

inspection report

Fostering Services

**East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Fostering Service**

County Hall
Cross Street
Beverley
East Yorkshire
HU17 9BA

7th March 2005

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

Local Authority Fostering Service?

YES

Name of Authority

East Riding of Yorkshire Council Fostering Service

Address

County Hall, Cross Street, Beverley, East Yorkshire, HU17
9BA

Local Authority Manager

Position Vacant

Tel No:

01482 887700

Address

County Hall, Cross Street, Beverley, East Yorkshire, HU17
9BA

Fax No:

01482 936103

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

26/01/04

Date of Inspection Visit		7th March 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of Inspector	1	David Martin	075214
Name of Inspector	2	Marcia Mackey	
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.		NA	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		NA	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Mrs Annie Shaw, Child Care Resource Manager, and Mrs Yvonne Burton, Fostering Team Leader (Acting).	

Introduction to Report and Inspection

Inspection visits

Description of Fostering Service

Part A: Summary of Inspection Findings

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection

Statutory Requirements from this Inspection

Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection

Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings

(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

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

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

Part D: Provider's Response

D.1. Provider's comments

D.2. Action Plan

D.3. Provider's agreement

INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

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

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

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

The report will show the following:

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

This report is a public document.

INSPECTION VISITS

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

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.
<p>The Fostering Service is run by the East Riding Of Yorkshire Council and is managed within the Social Service Directorate. The service is set up to provide foster care for children looked after by the Council. Foster carers are recruited and assessed by fostering social workers and are considered for approval by the Fostering Panel. Looked after children may also be placed with 'friend and family' carers who should also be assessed and approved. The Council's stated aim for the service is to help Foster Carers to provide care that ensures the safety and well-being of children and maximises their life chances by valuing diversity and promoting equality and achievement.</p>

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

Inspector's Summary

This inspection was carried out on an announced basis over a period of 6 days commencing on 07/03/05. Prior to the inspection there 3 pre-inspection meetings held with representatives of the East Riding of Yorkshire Fostering Service and Child Care division. These meeting were designed to deal with outstanding requirement and recommendations from the previous inspection. The fostering services provided written confirmation that it had dealt with the issues and, consequently, they have not been revisited during this inspection other than through a sampling process and assessment against core standards.

It is clear that the East Riding Fostering Service has made considerable progress since the last inspection to ensure that it meets with regulations and National Minimum Standards and continues to develop good practice. The service is held in high regard by other professional who come into contact with it and children using the service were pleased with the standard of care provided for them on an individual basis. The service is currently managing to provide an excellent training package for foster carers and deserves particular commendation for the bi-monthly magazine it produces. There is a view within the team and expressed by the panel chair that the delivery of service is good and has the potential to continue improving. The appointment of a new manager is critical in ensuring that the development of the service continues.

Statement of Purpose

Since the last inspection a fully revised Statement of Purpose has been produced. It meets with the requirements set out in regulations and National Minimum Standards and has been approved by elected members of the Council. The Children's Guide is acknowledged by the Fostering team to require further development.

Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The Fostering Service is managed within Council's Children's Services and is directly line managed by the Child Care Resources Manager. The Fostering Team Leader post is currently filled on an acting basis. It is expected that a permanent post-holder will be appointed by June 2005. The acting manager has an appropriate professional qualification and is an experienced senior practitioner. The acting manager will be enabled to access support through the line management structure.

Management of the Fostering Service

There are comprehensive policies and procedures available for both foster service staff and carers. Staff have clear job descriptions setting out duties and responsibilities. Files contained evidence that they are audited. The Commission should receive notifications of events reportable under Regulation 43.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The Foster Carers' Handbook sets out in detail the process for matching carers and looked after children. The fostering social workers expressed a commitment to ensuring that the matching process results in placements that are in the best interest of the children.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council has Area Child Protection Committee policies and procedures in place and widely distributed. Child protection issues are dealt with comprehensively in the Foster Carers' Handbook and in core and advanced training for carers.

