



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

Fostering Services

**TACT (The Adolescent and Children`s  
Trust)**

27 Station Road

Kettering

Northants

NN15 7HH

17th January 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?**

NO

**Name of Authority**

**Address**

**Local Authority Manager**

**Tel No:**

**Address**

**Fax No:**

**Email Address**

**Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)**

YES

**Name of Agency**

TACT (The Adolescent and Children`s Trust)

**Tel No**

01536 411410

**Address**

27 Station Road, Kettering, Northants, NN15 7HH

**Fax No**

01536 524021

**Email Address**

enquiries@tactfostercare.org.uk

**Registered Number of IFA**

H070000409

**Name of Registered Provider**

Adolescent and Children`s Trust (The)

**Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)**

Mrs Sonia Anne Bolland

**Date of first registration**

25th April 2003

**Date of latest registration certificate**

25th April 2003

**Registration Conditions Apply ?**

NO

**Date of last inspection**

19.01.04

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		17th January 2005	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		10:00 am	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Mrs Maria Johnson	081363
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>	Mr Patrick Toner	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> 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.			
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>			
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>		Sonia Bolland Regional Manager	

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**(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)**

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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 TACT (The Adolescent and Children`s Trust). 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.

TACT is a voluntary fostering agency organised with a board of trustees and a chief executive: Kevin Williams, who is the designated decision maker.

The main aim of TACT is to recruit, select and provide foster carers for children placed by Local Authorities. Foster Carer approvals and reviews are managed through Tact's Fostering Panel, as well as providing support to foster carers. TACT aims to ensure that everybody who comes into contact with the fostered children promotes their welfare and safeguards their interest. TACT aims to work closely with the children, their parents and placing authorities.

TACT has a number of branches with premises and a designated manager for each region and headquarters office based in London. The Regional Manager for TACT East Midlands is Sonia Bolland, who is based at the Kettering Office.

## **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 inspection was undertaken using the "case tracking" process. This means that the Inspector reviewed the care of specific Children and Foster careers, "tracking" the way in which care is delivered. This was done through reviewing the Children's identified needs and choices from the preadmission information, matching information, placement agreements and reviews, and cross checking through discussions with the Foster careers and staff, and if possible the Children and the Placing Authorities. The information gathered would establish whether the child's identified needs and wishes are being met, and updated appropriately where needs are changing. The Inspector reviewed the assessment, training and support provided to the Foster careers, and the ability to meet the needs of the Children in placement.

The Inspector visited the Foster careers identified for case tracking and also spent time meeting other Foster careers at a Careers Support Group. The Inspector also had opportunity to observe children in placement, due to the children's ages and willingness to engage it was not possible to have in depth discussion regarding the National Minimum Standards. The evidence of the children's views has been drawn predominately from the completed questionnaires, general discussion and observation.

The inspectors reviewed the Key Inspection Standards as detailed in the CSCI methodology, this included delivery of care, support to careers, ways in which the agency is managed, functions, the suitability of the premises, and the organization of staff. The inspection was conducted over a period of five days; during this time inspectors reviewed records, observed and met with panel members, observed a training workshop and interviewed three members of staff and the Registered manager.

Inspectors also sought views from directors of Social Services, area child protection teams, and distributed questionnaires to all carers, children in placement, and placing authorities.

The following responses were received;

### **20 Placing Authority Questionnaires returned**

All the comments received from the placing authorities were very positive. The placing authority questionnaires confirmed that the care that children were receiving was of a very good standard and that the foster carers had a strong commitment to the children in their care. Where appropriate carers have worked well with the child's natural family. A number of placing authorities commented of the high level of care provided to children with special needs and the carers commitment to attend training and find information relating to the child's specific needs.

### **13 Foster Carers Questionnaires returned**

Most carers confirmed that the agency continues to provide a good level of support. Although some carers still consider that staffing levels could be increased, and that would improve availability of there own supervising social workers. Carers confirmed that they are able to contact a duty social worker at all times.

Most carers confirmed that they would not wish any changes to be made to the way in which the agency is run.

Carers confirmed that the training available to them and that they are attending a variety of courses relating to the care of children. A number of carers have highlighted the difficulties in attending training events at the Kettering office. (This matter is discussed further in the body of the report)

### **23 Children's Questionnaires returned**

All children had received a copy of the children's guide, and new how to make a complaint to the agency if they were unhappy. A number of the children are still unsure how they could contact the Commission for Social Care Inspection if they were unhappy.

