no independence training policy and procedure in place, but was being drafted. Also, that it was intended links with the Connexions service would be developed, and ongoing support would be available to young people.

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

The fostering service has recruitment and selection procedures in place for the appointment of staff. The registered manager acts as the CRB counter signatory for the service locally and administers all required CRB's. All staff are interviewed, and relevant checks and references are obtained. The manager confirmed the CRB checks are completed every 3 years. Assessments of carers are completed by qualified Swiis social workers when possible, with a few completed by three independent sessional workers. The manager confirmed the service was addressing the need to provide relevant training for the support workers, and further opportunities for training to the social work team. Staff without qualifications, were appropriately supervised by experienced and qualified social work staff. Additionally, the review of service has addressed the difficulties experienced with the recruitment and retention of staff. Exit interviews have assisted in identifying reasons for social workers leaving. This information has been valuably used to review the advertisement and interview procedures. The Manager and carers met confirmed the turnover of staff had an impact on carer support and also had an effect on children placed who had come to know them.

Total number of staff of the agency:

20

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?

3

The evidence from this inspection gained through interviews and records indicates, staff are organised and managed to deliver an efficient service. The delegation and responsibility of tasks is appropriate for the skills and experience of members of the team. The administration team had recruited more clerical staff to meet the developing needs of the service. Enquiries were dealt with promptly from prospective carers, and only qualified staff, complete the assessments of foster carers whether in house or by sessional workers. At the time of inspection the workload of staff was high due to recent changes in staffing. There had been some delay in the annual reviews of carers, but these were almost up to date. Post approval training and training portfolios were in place for foster carers with opportunity for some NVQ 3 training. The Manager confirmed staff training had been under developed and the recent appointment of a training officer for the service would redress this imbalance.

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 evidence from this inspection indicates there is a good range of carers recruited to the service. The manager confirmed they would like to recruit more carers from the diverse cultures within the area. The staffing levels had been revised to meet the needs of the service and current vacancies were about to be advertised. When there are shortfalls, the manager and deputy cover for the support workers and, agency staff are employed when necessary. The manager had identified through exit interviews the issues relating to retention of carers and incorporated this into the review of service. The information gained had been considered with personnel and the advertisements for staff and interview process altered to hopefully, assist the retention of staff. There is a clearly identified recruitment and assessment process and pre approval training contains all elements of NMS17.7. Foster carers met and returning questionnaires were generally positive about the assessment process, and the information and training provided.

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?****2**

The employment practice of Swiis, were generally sound with good regular supervision of all staff and carers. The manager, deputy manager and Education Manager provide regular supervision for staff. The service make every effort to ensure that staff receive their appraisals annually and the Manager clearly demonstrated an oversight of staff needs and developments required to support the service to children. Foster Carer Agreements identify the process of supervision and, public liability and professional indemnity insurances are in place. A 24-hour support service is provided to carers. In addition support can be made available from the support workers. A number of carers met and returning questionnaires were particularly concerned about the shortage of agreed respite within the care plan process, especially when children's behaviour was very difficult. Or, where emergency alternative care was required due to unforeseen events and illness occurred within the foster family. However, during a conversation with the managers it was clear that there is a level of confusion of carers between paid holidays and respite, in spite of clarification.

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>There is an induction programme in place for staff and some in-service training. The manager had identified in the service review a number of areas of further training for staff, which need to be provided to reflect the changes to legislation. Additionally, to support staff to gain appropriate qualification and access to post qualifying training. Joint training for staff and carers occurred and, there were plans for further joint training initiatives to include the teaching staff, carers, support and social work staff.</p>		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)		
All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The staff duties and responsibilities and the job descriptions varied and have recently been revised, to ensure the role responsibilities were consistent for each post. Similarly the policies and procedures had been revised and were at the point of being distributed to staff and carers. Supervision sessions were regular, planned and recorded, with additional daily supervision available as required. All staff attended regular full team staff meetings, and there were separate team meetings for social workers, support staff, administrative staff and teaching staff.</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?	3
<p>The fostering service has a clearly documented procedure for working with and the supervision of carers. Supervision is recorded and has to be read, agreed and signed to confirm it is correct by carers.</p> <p>To ensure all elements of NMS 21.2 are met, the manager needs to clarify the process for respite care support for all carers. Also, carers reported an impact on their ability to ensure children's welfare needs are met, resulting from the lack of access to specialist health care services (Refer to NMS 18.)</p> <p>There is a clear policy in place for annual reviews for foster carers who are returned to Panel annually. There is good evidence from records inspected staff met and returned questionnaires that the fostering service endeavours to ensure good communication with placing social workers.</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?****3**

Foster Carer Agreements have been revised since the registration inspection. The new agreements contain all relevant information to meet the standards and identify responsibilities of carers, the agency and local authority. Overall the information gained from foster carers was the support received, was enabling and of a good quality to support the carer of the child. Foster carers are provided with qualified social work support, but reported, they would value support from specialist health care services. The out of hours service works well and payments are regular.

