



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

Sandwell Local Authority Fostering Agency

Kingston House
438 High Street
West Bromwich
West Midlands
B70 9LD

11th 12th 13th 14th & 15th October 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

Local Authority Fostering Service?

YES

Name of Authority

Sandwell Social Inclusion & Health

Address

Kingston House, 438 High Street, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B70 9LD

Local Authority Manager

Ms Norma Broadstock

Tel No:

0121 569 5771

Address

LA Sandwell Authority Fostering Service, Hollies Centre, Coopers Lane, Smethwick, West Midlands, B67 7DW

Fax No:

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 ?

Date of last inspection

Date of Inspection Visit		11th October 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Ms Linda Elsaleh	077704
Name of Inspector	2	Ms Christine Lancashire	
Name of Inspector	3	Ms Christine Fuller	
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		Norma Broadstock	

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(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

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2. Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service

3. Management of the fostering service

4. Securing and promoting welfare

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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 Sandwell Local Authority Fostering Agency. 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.

Sandwell Fostering Service is based in Smethwick and has a large number of experienced and highly committed foster carers. It provides foster care placements with approved foster carers for children and young people who are looked after by Sandwell Local Authority. It supports foster carers and placements of children/young people through the provision of a supervising social worker and can call upon specialist staff and services within social services, health and education fields, as appropriate. All prospective foster carers complete the Fostering Network 'Choosing to Foster' Programme. The service is currently being reviewed. There is a specific person within Sandwell Social Inclusion & Health training whose role is to co-ordinate and plan the post training programmes for foster carers and staff.

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.)

As part of this inspection process the inspectors sought comments about the service from the children/young people, foster carers and other professionals. Those who chose to comment expressed their general satisfaction with the service being provided. Reference is made to specific comments at appropriate places in this report.

The inspectors would like to thank everyone who participated in this inspection.

Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)

This standard was not met

The service has produced a Statement of Purpose, however, this now needs to be made available to all relevant parties. The Children's Guide remains in draft form at this stage. This needs to be completed and circulated, together with the Statement of Purpose in order for this standard to be met.

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

None of the 2 standards assessed were met

The local authority has yet to notify the Care Standards Commission for Inspection (CSCI) of the name of the person appointed as overall manager to its fostering service.

Management of the fostering service (Standards 4-5)

One of the 2 standards assessed was met

The service is still under review by Sandwell Social Inclusion & Health. Once this has been completed the manager must ensure that there is a clear system for monitoring and reviewing the matters referred to in Schedule 7 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

Securing and promoting welfare (Standards 6-14)

3 of the 9 standards assessed were met

Foster carers homes are assessed against health and safety standards, however, social workers require training in this area. Attempts are made to ensure that religious and culture needs are met. The manager must ensure that foster placement agreements comply with Schedule 6 of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002. Prospective foster carers receive training on child protection and safe caring. Following child protection related allegations the manager must ensure that appropriate recordings are made. Effective procedures to recognise, record and address issues of bullying need to be implemented. Individual arrangements of action to be taken in the event of a specific child/young person going missing must be recorded on the placement plan. Where appropriate, children/young people are encouraged to maintain contact with family and friends. Children/young people's health care and educational needs appear to be appropriately addressed. The manager needs to ensure that 'Pathway Plans' are developed for young people who have reached this stage in their lives.

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

2 of the 9 standards assessed were met.

The service has made progress in ensuring that appropriate recruitment and selection procedures, which meet the Fostering Services Regulations 2002, are being met. The local authority must ensure that records are maintained of the verification of references received by them and are advised to keep written records of the applicants interviews. The review of the service must include the allocation of workloads and planned training programmes must be produced for staff and for foster carers. These training programmes must meet the needs of the staff team and its individuals and cover relevant issues for foster carers, as detailed in the body of this report. The service has mechanisms for supporting foster carers.

Records (Standards 24-25)

None of the 2 standards assessed were met.

Placement plans for children/young people must be developed further giving details of how her/his individual needs are to be met on a day to day basis. Information kept by the service on children/young people and foster carers are securely stored, in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The manager must record and monitor all complaints and outcomes.