Foster carers understand the significance of contact with birth families for children make strenuous efforts to ensure contact arrangements are adhered to. Children who spoke with the inspectors confirmed that they have contact with their friends and families. The health and educational needs of foster children are properly provided for.

There are issues to be resolved relating to effective consultation with children using the service. There is a staff training need regarding diversity and equal opportunities.

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

A sample of staff files was inspected. Individual files contained all the information required by Regulation and National Minimum Standards. There is a system in place to ensure that renewal of Criminal Records Bureau disclosures are triggered every three years. Fostering Social Workers are satisfied with the level of training and support available to them. Current caseloads are manageable. Administrative support to the foster care team is available but there is an acknowledgement that the workload is onerous.

The approval of foster carers follows a robust assessment process. The range of training and its delivery is excellent. The fostering service produces a bi-monthly magazine for foster carers and children which is an excellent source of information and forum for sharing views. There are issues raised by carers which need to be resolved regarding practical support. The carer's views about the support from childcare social workers should be shared with colleagues in Social Services.

Records

A sample of children's files held by childcare teams was inspected. This provided evidence that 'Looked After Children' documentation is completed and that all cases are reviewed in a timely manner. Each foster carer is required to maintain a 'Child Placement File' and this provides a useful account of each placement. Foster carers' files are comprehensive and contain information relating to the care needs of individual children. Records relating to the supervision and visits to carers were not up-to-date in the files inspected.

Fitness of Premises for use as a Fostering Service

The fostering service shares office accommodation with the Council adoption team. The provision for the security of records and IT equipment is adequate. The premises are suitable in most respects but staff identified issues which should be addressed. This included the lack of dedicated or nearby parking, the lack of rooms for private consultation with carers and staff supervision, poor access for people with a disability and inadequate control over the heating.

Financial Requirements

None of the standards were assessed.

Fostering Panels

The business before the panel was dealt with effectively and there was robust discussion and exploration of specific issues. There are policies and procedures relating to the operation of the panel. The panel chair believes that the panel's expertise and grasp of the issues is developing. He considers that the level of scrutiny is good and that conflicts are resolved effectively. The panel chair is aware that the panel's quality assurance function requires further development.

Short-Term Breaks

None of the standards were assessed.

Family and Friends as Carers

The Fostering Service has made considerable progress in relation to the support it is able to provide for kinship carers. Training is available for kinship carers. There are issues relating to the approval of kinship carers which the Council needs to address. In particular there are instances where kinship carers assessments are not completed within the required 6 week timescale.

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)

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

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

YES

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:

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	
			Not applicable	

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	
Not Applicable		
Comments		

Lead Inspector**Signature****Second Inspector****Signature****Regulation Manager****Signature****Date**

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	38	FS32	The assessment of kinship carers should be completed within the required 6 week timescale.	With effect from 07/03/05
2	43	FS4	The Commission should be notified of any events tabled under Schedule 8.	With effect from 07/03/05

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	FS1	The Children's Guide should be developed.
2	FS7	Fostering staff should be provided with training that addresses issues of diversity, equal opportunities and anti-racist practice.
3	FS11	Information gathered through consultation of children and young people using the fostering service should be used more effectively.
4	FS24	Records relating to the supervision and visits to carers should be kept up-to-date.
5	FS26	Issues relating to the suitability of the premises should be addressed. This includes the lack of dedicated or nearby parking, the lack of rooms for private consultation with carers and staff supervision, poor access for people with a disability and inadequate control over the heating.

6	FS30	The Foster Panel's quality assurance function should be developed.
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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

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	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	YES
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	NO
• Contact with parents	NO
• 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	NO
Date of Inspection	07/03/05
Time of Inspection	10:30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	112

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?

