



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

Fostering Services

Peterborough City Council Fostering

Peterborough City Council

Bayard Place, Broadway

Peterborough

PE1 1FB

6th, 7th, 8th, 9th & 10th December 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?

YES

Name of Authority

Peterborough City Council Fostering

Address

Peterborough City Council, Bayard Place, Broadway,
Peterborough, PE1 1FB

Local Authority Manager

Gillian Sanderson

Tel No:

01733 746019

Address

Peterborough City Council, Bayard Place, Broadway,
Peterborough, PE1 1FB

Fax No:

01733 746090

Email Address

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

05.01.04

Date of Inspection Visit		6th December 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Lindsey Blickem	098780
Name of Inspector	2	Jacqui Barry	
Name of Inspector	3	Alison Hilton	
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		Gillian Sanderson	

Introduction to Report and Inspection

Inspection visits

Description of Fostering Service

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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 Peterborough City Council 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.

Peterborough Fostering Service is managed within the Children's Social Care Division of the Local Authority's Education and Children Department.

The fostering service is responsible for the recruitment, approval and supervision of foster carers in order to provide foster placements for Looked After Children and Young People. The service has discrete specialist foster carers categorised as long term (permanent), extended term (task-centred), short term, friends and family (formally known as kinship), respite, remand, parent and child, link (disability) and emergency care.

The number of children looked after by local authority foster carers was 260. Since the last inspection the service had approved 17 mainstream carers, 4 respite, 6 friends and family and 3 link carers increasing the number of foster carers supported by the service to 158.

The Fostering Team staffing complement was a Team Manager, an Assistant Team Manager, a Duty Officer/Placement Co-ordinator, a Training and Recruitment Officer, 4 Foster Carer Link Social Workers (at the time of the inspection 1 worker was suspended, 1 was on long term sick leave and 1 on extended leave), a Team Support Worker, a Link Scheme Co-ordinator, a Team Administrator and 3 Administration Assistants.

Full details of the Fostering Service are contained within the Statement of Purpose.

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.)

OVERVIEW

The inspection of Peterborough City Council fostering service took place on the 6th to the 10th December 2004. Three inspectors undertook the inspection looking at three discreet areas of service provision. Three cases were sampled from each of the three services looked at; Family and Friends, Time Limited foster carers whose households routinely exceed the 'usual fostering limit' and the Link scheme. The case tracking methodology was applied during the inspection involving interviews with carers, children and young people, parents, link workers and placing social workers. The children's and foster carer case files were inspected.

The evidence available at the time of the inspection suggested that the fostering service was operating successfully and offered good quality placements to children and good support and supervision to foster carers. The inspectors were impressed with how the service had developed since the last inspection particularly within the Link scheme and Friends and Family service. The routine exemptions and the high number of children in place within a small number of foster homes was an issue that the service must more robustly address.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (St 1)

This standard was met

The statement of purpose was fully compliant with Regulation 3 FSR 2002 and had been reviewed and updated appropriately.

FITNESS TO PROVIDE OR MANAGE A FOSTERING SERVICE (St 2 & 3)

Two of the two standards assessed were met

Both the fostering manager and the assistant team manager had not yet embarked on management training. The management team was considered 'fit' to carry on or manage a fostering service.

MANAGEMENT OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE (St 4 & 5)

Two of the two standards assessed were met

The management team was unchanged since the last inspection and the evidence available during the inspection suggested that the service was efficiently and effectively managed. The service was experiencing a staffing shortage/crisis that the City Council must respond to.

SECURING AND PROMOTING WELFARE (St 6 to 14)

All nine standards were met, two were exceeded

The service provided good quality family placements to children and young people that largely met the specific and differing needs of the children and young people placed there. The foster carers and children were largely well matched with one another although the large numbers of children within certain foster homes was a concern. The foster carers and fostering staff had good knowledge of child protection protocols and the communication within the service was good. All carers seen during the inspection positively promoted and facilitated contact arrangements when these were in place. The consultation projects completed by the City Council were excellent as was the educational provision for the young people in foster homes. All the young people seen during the inspection had engaged with appropriate health professionals although the lack information on the LAC documents was a concern. Arrangements for transition to adulthood within the Link scheme were good.