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service (Standard 26)

This standard was not met.

The accommodation and facilities provided is not suitable to meet the service's Statement of Purpose and does not provide a satisfactory working environment for staff. The inspectors were pleased to be informed that arrangements are being made for a more suitable environment to be provided in the near future.

Financial Requirements (Standard 27-29)

Three of the three standards assessed were met.

There are suitable arrangements for planning and monitoring the service's finances. Foster carers comments were generally positive in relation to the payment of fees.

Fostering Panels (Standard 30)

This standard was not met.

The service must ensure that the fostering panel is quorate.

Short-term breaks (Standard 31)

This standard was not met.

The service must develop a suitable procedure for the consideration and planning of respite arrangements.

Family and friends as carers (Standard 32)

This standard was not met.

Relative carers who are providing care to a child/young person who is related to them must be allocated a supporting social worker from the team of the manager responsible for the fostering service.

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)

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

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

NO

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

NO

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

YES

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:

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council fails to satisfy the regulatory requirements of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. This failure is not substantial and an action plan is anticipated to address these concerns.

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NO

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS				
Identified below are areas not addressed from the last inspection report which indicate a non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000 and Fostering Services Regulations 2002.				
No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	
1	3	FS1FS18	The local authority must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make available the Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide 	10th December 2004
2	10	FS2	The local authority must appoint an appropriate manager for the fostering service. Details of the name of this person and date of appointment must be forwarded, in writing, to the Commission	31 st January 2005
3	34, Schedule 2/3	FS14	The local authority must ensure its procedure for a young person after her/his 15 th birthday is followed and a suitable Pathway Plan is developed	31 st January 2005
4	19/21	FS16FS1 9	The local authority must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review the allocation and management of the service's social workers • ensure a planned programme for the training and development for staff is produced • develop and implement an appropriate induction programme for newly appointed staff 	31 st January 2005

5	34, Schedule 6	FS24	<p>The local authority must ensure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detailed information is agreed and recorded on how the day-to-day needs of the child/young person is to be met • each child/young person's placement plan includes specific information on what action the foster carer is to take if he/she goes missing 	31 st January 2005
6	23	FS26	The local authority must ensure the premises are suitable for the purpose of achieving the aims and objectives of the service	31 st January 2005

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

COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)

(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)

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

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector	<u>Linda Elsaleh</u>	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	<u>Chris Lancashire</u>	Signature	_____
Locality Manager	<u>Mike Gerard</u>	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	42	FS4	The manager must establish and maintain a system for monitoring and reviewing the service, in accordance with Regulation 42 (Schedule 7) and Regulation 43 (Schedule 8)	10 th December 2004
2	20	FS6	The manager must arrange for social workers to receive appropriate health & safety training	31 st January 2005
3	34/19	FS8FS22F S24	The manager must ensure that foster placement agreements comply with Schedule 6 of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002	31 st January 2005
4	12	FS9FS24	<p>The manager must ensure that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any child protection related allegations are appropriately recorded • effective procedures are developed and implemented to recognise, record and address issues of bullying and to counter bullying • that individual arrangements of action to be taken in the event of a specific child/young person going missing is recorded on her/his placement plan 	10 th December 2004
5	42/11	FS11	The manager must ensure that a system for ascertaining the view of children/young people about the fostering service is developed	10 th December 2004

6	12	FS13	The manager must review arrangements for obtaining written consent from the person with parental responsible to enable a child/young person to attend school/educational trips	31 st January 2005
7	20	FS15FS3	The local authority must ensure that records are maintained of the verification of references received by them	10 th December 2004
8	17	FS16FS23 FS24	The manager must ensure planned training programmes are produced for foster carers and individual up to date training records are kept	31 st January 2005
9	18	FS25FS11	The manager must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure appropriate records are kept of all complaints, details of investigations, outcomes and action taken • monitor the outcome of complaints in order to effectively review these as part of its review of quality of care 	10 th December 2004
10	25	FS30	The manager must ensure that the fostering panel meeting is quorate	10 th December 2004
11	37	FS31FS22	The manager must develop a suitable procedure for the consideration and planning of respite arrangements	31 st January 2005
12	35	FS32	The manager must ensure that a qualified social worker, from the fostering team, is allocated as the supervising social worker to all relative carers	10 th December 2004