2

Since the last inspection a fully revised Statement of Purpose has been produced. It meets with the requirements set out in regulations and National Minimum Standards and has been approved by elected members of the Council. The aims and objectives are reproduced in the Foster Carer Handbook which is has also been developed recently. The Handbook is due to be issued to all carers in the very near future. Its content will be discussed by fostering social workers and the carers they support. The Children's Guide has been adapted from material produced by the British Association for Adoption and Fostering and is acknowledged by the Fostering team to require further development.

See Recommendations from this Inspection No. 1.

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

The Fostering Service is managed within Council's Children's Services and is directly line managed by the Child Care Resources Manager. The Fostering Team Leader post, which is responsible for the day-to-day management of the service, is currently filled on an acting basis. It is expected that a permanent post-holder will be appointed by June 2005. The acting manager has an appropriate professional qualification and is an experienced senior practitioner. Observation of the fostering team meeting and comments by team members provided evidence that the service is effectively managed. There has been a relatively high turnover of foster team leaders and it is acknowledged by the service that a period of consolidation is required. The acting manager will be enabled to access support through the line management structure.

Standard 3 (3.1 - 3.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The acting manager's file was inspected and contained all the information required by Regulation and National Minimum Standards. The appointment of a new manager will take place in line with the Council's recruitment and vetting procedures.

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?

1

There are comprehensive policies and procedures available for both foster service staff and carers. Staff have clear job descriptions setting out duties and responsibilities. Files contained evidence that they are audited.

In the past 12 months the Commission has received no notifications of events reportable under Regulation 43 and steps should be put in place to ensure happens in the future. Notifiable events are tabled under Schedule 8, Regulation 43(1).

See Requirements from this Inspection No. 2.

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

0

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

X

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

X

Serious illness or accident of a child.

X

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

X

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

X

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

X

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

X

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

X

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

0

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

X

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)

The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

Not assessed.

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

Initial assessment of foster carers includes an assessment of the home environment. Any health and safety issues would be resolved at an early stage. All foster carers are seen at intervals of one or two months by their fostering support worker and any matters relating to the standard of accommodation would be addressed. Safety issues within the home are also covered within the foster carers handbook and through core training. There was evidence in individual case files and papers before the panel which indicated that environmental factors contributing to the protection of children are managed appropriately.

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?

2

The fFoster Carers' Handbook contains a brief statement expressing a commitment to equal opportunities and valuing diversity. The assessment of foster carers includes an exploration of their values and understanding of diversity and it is further developed through training. Through this process any discriminatory views would be challenged. Fostering social workers confirmed that the profile of carers reflected the make-up of the general population in the East Riding. They are aware that there is a shortage of carers able to provide longer-term care for children with disabilities. The staff also identify a training need for themselves in respect of diversity, equal opportunities and anti-racist practice.

See recommendations from this inspection No. 2

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 Foster Carers' Handbook sets out in detail the process for matching carers and looked after children. The fostering social workers expressed a commitment to ensuring that the matching process results in placements that are in the best interest of the children. They demonstrated a sound knowledge and understanding of the strengths of individual carers and were able to share this to assist colleagues seeking to make placements. Individual matching meetings are held to which all key people are invited. The fostering service has developed positive working relationship with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) which is able to provide specialist advice and is playing a greater role in the matching process. Fostering Placement Agreements are held on file. As far as possible any child's racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic needs are considered. To date the service has not encountered any difficulty in this regard.

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

East Riding of Yorkshire Council has Area Child Protection Committee policies and procedures in place. Child protection issues are dealt with comprehensively in the Foster Carers' Handbook and in core and advanced training for carers. Safer care matters are discussed through the Form F assessment process. Carers receive training in managing challenging behaviour appropriately. There was evidence in the panel discussions that child protection considerations are dealt with appropriately. Fostering Social Workers were clear about their responsibilities in promoting safe care practice and the procedures relating to any Section 47 enquiry. Inspection of a sample of staff and carers' files provided evidence that selection and vetting is robust. Children in foster care who met with the inspectors said they knew the complaints procedure.

