

inspection report

Fostering Services

London Borough of Hillingdon Fostering Service

Fostering & Adoption Service

855 Uxbridge Road

Hayes

Middlesex

UB4 8HZ

17th & 25th February 2005 3rd,4th March
2005 9th & 16th 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

London Borough of Hillingdon Fostering Service

Address

Fostering & Adoption Service, 855 Uxbridge Road, Hayes,
Middlesex, UB4 8HZ

Local Authority Manager

Mrs Marion Rodin

Tel No:

01895 277852

Address

Fostering & Adoption Service, 855 Uxbridge Road, Hayes,
Middlesex, UB4 8HZ

Fax No:

01895 277851

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

2/2/04

Date of Inspection Visit		3rd February 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Ms Susan Woolnough-Singh	074618
Name of Inspector	2		
Name of Inspector	3		
Name of Inspector	4		
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Marion Rodin – Service Manager.	

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 London Borough of Hillingdon 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 of the London Borough of Hillingdon is located in a purpose-adapted Portacabin Offices on the Uxbridge Road, Hayes. This is approximately 2 miles away from the Civic Centre, Uxbridge. The Service has a number of Foster Carers, which live in the Greater London Area and provide specific ethnic care to asylum seeking children. Respite care is offered to carers of looked after children. A small number of carers offer preventative respite care for the Hillingdon Community. There is a short break scheme for carers of disabled children. Family/friends Care is currently being developed. A new Team Manager had started approximately one week prior to the inspection. The Team Manager is accountable to the Service Manager. There are two assistant Team Managers.</p>

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

Inspector's Summary

(This is an overview of the inspector's findings, which includes good practice, quality issues, areas to be addressed or developed and any other concerns.)

This is the annual inspection of the London Borough of Hillingdon Fostering Service. The Children's Fostering Services Key Inspection Standards were assessed at this inspection. Therefore not all of the national minimum standards were assessed on this occasion.

As part of the inspection process, the Inspector conducted a case tracking exercise of four foster families. Their records were examined and a second inspector visited foster carers and children/young people in placement. Two sets of foster carers had babies less than two years of age. Two foster carers had children of under five years of age.

Although the children observed by the Inspector were not able to converse, the Inspector was able to see how they responded to foster carers and whether they were clean, well nourished and content. The babies and toddlers observed were well cared for and responded positively to stimulation and their individual Foster Carers. The one young school age child seen was very relaxed and had an informal chat with the Inspector. They were excited at the prospect of their birthday celebration and responded well to the Foster Carer.

A random sample of children's/young people were sent CSCI questionnaires as part of the inspection process. Of these three children/young people returned completed questionnaires. These questionnaires indicated that children/young people were helped to lead a healthy lifestyle with support for interests and hobbies. Sanctions used for unacceptable behaviour were 'grounding' and 'having privileges withdrawn'. Random samples of questionnaires were sent to Foster Carers for completion. Two completed questionnaires were returned. Foster carers' indicated that they were satisfied with the level of support offered to them by the Fostering Service. One participant commented on the turnover of staff and on getting to know staff that eventually leave the fostering service.

Three requirements were made at the last inspection. These requirements had been met.

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)

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

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:

As at the time of writing this report, it should be noted that Section 47 of the Care Standards Act 2000 has been repealed. Notwithstanding this, the report highlights some areas of the service that do not meet the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. Whilst these are not deemed as substantial concerns, these are listed as requirements in this report. CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspection) will monitor the progress of these

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

YES

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Identified below are areas not addressed from the last inspection report which indicate a non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000 and Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

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

COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)**(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)**

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

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector	Susan Woolnough-Singh	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	_____	Signature	_____
Regulation Manager	Angela Hunt	Signature	_____
Date	06/05/2005		

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.

FS15 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	20 (3) (d) (i)	FS15	<p>The Local Authority must ensure that the required references are applied for and evidence of this available on file for internal applicants.</p> <p>All Social Workers must have a satisfactory completed Criminal Bureau Check prior to employment.</p>	01.05.05

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	FS8	A system should be put in place to ensure placement information is kept up to date.
2	FS23	Training in moving and handling and infection control should be reviewed for those foster carers who need training in these areas due to the needs of the children placed with them.
3	FS23	Foster Carer Training Profiles should be kept on the premises.