All children confirmed that they were asked their opinion about their foster carers by the agency, and that they were positive about their placements.

Children also confirmed that they were being given help in staying healthy and support in their education. The children also confirmed that they were attending a variety of activities. Through out this report the inspector has detailed a number of areas that the organisation has developed improved systems. The agency is to be commended on the commitment to raising standards and the progress that has been made since the last inspection conducted in 2004.

The conclusion of the inspection is that;

#### **1. Statement of Purpose**

##### **Standard 1**

This Standard was not appraised at this inspection.

#### **2. Fitness to provide or manage a fostering service**

##### **Standard 2,3**

Standard 3 was appraised at this inspection as met.

The nominated responsible individual Kathy Blythe, and the Regional Manager Sonia Bolland, successfully completed Fit Person Interviews with National Care Standards Commission. Both managers were considered suitable people to run a fostering service, having in each case the appropriate experience and qualifications.

During the course of this inspection both the Registered manager and the Responsible Individual demonstrated a commitment to promoting the welfare of the children in placement.

### **3. Management of the fostering service**

#### **Standard 4,5**

These standards were not appraised at this inspection.

### **4. Securing and promoting welfare**

#### **Standard 6 – 14**

Standards 6-13 were appraised at this inspection.

A review of records confirmed that Health and Safety checks are completed as part of the foster carers initial assessment and there after annually at the carers review. A review of records confirmed that part one of the BAAF form is being completed, this section of the form requires Supervising Social workers to provide details of the carer's accommodation. A review of records confirmed that the room to be occupied is detailed in the initial carers assessment. A further Health and safety assessment is completed annually, the pro forma requires information regarding the household internally and externally and carers pets accommodated in the home and a risk assessment of the pet(s) is also undertaken. A review of records confirmed that the assessments are been completed.

Foster carer's receive training in equality and diversity during their preparation training groups. The Foster Carer and Supervising Social Worker Standards and Practice Guidance provide carers and staff with guidance on equal opportunities and valuing diversity. A review of the information confirmed that it had been developed in accordance with UK National Standards for Foster Care and the National Minimum Standards.

The Registered manager explained that since the last inspection the organisation had developed and implemented a system of Risk assessment and matching all potential placements

In addition to this a Behaviour Management Agreement has also been developed. The pro forma is to be completed by the supervising social worker in conjunction with the placing authority detailing serious or persistent behaviours, and the strategies to manage the behaviour. The Registered manager explained that the young person, carer, and senior managers from TACT and the pacing authority have to sign their agreement. The outcome is that there will be comprehensive over sight of behaviour management strategies to ensure the welfare of the child.

The organisation continues to promote contact between children and family members where appropriate. The organizations referral form requires information to be completed in relation to the contact arrangements for each child.

Through out the inspection it has been observed that children have a range of opportunity to express their views relating to the care that they receive. The organisation has implemented both national and local strategies to ascertain the children's

The organisation is to be commended on the developments that it has made since the last inspection to ensure that children's health needs are assessed and views.

A review of the Foster Carer and Supervising Social Worker Standards and Practice Guidance confirmed that staff and carers are provided with comprehensive information relating to the assessment of educational needs and supporting children to attain their potential. Since the last inspection the organisation has developed a Child's Education Record

**5. Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training foster carers and staff  
Standard 15 – 23**

Standards 15,17, 21 were appraised at this inspection.

The organization continues to operate a thorough selection process. Records identified that there are clear recruitment and selection procedures for appointing staff that follow good practice in safeguarding children and young people.

Since the last inspection the organisation has developed a new induction program that ensures that new staff are provided with comprehensive information relating to the organisation and individual responsibilities.

The organisation has also developed a new pro forma for supervision records that then relates to the individual Personal Development Plans, the Responsible Individual explained that the revised process is currently being implemented for all staff. A review of records confirmed that staff are receiving regular supervision.

Interviews with staff confirmed that they feel well supported and that they are able to approach members of the management team with difficulties or concerns.

The organisation has conducted their own survey of carers, the results identified that 99% considered the training on offer to carers was very good. 98% considered the allowances paid to carers to be good. 90% were happy with the level of support being provided. These statistics were confirmed by the survey of carers conducted by Commission for Social Care Inspection.