RECRUITING, CHECKING, MANAGING, SUPPORTING AND TRAINING STAFF AND FOSTER CARERS (St 15 to 23)

All nine standards were met

There were no significant gaps in formation on the three personnel files seen during the inspection. Evidence that CRB checks have been satisfactorily completed should be more clearly recorded. The discreet services were operating well within the whole service and the Link and Family and Friends services had developed well since the last inspection. Staff interviewed during the inspection reported being supported well by the management team. The foster carers spoken to also spoke of receiving a good level of support from the fostering service. The training opportunities for foster carers was very good and becoming more accessible. The fostering staff reported receiving adequate training opportunities. It was noted that staff members had been supported in their professional development. The overall support and supervision of carers and fostering staff was good.

RECORDS (St 24 and 25)

Two of the two standards were met

The children's case files and foster carer files were well ordered and the information contained within them was largely accessible. The LAC documents were not in place for a majority of children and young people and there was a risk of significant information gaps to occur.

FITNESS OF PREMISES FOR USE AS FOSTERING SERVICE (St 26)

This standard was met

This standard was unchanged since the last inspection. The building was at times uncomfortably warm and not conducive to a working environment.

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS (St 27 to 29)

All three standards were met

The financial viability and the financial processes within the fostering service were sound. The carers reported receiving the correct allowances owed to them.

FOSTERING PANELS (St 30)

This standard was met

The fostering panel was operating successfully and supported the fostering service very well. The panel functioned efficiently and was managed and administrated to a high standard.

SHORT TERM BREAKS (St 31)

This standard was met

All carers could receive respite as stipulated in the services respite policy. Respite was available across the service. The Link scheme was operating successfully and it was noted that significant improvements had been made to the service since the current coordinator had been in place.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS AS CARERS (St 32)

This standard was met

This service was another aspect of the fostering service that had improved significantly since the last inspection. The approach taken by the fostering service in supporting these carers was commendable.

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:

YES

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:

The routine exemptions made for a small number of foster carers to provide care for up to eight children (non sibling groups) at any one time is in breach of it Schedule 7 (3) Children Act 1989 (the usual fostering limit).

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>Lindsey Blickem</u>	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	<u>Jacqui Barry</u>	Signature	_____
Regulation Manager	<u>Cathryn Bramham</u>	Signature	_____
Date	<u>3rd February 2005</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	Schedule 7 (3) Children Act 1989.	FS17	The fostering service must put in place a strategy to reduce the number of children in place within a small number of foster homes that have exceeded the 'usual fostering limit'.	28.02.05
2	34	FS6	The City Council must ensure that Foster Placement Agreements are in place for all children placed with foster carers.	28.02.05
3	19	FS5	The City Council must ensure that the fostering service is sufficiently staffed.	31.03.05

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	FS2	The fostering manager and assistant team manager should complete appropriate management training.
2	FS22	The service should continue to develop training for Friends & Family carers.
4	FS15	The service should ensure the CRB checks are more clearly evidenced on personnel file.

5	FS26	The City Council should ensure that the heating in the building is conducive to a working environment.
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* 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
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The following inspection methods have been used in the production of this report

Number of Inspector days spent	14
Survey of placing authorities	NO
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	NO
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	NO
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	YES
• Contact with parents	YES
• Contact with supervising social workers	YES
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	YES
Interview with panel chair	YES
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	06/12/04
Time of Inspection	09.00
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?

3

The Statement of Purpose was largely unchanged since last inspection. Relevant sections have been updated in line with the changes within the fostering service.

The evidence available during the inspection was that the service largely operated within the parameters set within the Statement of Purpose.