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	FS6	The manager is advised to develop the health & safety checklist for foster carers home further to ensure it captures individual and specific hazards not identified on the checklist
2	FS15	The local authority is advised to include the level of the CRB check requested on the memo to the fostering service manager detailing the response received
3	FS18FS21	The manager should give consideration to the foster carers wishes for a 'out of hours' service that is covered by staff from the fostering service
4	FS19	The manager is advised to evaluate the effectiveness of all the training provided
5	FS20	The manager is advised to implement a regular planned programme of supervision and appraisals for all workers and ensure sessions are recorded appropriately
6	FS21	The manager is advised to provide a more detailed content list or index to the Foster Carers' Handbook

* 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 YES

Foster carer survey YES

Foster children survey YES

Checks with other organisations and Individuals

 • 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 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 NO

Interview with panel chair YES

Observation of foster carer training NO

Observation of foster panel NO

Inspection of policy/practice documents YES

Inspection of records YES

Interview with individual child YES

Date of Inspection 11/10/04

Time of Inspection 10:00

Duration Of Inspection (hrs) 108

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

The fostering service has produced a Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide. The manager informed the inspectors that the Statement of Purpose was now being circulated to relevant parties. However, most of the foster carers and staff who were interviewed stated they had not yet received or circulated this document. The Children's Guide is still in draft form. The inspectors were informed that consultation has taken place with young people and their comments are being incorporated into the guide. The manager stated once the amendments and more suitable graphics had been produced in the final draft these will be made available. The manager acknowledged the need to produce versions of the guide for younger children and in different languages and hopes to work on these in the near future. The Statement of Purpose must be made available to all relevant persons detailed in Regulation 3(2) and a copy of the Children's Guide provided to children/young people and approved/prospective foster carers.

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?

2

The inspectors were informed that the service continues to go through re-organisation as part of the Sandwell's Social Inclusion & Health Modernisation Programme and changes are taking place that will affect the management arrangements. The Fostering Services Regulations 2002, Regulation 10, requires the local authority to appoint one of its officers to manage the service. The service continues to have two managers, who are qualified social workers and have many years experience working with children and young people. However, they have different roles and responsibilities within the service. One manager is responsible for the recruitment and training of prospective foster carers, and the other manager is responsible for the management of the approved foster carers. The National Minimum Standards states that managers of fostering agencies must hold a National Vocational Qualification Level 4 in Management, or an equivalent qualification, by 2005. The local authority is advised to give consideration to this requirement with regards to the manager of its fostering service. The name of the person appointed to manage the fostering service and the date of appointment must be forwarded, in writing, to the Commission.

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?

2

The inspectors were informed that satisfactory checks were now being carried out on managers, such as Criminal Record Bureau checks, which will be carried out every three years. Recruitment and employment records were discussed with a representative of the local authority's personnel section, who informed the inspectors that a full review of the procedures was being completed to ensure compliance with the Foster Services Regulations 2002. These are reported on in more detail in Standard 15 of this report.

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

As previously stated, the service is still undergoing re-organisation and review. The inspectors were provided with reviewed job descriptions for social workers and for the yet to be nominated manager of this service. From the observations made and discussions held, staff demonstrated their abilities to carry out the duties expected of them. They stated that there were clear lines of accountability and knew who to approach for information, guidance and decisions in the absence of their respective managers. The information below was made available on the pre-inspection questionnaire and details were provided during the inspection. As identified at the previous inspection the manager must develop clear procedures for monitoring and reviewing the service on a regular basis to ensure it meets the Statement of Purpose. The manager is referred to Schedule 7 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

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

1

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.