**6. Records  
Standard 24,25**

Standard 24 was appraised at this inspection.

Files were inspected in accordance with the Commission for Social Care Inspection methodology, the files reviewed as part of this inspection contained all the relevant information in accordance with the National Minimum Standards and regulations.

The inspector observed that the structure of files was well organised. The Registered manager explained that the Team managers conduct their own audits of files to ensure that information is correct and up to date.

A review of records confirmed that the basis of placement, duration and purpose is recorded in the placement agreement and the LAC paper work that is made available to the carers.

**7. Fitness of premises for use as fostering service  
Standard 26**

These standard were not appraised at this inspection.

**8. Financial requirements  
Standard 27 – 29**

These standards were not appraised at this inspection.

**9. Fostering panels  
Standard 30**

Standard met. The inspectors observed a Panel Meeting - all members gave their views very clearly, the panel appeared to function well and in accordance with Regulations 24,25 & 26 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

The organisation is to be commended on the developments that panel has made and the strong commitment of the panel members to promoting the welfare of the children cared for by the organisation.

**10.Short term breaks****Standard 31**

The agency has developed a Respite Placement Policy that clearly details the responsibilities of the agency to assess and support the carers and the responsibilities of the carer to provide care and support to the child.

**11.Family and friends as carers****Standard 32**

This service is not offered

## Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

### (Local Authority Fostering Services Only)

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

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

**The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:**

## Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

YES

**If No please list below**

### STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

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



## 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	

## 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	RFC8	The Registered manager was advised to consider risk assessment and risk management training for staff and carers.
2	RFC21	The Registered manager is advised to continue to explore more localised training venues.
3	RFC21	The Registered manager was advised to review with supporting social workers the ways in which levels and types of support are determined in accordance with risk assessment and risk management strategies.

\* 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	10
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	YES
• Child protection officer	YES
• 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	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	YES
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	17/01/05
Time of Inspection	10.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	80

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?	0
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This Standard was not appraised at this 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 appraised 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 nominated responsible individual Kathy Blythe, and the Regional Manager Sonia Bolland, successfully completed Fit Person Interviews with National Care Standards Commission. Both managers were considered suitable people to run a fostering service, having in each case the appropriate experience and qualifications. During the course of this inspection both the Registered manager and the Responsible Individual demonstrated a commitment to promoting the welfare of the children in placement.

## 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?**

0

This Standard was not appraised at this inspection.

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

X

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

X

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

X

Serious illness or accident of a child.

X

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

X

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

X

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

X

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

X

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

X

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

0

**Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:**

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 not appraised at this 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

A review of records confirmed that Health and Safety checks are completed as part of the foster carers initial assessment and there after annually at the carers review. A review of records confirmed that part one of the BAAF form is being completed, this section of the form requires Supervising Social workers to provide details of the carer's accommodation. A review of records confirmed that the room to be occupied is detailed in the initial carers assessment. A further Health and safety assessment is completed annually, the pro forma requires information regarding the household internally and externally and carers pets accommodated in the home and a risk assessment of the pet(s) is also undertaken. A review of records confirmed that the assessments are been completed.

Foster carer's receive training in health and safety issues during their preparation training groups. The Foster Carer and Supervising Social Worker Standards and Practice Guidance provides carers with information relating to Health and safety in the home, and details carers and staff responsibility to ensure a safe environment is provided to children in placement. All the homes visited during this inspection provided homely accommodation, which was appropriate for the child placed.

Carers confirmed that they understand that they may be interviewed or visited as part of the Commission's inspection process.

### 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

Foster carer's receive training in equality and diversity during their preparation training groups. The Foster Carer and Supervising Social Worker Standards and Practice Guidance provide carers and staff with guidance on equal opportunities and valuing diversity. A review of the information confirmed that it had been developed in accordance with UK National Standards for Foster Care and the National Minimum Standards.

The organisation has developed a Risk Assessment/Matching Form, the pro forma requires supervising social workers to review the child's needs in relation to disability, race, language and culture and identify any shortfalls.

**Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)**

Local authority fostering services, and voluntary agencies placing children in their own right, ensure that each child or young person placed in foster care is carefully matched with a carer capable of meeting her/his assessed needs. For agencies providing foster carers to local authorities, those agencies ensure that they offer carers only if they represent appropriate matches for a child for whom a local authority is seeking a carer.