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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Neither the Team Manager or the Assistant Team Manager had completed appropriate management training. The Team Manager reported that this should be addressed in 2005.

The evidence available during the inspection suggested that the service is well managed by a competent and highly experienced management team.

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
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This standard was unchanged since last inspection. The service continued to be managed by the same management team that was in place at the last inspection.

The Service Manager in place during the last inspection was on long-term sick leave and had been temporarily replaced.

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?

3

The majority of carers spoken to had a clear understanding about lines of accountability. Channels of communication were reported to have improved significantly within the link service following the appointment of link coordinator.

Three support foster carers have been appointed since the last inspection providing additional and peer support for carers. The service was also in the process of attempting to recruit support foster carers specifically for the link service and family and friends.

The Management roles within the fostering service were well established. The way in which the service has dealt with the staffing crisis just prior to the inspection had been commendable.

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.

0

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.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

0

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 evidence available during the inspection suggested that the service was efficiently and effectively managed.

Although the staffing shortage had not yet significantly affected the day-to-day service delivery the City Council must continue to address this issue as a priority.

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
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The 3 link placements seen during the inspection clearly supported and promoted the children and young people's physical and emotional needs. Transport arrangements were flexible and the general consensus among carers, children and parents about the fostering service was positive.

The standard of care offered to young placed within the 3 mainstream foster homes seen during the inspection that were operating above the usual fostering limit was good. There were however concerns raised again about the routine exemptions made for a small number of carers supported by the service providing care for up to eight children. It was acknowledged that the 3 carers seen provided adequate accommodation for 'group living' and the care offered was also good.

The standard of care within the 3 kinship care placements seen during the inspection was also good and it was acknowledged that these families had demonstrated commendable commitment to the children in their care.

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
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Within the link the link scheme, there was evidence (through the case tracking activity of one young person of mixed heritage) that this young person had equal access to new experiences as other children within the placement. There was evidence for all three (link) children and young people that they were included in events and activities and valued as part of carers natural families.

The service had accommodated the different needs of families within the Friends and Family service well. The service was evidently flexible in meeting the needs of the carers and young

people. The young people seen were given the opportunity to be involved in religious festivals and the specific cultural needs of children and young people were well met within placement. There was also evidence that carers shared their knowledge of cultural and religious needs.

There was one example where in the absence of relevant and up to date information available to carers in the form of a care plan resulted in a child being discriminated against.

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 children and young people seen within the link service had been well matched to carers with carers with relevant skills. Gaps in experience were acknowledged that were addressed through accessing specialist services. There were excellent examples of gradual and child focused introductions.

The carers within the Family and Friends service had been appropriately matched with the young people in their care with an appropriate assessment completed of the carer's strengths and needs.

The evidence available relating to the mainstream service were that the young people placed in emergency placements were generally well cared for in line with their needs. The number of children placed with a small number of carers was however excessive. It was difficult to assess whether other options, at the point of referral to the service, had been appropriately explored.

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

All foster carers who had attended pre and post approval training had received child protection. All foster carers seen during the inspection had safe caring policies in place within the case files. Carers spoken to had a clear understanding of the service's behaviour management policy. The majority of carers and workers commented that the communication between the placing social worker, link worker and foster carers was good.

It was difficult to assess the impact on some children placed within households where there were multiple placements of children of differing age groups and the sheer numbers of children placed in an emergency. The practice of routinely exempting some carers to place up to eight children in one household presented risks to both placement stability and the

matching process.

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

The standard of Looked After Children (LAC) paperwork that was available within a small number case files was reasonable although there were considerable elements of the LAC paperwork missing in a majority of the case files seen, (particularly within the Friends & Family service). In other areas of the service the LAC paperwork was outdated. It was difficult to measure against the information available from within the LAC paperwork what constituted an appropriate level of contact for each young person seen.