1

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

X

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

X

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

X

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

X

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

X

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

X

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

X

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)**The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

As previously stated, the service has two managers who have different roles and responsibilities for managing the service and deputise in each other's absence. They both hold professional qualifications in social work and are experienced in working with children and young people. They do not hold similar positions in any other organisation. A job description for the Service Manager was provided to the inspectors. This will need to be reviewed once the department's modernisation programme has been completed and the manager has been established to ensure it is comprehensive and meets with the service's Statement of Purpose and the Fostering Service Regulations 2002 (Regulation 10).

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?
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<p>The inspectors visited a selection of foster carers' homes. All were maintained, decorated and furnished to a good standard. The children/young people who spoke with the inspectors indicated that they were satisfied with their bedrooms and were able to arrange their rooms to reflect their own personalities and interests. The inspectors were informed that foster homes are assessed against health and safety standards. Examination of a random selection of records showed that there were improvements in the recording practices carried out during the assessment process. However, in the inspectors' opinion the form needs to be developed further to ensure it captures individual and specific hazards not identified on the checklist. The inspectors identified one such hazard and brought this to the attention of the worker. Foster carers are provided with guidance on health and safety issues. However, health & safety training is not being provided for social workers. In order for social workers to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the environment and be confident in their competence, appropriate training must be provided. The inspectors were informed that the Foster Carers Handbook had now been circulated and are aware that some information on health & safety is provided in the handbook. With regards to the environment provided the service does not keep records of discussions held with regards to the sharing of bedrooms or the use of bunk beds. The manager was informed that full risk assessments and consultations must take place and this process must be recorded and reviewed on a regular basis.</p>	
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Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The service operates a same race placement policy wherever possible. The Foster Carers' Handbook emphasises the importance of addressing religious and cultural needs of the children/young people and provides some practical advice. The core training in 'Introduction to Fostering' addresses issues of diversity. The majority of children/young people with disabilities are provided with short-term placements, on behalf of the local authority, by a registered independent fostering agency. Those accommodated within this fostering service were found to be receiving a high level of service from their foster carers. The children/young people are encouraged to develop skills and social relationships. Conversations with foster carers revealed that children/young people are encouraged and supported to access as wide a range of activities as possible to enable them to lead full and active lives. Comments from some foster carers indicated that they would welcome more training on meeting cultural differences.

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?**

2

The sampling of records carried out by the inspectors indicated that the Looked After Children information provided by the placing social workers required more detail in the child's health, educational and social needs, in order for a detailed day-to-day care plan to be identified and agreed by the relevant persons. As part of the process for planning individual placements a written foster placement agreement is drawn up which contains reference to specific elements of matching but these are of a general nature and do not contain references to particular children/young people being placed. Discussions were also held with the manager about specific incidences of children being placed outside the categories of preferences agreed with the foster carers at the time approval. The assessments and recommendations of any changes to such agreements should be appropriately recorded.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

Prospective foster carers receive training in their 'Introduction to Fostering' on abuse and safe care. The information provided indicated that not all foster carers have received regular training in child protection issues. Although initial training is provided in safe care and the Foster Carers' Handbook contains general health & safety guidance, there was little evidence, on the records that were examined, to show that all foster carers had been provided with their own specific written guidelines. However, the inspectors are pleased to report that following an allegation made about specific foster carers appropriate action had been taken on a planned basis and suitable recordings made about the progress. The foster carers have been provided with written guidance on managing behaviour and acceptable sanctions, as part of the information included in the Foster Carers' Handbook. The inspectors could find no appropriate systems in place to collate and evaluate information on the number, circumstances and outcome of all allegations of neglect or abuse of a child/young person in foster care. The manager must ensure that appropriate systems are maintained of the recording of such allegations. The feedback on the questionnaires completed by the children/young people identified their concerns with regards to bullying. This was brought to the attention of the manager. The manager must develop effective procedures to recognise, record and address issues of bullying and to counter bullying. There were varying comments from foster carers with regards to the quality of the information provided on the child/young person being placed with them, and her/his family, to enable them to protect the foster child/young person, their own children and themselves. Some foster carers stated that they would prefer to have more details prior to placement. General information about what to do if a child/young person goes missing is included in the Foster Carers' Handbook. The inspectors were informed that a draft procedure had been completed, but not yet circulated. Individual arrangements should be identified on the placement plan.