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 Foster Carers' Handbook sets out the importance of maintaining and promoting contact with birth families. Contact arrangements are set out in children's case files, placement agreements and are reiterated in placement review minutes. There is evidence in foster carers' questionnaires returned to the Commission that foster carers understand the significance of contact for children and that they make strenuous efforts to ensure contact arrangements are adhered to. Children who spoke with the inspectors confirmed that they have contact with their friends and families. Where circumstances indicate that contact should not take place, individual children and young people said they understood the reasons why.

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?****2**

Foster carers receive training in listening to the views of children. The East Riding has begun to seek the views of children through the Participation Officer. She has done some very good work in this regard, including the preparation of presentations by a group of children for the inspection. However, there are indications that the information gathered is not put to best use.

See Recommendations from this Inspection No.3

There are wider issues for the Council to tackle with regard to consultation. The Children who spoke with the inspectors said they had contact with the fostering workers but rarely saw their own social workers. They were concerned that their attendance at review meeting was a waste of time. The Council has dispensed with the services of the Children's Rights Officer but has yet to replace this with an alternative means of consulting and advocating on behalf of children.

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 Foster Carers' Handbook contains advice and guidance regarding the importance of meeting a child's health care needs. Individual case files provided evidence that the health care needs of children are documented appropriately. There is evidence that medical examinations have been carried out. Foster carers who spoke with the inspectors were clear about their responsibilities for ensuring that children have access to medical care. Diary sheets kept by foster carers provided evidence that appointments are kept. Fostering support visits and supervision are used to discuss health care issues. The CAMHS team provides mental health input as necessary. The Council is aware that there have been problems in providing written consent for medical treatment on occasion and is taking steps to address this.

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**

Inspection of children's and carer's files provided evidence that the educational needs of children are assessed and appropriately provided for. Personal Education Plans are completed and schools contribute written statements for and attend reviews. The Foster Carers' Handbook contains comprehensive guidance and advice to assist foster carers in meeting the educational needs of children. Observation of the panel provided evidence that educational needs of children are discussed. There is a representative on the panel who is involved in educational issues.

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****0**

Not assessed.

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

A sample of staff files was inspected. Individual files contained all the information required by Regulation and National Minimum Standards. There is a system in place to ensure that renewal of Criminal Records Bureau disclosures are triggered every three years.

Total number of staff of the agency:

12

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

X

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

Not assessed.

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
Fostering Social Workers in the team have approximately 15 carers to support and supervise and, at any one time, may have 2 or 3 Form F assessments to complete. Staff who spoke with the Inspectors said that their current caseloads were manageable. In addition to casework fostering officers are involved in the delivery of foster carers' training and the running of support groups. The service is clearly developing and as it expands the recruitment of additional staff will be necessary. There are issues to be resolved in relation to the approval of 'kinship' carers which may also require additional resources for the fostering team. The approval of foster carers follows a robust assessment process.		

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

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

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

Fostering Social Workers who spoke with the inspectors were satisfied with the level of training and support available to them. In light of the recent change in the day-to-day management of the service, the delivery of formal supervision of staff is being restructured.

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**

In the last 12 months the service has reclassified all carers depending on experience and expertise into 3 separate bands. This enables training and support to be pitched at an appropriate level. It also clarifies the payment system and ensures that matching can be carried out with a greater degree of accuracy. There are clear Placement Agreements. The fostering service produces a bi-monthly magazine for foster carers and children which is an excellent source of information and forum for sharing views.

In discussion with inspectors and through inspection questionnaires, carers have confirmed that the majority feel well supported, receive good information about the children in their care and are enabled to contribute through reviews. With regard to the fostering service, they raised concerns that their telephone calls are not always returned. They suggested that they would like copies of their supervision notes and that the provision of or funding for equipment should be quicker. They would also like the 'Priority Care Service' to work more efficiently during school holidays. Foster carers do not feel that they are consulted about how the service is run. These issues were feedback to the Fostering Service manager who was aware of the issues and is taking steps to address them.