Through discussions with social workers, link workers, carers and young people it was determined that the contact arrangements for most of the young people seen during the inspection were appropriately promoted and facilitated.

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?

4

The City Council had done excellent and extensive work on consulting with looked after children and young people in relation to a wide range of issues affecting them.

Review documents had been altered and pitched more appropriately to age, and the bi-monthly magazines made available to looked after children were informative and appealing.

The 9 cases tracked by the inspectors provided good evidence of appropriate consultation with the young people concerned.

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
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Within the 9 cases tracked, each child's or young person's health needs had been assessed and reviewed within the LAC system. Specialist advice had been provided to support carers for children with disabilities and training had also been provided to ensure that carers administering controlled drugs were doing so appropriately.

The service was developing new and creative strategies to encourage and promote young people to take care of their health. Sporting activities were on offer and health kits available to young people. There was an example of poor practice in relation to care planning potentially impinging on a child's health and welfare needs.

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
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Excellent work had been done to promote children's educational attainment and including supporting carers to support children. The literacy strategy was an excellent initiative and providing equipment to pre-school children was another example of the department's commitment to good educational outcomes for LAC.

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?	3
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There was a good plan in place for one young person making the transition to adult services. The relevant parties/professionals had been identified and were working together to ensure the transition was as smooth and positive. The carers were making the transition to become carers for the young person once adulthood was reached.

The appointment of a supported lodgings worker was a positive development and it will be interesting to see how this role progresses in future inspections.

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

Of the 3 personnel files inspected, no significant gaps in information were identified.

Files were well ordered and the information contained within them was largely accessible.

The service should evidence more clearly on the personnel files of the details of the Criminal Records Bureau check.

Total number of staff of the agency:

14

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

2

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

There were clear lines of accountability within the service. The team were enthusiastic and highly committed to their respective roles. The organisational management of the discreet services within the fostering team impressed the inspectors.

It was evident that individual skills within the team were acknowledged and promoted. Agency workers were being used by the service specifically to complete Form F assessments and this was an indicator of the services commitment to recruiting carers.

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
<p>The form F assessments seen during the inspection most recently completed by the service were of a high standard. The service had nominated one staff member whose role was almost exclusively to assess prospective carers, it was recognised that this member of staff had developed excellent assessment skills.</p> <p>The service had made very good progress in recruiting new carers to the service. The service had available to them a good range of carers with relevant skills and experience. Although the service could not meet the demand for placements it was acknowledged that it had improved its capacity considerably.</p>		

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?	3
<p>The evidence available during the inspection suggested that Peterborough City Council was a fair and competent employer. Staff and the majority of carers spoken to reported being supported well by the City Council and the fostering service.</p>		

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>Adequate training had been provided for a majority of staff working within the service. One new member of staff had undertaken the full in-house induction training and felt well supported in her role as a new employee. Job descriptions and terms and conditions were evident on personnel files. Training for all employees had been evaluated regularly.</p>		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)**All staff are properly accountable and supported.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

All staff members spoken to working in the Fostering Unit, reported having received a high level of support by the management team and were in turn highly supportive of the management team. Staff members reported receiving formal supervision regularly and the day-to-day support offered throughout the team was very good.

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**

The evidence available from carer's files showed that regular support and supervision was offered covering a wide range of relevant and child focused issues. The service had clearly cultivated positive and constructive working relationships with the majority of carers. The introduction of support foster carers had been a positive development during the preceding twelve months.

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**

The carers spoken to reported that they were offered a high level of support and the evidence available suggested that this was put into practice proportionately to the needs of the carers and children in placement.

Foster carer agreements were in place on each of the files. The majority of carers seen had been given copies of policies and procedures relating to their role and they were clear about how to comment or complain about the support they received.

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

Extensive, relevant training was accessible to carers; most of whom took advantage of these opportunities. The training coordinator was looking to make further training available outside of office hours to better suit the needs of some carers.