* 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

4

Survey of placing authorities

NO

Foster carer survey

YES

Foster children survey

YES

Checks with other organisations and Individuals

NO

- Directors of Social services

NO

- Child protection officer

NO

- Specialist advisor (s)

NO

- Local Foster Care Association

NO

Tracking Individual welfare arrangements

YES

- Interview with children

YES

- Interview with foster carers

YES

- Interview with agency staff

YES

- Contact with parents

NO

- Contact with supervising social workers

NO

- 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

NO

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

17/2/05

Time of Inspection

10.00

Duration Of Inspection (hrs)

19.20

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the CSCI assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards have been met. The following scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The scale ranges from:

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

"0" in the "Standard met?" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

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

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

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- There is clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and the fostering service ensures that they meet those aims and objectives.

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

There is a clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and of what facilities and services they provide.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

A statement of Purpose and Children's Guide are available. The Statement of Purpose has been updated since the last inspection.

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?

0

This standard was not assessed at this inspection.

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 Management Team of the London Borough of Hillingdon Fostering Service consists of the Service Manager, Team Leader and two Assistant Team Leaders. The Assistant Team Leaders had been managing the service prior to the appointment of the Team Leader in February 2005. All of the staff involved in managing the fostering service are qualified Social Workers who have many years experience of working in services for children and fostering. The two Assistant Managers are due to commence their NVQ Level 5 management training this year. The new Team Leader has a Certificate in Management Studies. At the time of the Inspection, the Team Leader had not been Registered with the CSCI. The Fostering Service provided information stating that a satisfactory CRB check had been received.

Management of the Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The fostering service is managed ethically and efficiently, delivering a good quality foster care service and avoiding confusion and conflicts of role.

Standard 4 (4.1 – 4.5)

There are clear procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the fostering service and ensuring quality performance.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

This standard was assessed and was almost met at the last inspection. A requirement was made for the Fostering Service to inform the NCSC (now CSCI) of notifiable events in accordance with regulation 43 (1). This requirement has since been met.

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

5

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

0

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

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

0

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

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

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

3

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

0

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

0

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)

The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This standard was assessed and met at the last inspection.

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

Four planned visits were made by an Inspector to foster carer's homes. The internal environment in each case was deemed to be satisfactory. One garden needed to be health and safety assessed. This was highlighted during the feedback session. The Inspector also highlighted the need for the fostering service to ensure that infection control training is available for carers who require this. (Please see Standard 19)

Good information and guidance is available on safety and hygiene in the Foster Carers Handbook. Providing a safe environment is also covered in the 'Skills to Foster' Training. The Inspector noted that Health and Safety Checklists were present on three foster carers files. The fourth was not seen.

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 documentation seen by the Inspector during the inspection indicates that diversity and equality matters are given due consideration. A section in the Carers Handbook gives specific information on accommodating unaccompanied and asylum seeking children and young people. The London Borough of Hillingdon Policies and Procedures are available on equality and good practice when working with families/children from diverse backgrounds.

The Inspector was informed that diversity and cultural considerations are taken into account when foster carers are recruited. The Inspector spoke with four supervising social workers that confirmed that cultural issues were considered during the matching process.

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**

There has been no change to this standard since the last inspection. A Duty System is in place whereby referrals are taken from the placement authority. Where possible the placement authority will fax through information on the child/young person to be placed in foster care. Once a vacancy has been identified that matches with the needs of the child/young person, a duty call is made to the foster carer. Within the first seven days of the placement, a multi agency Placement Agreement Meeting is held to confirm the suitability of the placement.

The Inspector discussed matching with the supervising social workers, who indicated the considerations for matching the child's/young person needs meets with the skills and background of the Foster Carer. One supervising social worker talked of the complexity of matching unaccompanied children /young people with families that matched their own backgrounds and language; social class and lifestyle that also need to be considered if the child/young person is to feel comfortable with the family.

Information for Foster Carers is available in the Carers Handbook on the process that is taken when a child/young person is placed.