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 Introduction to Fostering and Foster Carers' Handbook stresses the importance for children/young people to maintain contact with their families, wherever possible, and the need to provide support for this. In discussions with staff and foster carers and the information on the children/young people's files it continues to be evident that family contact has a high profile and is addressed at children/young people's planning meetings and reviews. In cases where there have been difficult contact issues, foster carers reported that they were provided with help and support in dealing with these in a positive manner. Appropriate financial support is provided to foster carers who provide transport to ensure contact arrangements take place.

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?**

1

The inspectors found that although individual foster carers understand the importance of listening to the children/young people and advocating on their behalf, the fostering service needs to ensure that all foster carers receive training with regards to this issue. There are no formal mechanisms in place for ascertaining the opinions and views of the children/young people in relation to the service being provided. Information with regards to making a complaint has been included in the Children's Guide, which has not yet been distributed. The reader is referred to Standard 25 of this report with regards to responding to and recording of complaints.

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

Discussions with foster carers demonstrated that children/young people's health care needs are addressed appropriately. Foster carers promote healthy living in accordance with the child/young person's age and understanding. The Foster Carer's Handbook contains information about promoting healthy living and information on homely remedies. Brief guidelines about the safe handling of prescribed medication are included. There is evidence available on the random selection of files that were examined to show that some health information is provided to the service by the child/young person's social worker. In the absence of training records for foster carers, the inspectors were unable to assess whether first aid, safe handling of medication and health & hygiene training is updated on a regular basis. A Looked After Children's nurse and a consultant have been identified to undertake initial assessments of children being received into care and six monthly reviews. The format in which the health information is to be provided will be portable and follow the child/young person throughout their period in care.

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?**

2

The child/young person's educational needs should be included in their care plan and copies of significant reports, such as statements of educational needs, should be provided. However, there was little evidence of personal educational plans on the files examined during this inspection. Foster carers encourage and support children/young people to attend educational placements. They discuss the child/young person's progress or any areas of concern with their allocated social worker and arrangements are made to ensure the placing social worker is kept informed. Where appropriate, a representative from the child/young person's educational placement is invited to their review. Advice and guidance on progressing personal educational plans and finding suitable placements is provided by the Looked After Children in Education (LACE) team. Foster carers feedback stated that some felt more support was required in managing exclusions. They also raised the issue of funding for school trips and the amount of time it takes to obtain written consent from the person with parental responsibility to enable the child/young person to attend school trips.

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

The Foster Carers' Handbook provides written information to guide foster carers in preparing young people for adult living and the inspectors were provided with a copy of the local authority's policy for 18 year olds, 'Post Care, Who Remain Living with their former Foster Care Family'. The policy includes details of the process to be followed immediately after a young person's 15th birthday. Files examined by the inspectors did not reflect this process and no 'Pathway Plan' was available. This is an outstanding requirement from the previous inspection. The manager explained that this issue had been raised with the Leaving Care Team. Training in preparing young people for independence is identified in the general training programme for foster carers and some have attended this training.

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

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The inspectors were informed that the local authority has reviewed its recruitment and selection procedures. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks that needed to be undertaken had now been applied for. The inspectors were informed that once the result of a CRB check is received, the personnel department contact the fostering service manager by memo stating whether this has been satisfactory or not. The inspectors have advised the personnel section to include in the memo the level of the check that was requested. These checks must be undertaken every three years. Two written references are obtained, however, a record of verification of these references should be kept. The inspectors were informed that all senior staff and supporting social workers have appropriate qualifications and experience. The inspectors were satisfied from the discussions held with individual staff members that they had the necessary knowledge and skills in order to carry out their duties. Managers, staff and foster carers must be informed of their responsibility to declare any possible conflicts of interest. Information is kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The service is currently investigating the effectiveness of the use of support workers to supplement the work undertaken by the qualified social workers.