Foster carers files contain the regular fortnightly supervisory visit reports. Unannounced visits do occur at least annually to carers, and the manager and deputy monitor these. Foster carers were aware of the policy and procedure for investigation of allegations and the process for de registration of foster carers.

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?****2**

All carers receive pre and post approval training and there is an expectation of high standards of care. The service has provided training opportunities in a number of venues around the midlands to assist with improved access for foster carers. Carers did not always have the knowledge or skills, to meet the needs of children placed. It is noted that there is an on-going failure by placing authorities to meet their statutory duties in providing all the required information. However the evidence of this inspection indicates, the agency has made placements without facilitating foster carers appropriate training, when this was known to be required.

The manager has addressed the provision of more appropriate venues to promote attendance. Safe caring policies are in place, which has been backed by child protection training. This would be further enhanced by ensuring that all foster carers are clear about the reporting arrangements for all matters of concern that affect all children in their care including their own and any others that have been involved or affected by specific events. Children of carers are given the opportunity if they wish to see support workers at least once a month to raise any concerns they may have. Annual reviews take into account the training needs of carers, which are documented and contribute to annual reviews and developmental needs for the foster service.

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

Swiis have a positive policy of sharing all information received with foster carers on children placed. However, placing authorities, despite the agencies comprehensive referral process, do not always provide full background information. There was good evidence of support social workers and the manager seeking information not provided, including written requests for information to placing authorities. The process of formal written requests would benefit by earlier action and a timescale for letters to be sent to senior officers of placing authorities. Despite this the foster carers and Swiis Team were providing a good standard of care for the children within the limits of information or resource available.

The recording policy and process of file format and content had been reviewed since the registration providing clearer access to information. Carers actively encouraged children to collate information on their background and ongoing life events. Additional support was also available via the support workers, when agreed with placing authorities to complete life story work.

All information is stored securely and all carers and staff met where aware of the policy and practice.

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?

2

The majority of fostering service records contain all the significant information to run the fostering service. The monitoring process for all allegations and complaints and there progress, is in place and available at inspection. Procedures for storage of information are in place across the service

The recording of information on children complies with the looked after children's format and the integration of records, with information being returned to placing authorities at the end of placement. Children and carers were aware they could access and contribute to records held about them. The children's register requires revision to include all information identified at schedule 2.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:		85
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:		78
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:		52
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:		17
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:		2
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	370.00	Maximum £ 540.00

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

The premises are currently appropriate for the fostering service and easily identifiable for staff and service users, purchasers of service. Security of records and the office are in place, as are the IT systems. The administration systems and equipment are sufficiently robust to ensure a service and insurance is in place. Swiis are in the process of identifying alternative premises separate from the staff recruitment service.

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 information presented to inspectors confirms the service is financially viable. There is an expectation that the safeguards for children's welfare to be adhered to in the event of financial crisis.

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?

3

The financial processes and systems for the agency are in place and payments made via the London headquarters of Swiis and are overseen by an accountant. The Provider and Manager receive regular updates of the financial situation in relation to the Birmingham branch and the foster service as a whole. The fees and charges for the services are provided to placing authorities.

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

Foster carers received fees and allowances and expenses. These are subject to annual review and updated information is provided to carers.

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 fostering service Panel has clear written procedures in place about the functions of the panel and the decision making process. There was an understanding of the quality assurance functions of the Panel identified by the Panel Chair. The Panel minutes inspected demonstrated oversight of service developments were regularly shared with Panel members, in relation to carers, placements and practice. The Panel inspected clearly demonstrated a willingness to be rigorous in the oversight of assessments and reviews. The Panel members represented a range of experience and expertise including education, legal advice, and were provided with medical advice. Independent membership included someone who had been fostered. The Provider was not identified as having attended and this was a weakness in the monitoring of the service. (Refer to NMS15)

The Panel policy and practice would be strengthened by ensuring where there are concerns regarding foster carers practice, following panel review, the concerns are clearly identified with recommendations how they are to be addressed in panel minutes. Confirmation in writing to the carers and fostering service staff, with a requirement the progress will be included in any future review, would provided clarity when there are disputes

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?	9
This service is not provided		

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?	9
This service is not provided		

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

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 20/09/04 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	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments were received from the provider	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provider comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan was received at the point of publication	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provider has declined to provide an action plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: <enter details here>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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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