The Inspector made a recommendation during feedback to the Managers that an IT system for keeping information up to date when the initial match has been made should be considered, as this information is not always updated promptly.

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**

Information provided to the Inspector prior to the Inspection states that London Borough of Hillingdon Social Services Department has a clear policy on not promoting corporal punishment and that each carer has to sign an undertaking agreeing to this.

The Foster carers handbook contains clear and precise information on behaviour management. This contained descriptions of behaviours children/young people may exhibit and how to manage this behaviour. The Foster Carers handbook also includes clear information on definitions, and symptoms of abuse and strategies for caring for children who have been abused and victimised. Information on allegations and child protection procedures are also contained in the handbook. The three supervising social workers spoken with talked of the policies and training in place for foster carers on child protection.

The fostering service continues to provide an out of hour's service for foster carers to contact the service.

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 Inspector sampled foster carers files as part of the case tracking process and specifically looked at information on contact. Contact arrangements are identified with the placing authority social worker prior to and/or once a child/young person is admitted to foster care. Supervising social workers during monthly monitoring visits and at reviews monitor contact arrangements.

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.5)

The fostering service ensures that children's opinions, and those of their families and others significant to the child, are sought over all issues that are likely to affect their daily life and their future.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The Inspector discussed consultation regarding Children/Young people with two supervising social workers. They commented that they would always aim to talk with children/young people on their monthly monitoring visits.

The Children's Guide includes details of the complaints procedure and a range of organisations children/young people may contact. Children/young people are also able to put forward their views at reviews. The first review takes place within a month of the placement, the second review after three months and thereafter six monthly.

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 Inspector looked at the files of four foster families as part of the case tracking process. Records seen in the file were recent and indicated that the child's/young person health care was being monitored by the supervising social worker as part of the family visit. All children/young people are required to have a statutory medical; children under five are seen by the department advisor, or specialist if they are receiving regular assessments. Foster carers are given ample information in the Carer's Handbook on their role in relation to the health of children/young people placed with them. The handbook also covers medical issues and first aid, and basic information on ailments and common childhood illnesses. Health related matters are also addressed with foster carers as part of their Skills to Foster preparation training.

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**

Foster carers are fully supported in ensuring that Children's education is continued once they are admitted to foster care. As part of the case tracking process, the Inspector looked at four foster carer files. Supervising social workers, as part of the monthly monitoring visit, had made recent recordings regarding educational issues. All children/young people are required to have a Personal Education Plan, which is drawn up and includes the foster carer. This is monitored through family monitoring visits and at the child's/young person review.

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****3**

This standard was assessed and was met at the last inspection.

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

Corporate recruitment policies and procedures are in place. The majority of staff had been vetted via the Criminal Records Bureau. Advertising and the initial recruitment of staff to application stage had recently been outsourced.

As part of the case tracking process, the Inspector looked at the recruitment paperwork of four supervising social workers. The majority of records were in place. A translation with regard to one overseas social worker documents were on file. For two supervising social workers, a reference was not on file. This was discussed in the feedback session. It was explained to the Inspector that the supervising social workers were internal applicants. References for employees who had been with the department for a substantial time are not always available to be transferred. It was confirmed to the Inspector that follow up verbal/telephone references are made. An application had been made for an updated CRB for one supervising Social Worker.

Total number of staff of the agency:

14.50

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

0

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This standard was assessed and was met at the last inspection.

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

All supervising social workers are qualified. Information provided to the Inspector prior to the inspection indicates that there are three managers, seven supervising social workers and one fostering support worker. Each supervising social worker has approximately twelve foster families to support on their caseload. Supervising Social workers are also responsible for foster carer assessments. The Supervising Social Workers spoken with were positive

about the support they received from the fostering services management team.

The Fostering Service aims to recruit foster carers from a wide range of backgrounds to meet the needs of the children/young people. Discussion with supervising social workers and records seen indicated that this was being achieved. The Inspector was informed that the recruitment of foster carers (nationally) to meet the needs of all the children put forward for placement remain difficult due to the shortage of foster carers. The service regularly uses local publications and venues to advertise for Hillingdon Foster Carers.

It was evident from the records seen and discussion with visits to foster carers that support and advice is being given.