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

3

The Registered manager explained that since the last inspection the organisation had developed and implemented a system of Risk assessment and matching all potential placements. A review of records confirmed that Risk Assessments had been completed for each child in placement. It was noted that in one case where the carers circumstances had altered the risk assessment had not been updated to reflect the changes. The Registered manager was advised to consider risk assessment and risk management training for staff and carers.

A review of the Foster Carer and Supervising Social Worker Standards and Practice Guidance confirmed that clear guidance is available to carers and staff regarding the process of matching children and carers.

**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

As stated in standard 9 the organisation has developed a pro forma for Risk Assessment / Matching records confirmed that all cases tracked risk assessments were in place. In addition to this a Behaviour Management Agreement has also been developed. The pro forma is to be completed by the supervising social worker in conjunction with the placing authority detailing serious or persistent behaviours, and the strategies to manage the behaviour. The Registered manager explained that the young person, carer, and senior managers from TACT and the placing authority have to sign their agreement. The outcome is that there will be comprehensive oversight of behaviour management strategies to ensure the welfare of the child.

Interviews with carers caring for children with difficult behaviours confirmed that they had received guidance on managing the behaviours and had attended training relating to physical interventions. Carers also confirmed their understanding of reporting incidents/accidents relating to the child in placement.

**Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:**

0

%

**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 organisation continues to promote contact between children and family members where appropriate. The organizations referral form requires information to be completed in relation to the contact arrangements for each child. A review of the records identified that placing authorities completing the Looked After Children formats include details of contact arrangements.

During the assessment process and pre approval training of careers, the fostering service stresses the importance of foster carers helping a child to maintain appropriate contacts and covers the skills required to encourage and facilitate such contacts.

The Foster Carer and Supervising Social Worker Standards and Practice Guidance provide information and guidance to staff and carers in working with birth families. Since the last inspection the organisation has developed a comprehensive guide for parents, which provides information about the organisation and informs parents about the organisations complaints procedure.

Interviews with careers confirmed that they were aware of the individual arrangements for the children placed with them.

**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

Through out the inspection it has been observed that children have a range of opportunity to express their views relating to the care that they receive. The organisation has implemented both national and local strategies to ascertain the children's views.

- A national survey has been conducted.
- Children in placement have the opportunity at the carer's annual review to record their views; the Reviewing Office and the Fostering Panel then review this information.
- Bi monthly discussion and activity children's group
- News letter
- A national children's conference organised by an independent consultation group.
- TACT Children's web page
- Children Who Foster Group

The outcome is that children have a range of opportunities to voice their views regarding their care and the organisation. Children have further confirmed this through the questionnaires completed as part of the inspection process.

**Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)**

The fostering service ensures that it provides foster care services which help each child or young person in foster care to receive health care which meets her/his needs for physical, emotional and social development, together with information and training appropriate to her/his age and understanding to enable informed participation in decisions about her/his health needs.

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

4

Since the last inspection the organisation has developed a Child's Health Record the Registered manager explained that each child in placement would have an individual record. A review of the format confirmed that the information required would provide a comprehensive assessment of the child's health care needs.

A review of the Foster Carer and Supervising Social Worker Standards and Practice Guidance confirmed that staff and carers are provided with comprehensive information in relation to health assessment, ongoing needs, consent, urgent treatment and confidentiality. Discussion with carers confirmed that the guidance is useful.

Since the last inspection the organisation has appointed a health professional to the Fostering Panel. The inspector observed children's health needs being reviewed and advice being given to ensure that the appropriate treatment was being provided to the child. The inspector observed that records being presented to panel incorporated the revised review format that incorporates the health assessment of each child in placement.

A survey completed by the organisation relating to the Child Care Performance Indicators confirmed that a significant number of children have attended medicals, dentist and optical examinations.

The Registered manager explained that where a child is identified by the agency and placing authority to be in need of mental health assessment or services the organisation will make a £500.00 allowance to purchase any services required.

The organisation is to be commended on the developments that it has made since the last inspection to ensure that children's health needs are assessed and met.

**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

A review of the Foster Carer and Supervising Social Worker Standards and Practice Guidance confirmed that staff and carers are provided with comprehensive information relating to the assessment of educational needs and supporting children to attain their potential. Since the last inspection the organisation has developed a Child's Education Record the Registered manager explained that each child in placement would have an individual record. A review of the format confirmed that the information required would provide a comprehensive assessment of the child's education needs.