Total number of staff of the agency:

17

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

1

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?****2**

As previously stated, the service has two managers, each with different responsibilities for the service. The staff group is also divided into two teams, with different roles and responsibilities that are not reflected in the recently reviewed job descriptions. Records examined by the inspectors show that since the last inspection social workers are not receiving regular planned supervision or annual appraisals. The inspectors were informed that the service has access to a range of advice from other professionals. However, programmes for the provision of appropriate professional and skills development and on-going training programmes and records for staff were not available. There were no comprehensive records available of the training undertaken by approved foster carers but some foster carers informed the inspectors that they keep an up to date portfolio of their own training. The inspectors were informed that the training section has appointed a person specifically to meet the needs of the fostering service. The policies and procedures are in the process of being reviewed. These need to be collated in a 'user friendly' format for all workers. The administrative team has its own procedures manual. The administrative staff team work in an unsuitable environment and should be commended for their work in such circumstances. This matter is reported on more fully in Standard 26.

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**

As reported in the previous inspection report in the light of the findings with regards to the social workers' workloads, the inspectors are unable to comment on the appropriateness of the current staff complement. This will be reported on once the local authority has evaluated its assessment of these workloads and implemented its findings. At the last inspection the inspectors found that the service provides literature and has clear processes for recruiting a range of foster carers. The assessment process covered the qualities, competencies and aptitudes required of prospective foster carers and they were aware of the details included in the report and provided their own written statement. Since then there has been very little work undertaken on the recruiting of foster carers due to the Modernisation Programme. Therefore, this standard will be looked at more fully at the next inspection. The inspectors recommend that part of the service's review should include research into demographic trends in relation to future needs of the children/young people and the forthcoming changes in the current foster carers.

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)

The fostering service is a fair and competent employer, with sound employment practices and good support for its staff and carers.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****2**

Staff informed the inspectors that they considered the local authority and their managers to be fair and competent employers. The Foster Carers' handbook has been circulated and contains information about health and safety issues. However, the Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide have yet to be circulated. All foster carers visited by the inspectors were complimentary about the support and supervision provided to them by their allocated worker. The information contained in the local authority's whistle-blowing policy is for use by staff. The local authority has appropriate public liability and professional indemnity insurance for this service. Foster carers informed the inspector that they use the local authority's 'out of hours' telephone number in the event of an emergency and stated that whilst this team do try to provide appropriate advice and support, they are unfamiliar with the children/young people placed with the foster carers, and feel that consideration should be given to providing an 'out of hours' service that is covered by staff from the fostering service. No progress has been identified on this issue.

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?****2**

The service has yet to develop and implement a clear planned programme for the training and development of staff. A general training programme is provided by the training section and staff are able to apply for these courses. These include mandatory training such as Child Protection and Caldicott compliance. The manager also stated that she invites staff to apply for courses that will be of benefit to them. However, the team's training needs as a whole have not been discussed. Staff records did not contain evidence of a planned induction process or comprehensive records of completed training. Individual training records must be kept and the outcomes of all training should be effectively monitored and recorded. The inspectors were informed that joint training is arranged for staff and foster carers. The inspectors look forward to monitoring progress in meeting the training requirements identified in this report.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)

All staff are properly accountable and supported.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****2**

Regular staff meetings and specific team meetings are arranged to facilitate relevant and focussed discussions to take place within appropriate settings. The discussions held at these meetings are recorded. Of the staff records examined none were found to be receiving regular supervision on a planned basis. The manager is strongly advised to ensure that there is a regular planned programme of supervision and appraisals for all workers and sessions are appropriately recorded.