The carers also raised issues about their contact with childcare social workers. They are concerned about the high turnover of social workers and the impact this has on consistency. They feel there is a lack of support. The fostering service should share these views with colleagues in Social Services.

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**

Since the last inspection a comprehensive Foster Carers' Handbook has been produced. It is due to be distributed and in the course of supervision visits its content will be discussed with 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?****3**

The inspectors met with the training and development officer attached to the fostering service. The range of training and its delivery is excellent. 'Skills to Fostering' training is provided pre- and post approval. There is compulsory core training for all carers and more advanced training for experienced carers. There are stand-alone courses regarding the management of challenging behaviour, and safer care. Guest speakers are often used. Many carers have achieved or are in the process of obtaining NVQ3 qualifications. Kinship carers are able to attend all training courses but it is acknowledged that some separate training may be required.

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?

2

A sample of children's files held by childcare teams was inspected. This provided evidence that 'Looked After Children' documentation is completed and that all cases are reviewed in a timely manner. Each foster carer is required to maintain a 'Child Placement File' and this provides a useful account of each placement. Foster carers' files are comprehensive and contain information relating to the care needs of individual children. They tie in with the childcare files. Foster carers' reviews are up-to-date. Records relating to the supervision and visits to carers was not up-to-date in the files inspected.

See Recommendations from this Inspection No. 4.

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?

0

Not assessed.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			X
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			X
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			X
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			X
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?

2

The fostering service shares office accommodation with the Council adoption team. The provision for the security of records and IT equipment is adequate. The premises are suitable in most respects but staff identified issues which should be addressed. This included the lack of dedicated or nearby parking, the lack of rooms for private consultation with carers and staff supervision, poor access for people with a disability and inadequate control over the heating.

See Recommendations from this Inspection No. 5.

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?

9

Not assessed.

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?

9

Not assessed.

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?**

0

Not assessed.

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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The inspectors attended a meeting of the Fostering Panel and interviewed the panel Chair. Membership of the panel is in line with regulations. There are long-term vacancies which despite strenuous efforts have yet to be filled. Work in this area is ongoing and was discussed during the panel meeting. All recent panel meetings have been quorate. The business before the panel was dealt with effectively and there was robust discussion and exploration of specific issues. There are policies and procedures relating to the operation of the panel. The panel chair believes that the panel's expertise and grasp of the issues is developing. He considers that the level of scrutiny is good and that conflicts are resolved effectively. Any disagreement would be referred to the decision-maker. The panel chair is aware that the panel's quality assurance function requires further development.	2
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See Recommendations from this Inspection No. 6.

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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East Riding's short-breaks foster care is provided by Barnardo's. This agency is subject to its own inspection by the Commission and a report is available on the Commission's files. This standard was not assessed on this occasion.	0
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Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

1

The inspectors interviewed the fostering social worker with responsibility for providing support to family and friendship (kinship) carers. The service has made considerable progress in relation to the support it is able to provide for kinship carers. There are 26 kinship carers and all have a working relationship with the fostering service. 16 have been approved by panel. Training is available for kinship carers. There are issues relating to the approval of kinship carers which the Council needs to address. In particular there are instances where kinship carers assessments are not completed within the required 6 week timescale. The assessments are currently carried out by childcare social workers with support from the fostering service. This raises issues for the Council about the best use of social workers' time and lack of experience and expertise in completing Form Fs.

See Requirements from this Inspection No. 1.

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 7th March 2005 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

Comments were received from the provider

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

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

Note:

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

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

Action plan was required

Action plan was received at the point of publication

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

Public reports

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

D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

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

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

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

Or

D.3.2 I _____ of _____
am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:

--

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

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

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S0000055966.V209318.R01

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