It was a positive development that training specifically related to link care had been set up and this had been well received by the link carers spoken to during the inspection. Carers felt able to suggest training courses that they wished to attend and that these requests would be positively considered by the department.

There was specific training offered to Friends and Family carers, although this should be reviewed in light of the comments made by some carers. One carer spoken to during the inspection had acted as a trainer for the department although had not been paid. This should be remedied as soon as possible and a system should be set up where by this does not occur again.

The services commitment to training carers in NVQ was commendable and high numbers of carers had or were in the process of completing the training offered.

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
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Children and young people's case files were generally well ordered and the information contained within them was reasonably accessible.

As stated previously, the standard of LAC paperwork when in place was reasonable to poor. Up to date paperwork was not routinely available, leaving the possibility open for significant gaps in information.

There was good evidence that carers knew the reasons children and young people were looked after and interviews with link workers and social workers filled the information gaps in the paperwork.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The fostering social work team received a high level of professional support from a well-established and well organised administrative team. The general standard of recording and administration within the service was good.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			158
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:			30
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			X
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	X	Maximum £	X

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

This standard was unchanged since last year. It was noticed by the inspectors that the building was extremely warm and made the working environment uncomfortable.

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

Evidence seen during the course of the inspection suggested that the service is financially viable. Additional monies available to the service had been put to excellent use funding initiatives within the service and the City Council.

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

This was largely unchanged since the last inspection and the evidence available during the inspection was that the financial processes were operating well.

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 link and Friends and Family carers had been brought into line with that of mainstream carers since the last inspection.

Christmas and birthday allowances were also being paid to Friends and Family carers; these were recognised as positive developments.

All carers spoken to during the inspection expressed satisfaction with the payments made to them.

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?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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The fostering panel observed as part of the inspection functioned efficiently and effectively. It was noted that the discussions held by panel members were constructive and open. The panel chair facilitated discussions and areas of conflict very well and it was impressive that the foster carers and social workers were given a great deal of support and time to express their views.

The panel continued to provide a very good quality assurance function and areas of concern raised by panel were addressed with the senior management within the City Council. Panel addressed the issue with regard to routine exemptions made to a small number of foster carers appropriately although the advice and issues raised during panel meetings were not always heeded by the City Council.

The service had managed to recruit a former looked after child as a panel member. It was also noted that excellent administrative processes supported the 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?
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The fostering service had in place a respite policy for carers implemented in practice. Despite one carer raising an issue relating to this matter it did appear that this policy was administered fairly throughout the service. The service must continue to review this policy in order to assess whether it is in fact fair given the different circumstances within each of the foster families. Foster carers were given the opportunity to have respite if required.

The foster carers within the link scheme seen during the inspection were extremely dedicated to the children and young people for whom they cared and should be commended in this respect. The service provided children with good family placements and parents with much needed respite and support whilst retaining parental responsibility.

Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The system for assessing, approving and supporting Friends and Family carers had developed well within fostering service. The sensitivity and creativeness used in meeting the specific needs of these carers was impressive. The service had developed new approaches in working with these carers and should remain responsive to the needs of these carers. The commitment shown by the carers within the Friends and Family service seen during the inspection was highly commendable.

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 6th December 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

Many thanks for your report which we consider to be very helpful and accurate.

As the report acknowledges, the fostering service has continued a process of sustained improvement. We ask that further consideration is given to whether the following four areas justify a scoring of 4 under Standard Met? We believe that this scoring would appropriately reflect the report's narrative.

Standard 30: The fostering panel is described in your report as providing "*very good quality assurance function*" and supported by "*excellent administrative processes*".

Standard 27: The service is described as making "*excellent use*" of funding initiatives.

Standard 22 : Carers are reported to have been offered "*a high level of support*" and there was felt to be a clearly established use of foster carer agreements.

Standard 23: Training is described to be "*extensive (and) relevant*" and the service's commitment to training carers in NVQ is described as "*commendable*".

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 26th January 2005, 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.

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