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 manager stated that the revised 'handbook' had now been circulated to foster carers and included associated information such as the provision for regular, planned supervision. This must be conducted by a qualified social worker. The inspectors still found some difficulty in accessing information quickly and therefore, advise the manager to produce a more detailed content or index list to enable foster carers to access information more easily. Discussions were held with the manager about some of the language used in the handbook, which is now dated, and should have been amended prior to circulation. Nevertheless, the handbook does contain useful information and guidance on practice. In general, foster carers discuss a child/young person's progress with their own allocated social worker, who, in turn provides the child/young person's social worker with regular updates. The foster carers stated that they would contact the child/young person's social worker direct on important/emergency matters, using the local authority's Emergency Duty Team (EDT) telephone number out of office hours. As previously stated, during discussions with some foster carers, and from responses received to the questionnaires, the inspectors were informed that they would value a similar 'out of hours' provision from the fostering service, as EDT workers have limited knowledge of individual cases and individual foster carers. Foster carers' annual review reports are prepared and made available to the Fostering Panel. The content of the report is discussed with the foster carers prior to it being presented to the fostering panel.

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?****2**

The need for individual child centred Foster Placement Agreements has been discussed in Standard 8 of this report. The manager is advised to ensure that the agreement meets with Schedule 6 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. As stated previously, foster carers have now been provided with a handbook, which covers the issue of regular, planned supervision. There are practical support systems in place for dealing with issues such as foster carers' fees and this is commented on in more detail in Standard 29. Issues such as supervision, complaints and allegations of abuse have been reported on in other areas of this report. Foster carers identified the need for a respite provision. A need for such a provision should be fully explored by the service in conjunction with the placing social worker. As reported on in Standard 31 the service needs to provide a clear policy on the provision of respite and in what cases this may be considered an appropriate option bearing in mind the appropriateness of such a provision for the individual child/young person. The inspectors were pleased to note that foster carers valued the opportunities to attend various support groups facilitated by the service. The annual awards evening also provides an opportunity for carers to receive recognition for their efforts.

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

All prospective foster carers receive preparation training. Participation in these courses forms part of the assessment process and, where two adults in one household apply to be foster carers, both partners must attend the training. The inspectors were informed that opportunities are provided to enable prospective foster carers to benefit from the experience and knowledge of existing carers. The inspectors were also informed that prospective foster carers are made aware of the requirement to attend training sessions. Where outstanding training needs have been identified during the assessment process this information is passed to the support social worker by the recruiting social worker in order that this can be addressed. The inspectors are unable to assess the service's effectiveness in providing relevant and timely training due to a current planned programme and training records not being available. General comments received from foster carers indicated that they are able to access training and would welcome more training in managing emergency/unplanned placements and more specific child-centred training.

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

Foster carers are provided with information about the child/young person's legal status and other relevant information is made available. Foster carers are informed of the importance of ensuring information is held secure. The service has produced a written policy and guidance on recording and record keeping and this has been circulated to foster carers. This includes guidance on what information must be reported to the fostering service. The service has a case file on each child/young person placed with foster carers. Examination of a random selection of information held confirms that the general comments received from foster carers, about the need for more detailed information to be provided and agreed on the day-to-day arrangements for meeting the needs of the children/young people, including the specific action to be taken if the child/young person is missing, has still to be addressed by the fostering service. The service provides the child/young person's social worker with regular updates on their progress. The inspectors were informed that training is provided for foster carers in recording significant life events for a child/young person and in encouraging them to make their own recordings, including photograph albums.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)			
The fostering service's administrative records contain all significant information relevant to the running of the foster care service and as required by regulations.			
Key Findings and Evidence		Standard met?	2
<p>All information is securely stored, in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and staff are required to complete a tracker form when taking out a file to work on. Separate files are kept as required. The standard of recording is generally acceptable. It distinguishes between fact, opinion and third party information and handwritten entries are legible. The local authority is still in the process of updating its financial policy and procedures and information about charges and fees to placing social workers and foster carers. The inspectors were informed that the service is still seeking improvements in its system for maintaining records electronically and meetings are being held with the department's information technology section in order to resolve this. The inspectors were informed that all complaints are forwarded to the Consumer Care Unit. These records show that the Consumer Care Unit received 7 complaints since the last inspection, of which 1 was upheld. Although there are some records of complaints by foster carers directly to the fostering service, the inspectors found that some complaints by others were not recorded appropriately. The service must keep records of all complaints, details of investigations, outcomes and action taken. The manager needs to monitor the information kept of the outcome of complaints in order to effectively review these as part of its review of quality of care.</p>			
Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			268
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			331
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			219
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			8
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			44
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £		122.76	Maximum £ 474.46

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?