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

This standard was assessed and was almost met at the last inspection. Employment issues raised at the last inspection had been resolved.

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)

There is a good quality training programme to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Fostering Service continues to offer ongoing training for staff and foster carers. All staff had the required qualifications and are being supported to obtain post qualifying training and the Childcare Award. The Inspector as part of the case tracking exercise was able to look at the training profiles of four supervising social workers. The profiles dated back to 2000. The four supervising social workers had attended a minimum of four courses in 2004; one supervising social worker had attended nine training courses. All of the courses were relevant to working with children and working within the fostering service.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)

All staff are properly accountable and supported.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This standard was assessed at the last inspection, at which time was scored as the standard having been exceeded.

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6) The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>There has been no change to this standard since the last inspection. Supervising Social Workers provide information and advice to Foster Carers and Foster children when required. This was documented in the records seen by the Inspector. Reports for annual reviews were well written and are retained on Foster Carer's files. Good practice systems are in place to document evidence of telephone conversations and other forms of correspondence. Foster Carers were positive about the support they receive from the Supervising Social Workers.</p> <p>An annual foster carer review takes place. The report is prepared by the chair and signed off by the team Manager and Resource Manager.</p> <p>Foster Carers are able to access advice and support out of office hours via the Duty System, which operates until 11pm and at weekends.</p>		

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10) The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	0
This standard was assessed and met at the last inspection.		

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
<p>An annual training programme is available for foster carers. The home visits to Foster Carer's family homes highlighted the need for the service to offer additional health and safety training to foster carers. Guidance is given in the Foster Carers Handbook on Moving and Handling. The Inspector was not aware that training was provided on moving and handling and Infection Control for Foster Carers. In some instances, this training will be highly relevant. A recommendation that the service review training and information relating to moving and handling and infection control has been made. Foster carer training profiles are kept with the carer and were not available at the Fostering Service Office.</p>		

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- All appropriate records are kept and are accessible in relation to the fostering services and the individual foster carers and foster children.

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

The fostering service ensures that an up-to-date, comprehensive case record is maintained for each child or young person in foster care which details the nature and quality of care provided and contributes to an understanding of her/his life events. Relevant information from the case records is made available to the child and to anyone involved in her/his care.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Case records examined for case tracking purposes were well maintained, up to date and in good order. Information on record keeping is set out in the Foster Carers handbook. There is information on confidentiality, sharing information and recording. The information sets out clearly the Fostering Services expectations in these matters.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

This standard was assessed at the last inspection. The standard was almost met. A record of the information required in schedule 2 of the Fostering Services Regulations is now being maintained.

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?

0

This standard was assessed and met at the last Inspection. The Inspector did not observe a panel on this occasion. While a fostering panel meeting was due to take place in March 2005, at the time of the inspection there was no panel business/agenda for the panel to consider and therefore the panel meeting did not take place. The next panel meeting was not due to take place in April 2005.

I

Information on the formation of the panel was sent to the Inspection prior to the inspection. The panel is made up of the Chair, Vice Chair, a Social Worker, two independent foster carers, a Medical Advisor, a London Borough of Hillingdon councillor, and two further independent members. Form F assessments are presented to panel for approval.

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?

0

This standard was not assessed at this inspection.

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.7)

The financial processes/systems of the agency are properly operated and maintained in accordance with sound and appropriate accounting standards and practice.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This standard was not assessed at this inspection.

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

This standard was not assessed at this inspection.

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?	0
This standard was not assessed at this inspection.		

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 Disabilities Team currently manages the short-term breaks scheme. The scheme is made up of Carers for children with Disabilities called "Family Link". The Team Leader explained that this scheme would be transferring to the sole responsibility of the Fostering Service within the next six months.	3
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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?	3
Family and friends are approved as Foster Carers. The Inspector was informed that family and friends as carers undergo the same process of approval and monitoring/support as other foster carers. It was highlighted to the Inspector that supervising social workers had to be aware of the additional emotional complexities in some cases, of family and friends as carers.		

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 <enter date(s) of inspection here> 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 published reports. 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

NO

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

NO

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

YES

Note:

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

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

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

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

N/A

Other: <enter details here>

N/A

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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