1

The Sandwell Local Authority Fostering Service office is based in Smethwick. The property was originally used as a hospital and is now used as offices for this and other local authority services. The main car park is at the side of the building and there are a few parking spaces available on the front drive. Nevertheless, cars are regularly parked on the roadside due to the number of staff and visitors to the building. Those with legitimate business are able to access the building during normal office hours. There is limited access to wheelchair users and people with limited mobility. The fostering administrative team are based on the ground floor. The managers and social workers are based on the first floor. Both teams have very little workspace in order to carry out their duties, especially the administrative staff. There are no allocated rooms for meetings, staff facilities or suitable provision to accommodate students on placements. When additional space is required, such as a meeting room, permission to use the facilities of the other services housed in the building or venues at other locations is sought. The inspectors were informed that alternative accommodation has been identified and a move is planned in the near future. In general, there are adequate administrative systems in place and records are kept available. However, approved users who wish to obtain a selection of computerised data have to access each item of information they require separately by moving around the system, making the task time consuming and cumbersome. As mentioned in Standard 25 of this report, efforts are being made to address this problem.

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

There are procedures for the planning and reviewing budgets. The inspectors were provided with the latest Revenue Monitoring Report. There were no specific issues raised by the manager with regards to this. PAYE (Pay As You Earn) and National Insurance are handled centrally by the department's finance section.

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

As stated in Standard 27 the service has clearly documented financial arrangements, which are overseen by the Local Authority & Sandwell Social Inclusion & Health.

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

There are administrative systems in place for running of the service, including systems for the payment of foster carers allowances and agreed expenses. Foster carers' comments were generally positive about the staff responsible for payments and they stated that these are made in an efficient manner. Practical support systems are in place for dealing with any issues raised concerning these payments. The inspectors were informed that a review of the current fostering allowances was still in progress. Any changes in fostering allowances must be reflected in the written policy.

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?

2

The inspectors were provided with a copy of the information provided to panel members. This included relevant sections of the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards. The manager is advised to consider reviewing how this information is collated, in order for it to be user-friendlier and easier to update. From the information made available to the inspectors discussions were held with the manager about the need to ensure that each sitting of the panel is quorate, as any decisions made by a non-quorate panel are invalid and therefore must be re-considered. Each panel member receives an agenda, minutes of the previous meeting, reports and other additional information in advance. The author of a report and the child/young person's social worker, where applicable, is present at the meeting. This enables any additional information requested by the panel to be promptly provided. The inspectors were informed that foster carers are encouraged to attend the panel. All panel members are required to undertake a Criminal Record Bureau check. The manager is advised to ensure that these are reviewed every three years and records are kept to verify that satisfactory checks have been received.

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 local authority has appropriate arrangements in place for short-breaks to be managed on its behalf by a registered independent fostering agency. A small number of respite arrangements are handled by the fostering service, however no policy or procedure with regards to the consideration and planning of respite arrangements were made available to the inspectors. Foster carers raised the question of the allocation of respite resources with the inspectors and the manager needs to provide more clarity on this matter.	2
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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?

2

Since the last inspection the fostering service has undertaken assessments of relatives caring for children/young people. Relative carers have access to the main stream "Choosing to Foster" training, post approval training and support groups. They also have access to the local authority's Emergency Duty Team. The manager has identified the need to allocate a supervising social worker to each relative carer and to provide some specific training. At the time of this inspection the service had arranged for a support worker to visit relative carers and were monitoring the effectiveness of this role with a view to extending it. The inspectors spoke with relative carers who expressed satisfaction with the support received. During discussions with other professionals it became evident that further debate needs to take place within the department about various approaches to kinship care.

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 11th October 2004 of Sandwell Local Authority Fostering Agency

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

Comments were received from the provider

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

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

Note:

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

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

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

Action plan was required

Action plan was received at the point of publication

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

Public reports

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

D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I _____ of Sandwell LA Fostering 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 Sandwell LA Fostering 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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