The inspector observed the Educational Advisor providing guidance to supervising social workers at the Fostering Panel. The inspector observed that records being presented to panel incorporated the revised review format that incorporates the education assessment of each child in placement.

The organisation completed a survey of all children cared for by the agency, it was established that 96% of children were regularly attend school. The survey also highlighted a deficit in the number of children with Personal Educational Plans. This information has been used by the organisation to address shortfalls and further develop support to children.

**Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)**

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

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

0

This Standard was not appraised at this 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?

4

The organization continues to operate a thorough selection process. Records identified that there are clear recruitment and selection procedures for appointing staff that follow good practice in safeguarding children and young people. Records confirmed that the organization is continuing to complete the required checks and references and record their outcomes. Staff reviewed as part of this inspection have an appropriate qualification in working with children.

Total number of staff of the agency:

X

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

X

### Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This Standard was not appraised at this 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

Since the last inspection the organisation has developed a new induction program that ensures that new staff are provided with comprehensive information relating to the organisation and individual responsibilities.

The organisation has also developed a new pro forma for supervision records that then relates to the individual Personal Development Plans, the Responsible Individual explained that the revised process is currently being implemented for all staff. A review of records confirmed that staff are receiving regular supervision.

Interviews with staff confirmed that they feel well supported and that they are able to approach members of the management team with difficulties or concerns. Staff also confirmed that they are attending joint team meetings with administration staff and supervising social workers.

The agency has a recruitment policy and strategy aimed at recruiting a wide range of carers to meet the needs of the children and young people for whom it aims to provide a service.

The agency has a clear assessment process for carers and information is collected from a variety of sources including witness statements from personal/employment references, discussions with the applicants and their family, observation of applicants with their family and a preparation course.

As part of this inspection the inspector observed training for carers and staff relating to the Foster Carer and Supervising Social Worker Standards and Practice Guidance. There was evidence of good communication and relationships between the staff and carers. Discussion with carers after the event confirmed that the opportunity to attend joint training had been very useful. The Registered manager explained that joint training events had proven to be successful and it is envisaged that more events will be arranged.

**Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)**

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

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

0

This Standard was not appraised at this inspection.

**Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)**

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

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

0

This Standard was not appraised at this inspection.

**Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)**

All staff are properly accountable and supported.

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

0

This Standard was not appraised at this inspection.

**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 organisation has conducted their own survey of carers, the results identified that 99% considered the training on offer to carers was very good. 98% considered the allowances paid to carers to be good. 90% were happy with the level of support being provided. These statistics were confirmed by the survey of carers conducted by Commission for Social Care Inspection.

The inspectors spent a morning at a foster carers support group in general the carers were very happy with the support that they received from the agency. Carers did raise the issue of training venues and explained that the travelling can create difficulties; a local venue would be more practical. This issue was raised in the previous inspection; the Registered manager explained that efforts had been made to identify a more local venue however this had not always been possible. A review of training events confirmed that there had been some events staged at different locations. The Registered manager was advised to continue to pursue this matter.

A review of records confirmed that carers were receiving regular visits from their supervising social workers, and that carers were being offered the support of respite care from other carers. The records indicated that the carer determined the level of respite provided, in some cases. The Registered manager was advised to review with supporting social workers the ways in which levels and types of support are determined in accordance with risk assessment and risk management strategies.

The Foster Carer and Supervising Social Worker Standards and Practice Guidance provide both carers and staff with clear guidance on supervision, support, information and advice.

The guidance also details frequency and content of visits.

Supervising social workers are required to complete a supervision pro forma that clearly details the areas discussed and any action that is required. A review of records confirmed that information is being recorded correctly.

**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 not appraised at this 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?**

0

This Standard was not appraised at this inspection.

## 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

Files were inspected in accordance with the Commission for Social Care Inspection methodology, the files reviewed as part of this inspection contained all the relevant information in accordance with the National Minimum Standards and regulations. The inspector observed that the structure of files was well organised. The Registered manager explained that the Team managers conduct their own audits of files to ensure that information is correct and up to date. A review of records confirmed that the basis of placement, duration and purpose is recorded in the placement agreement and the LAC paper work that is made available to the carers.

### Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This Standard was not appraised at this inspection.

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 not appraised at this inspection.

## 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 appraised 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 appraised 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 appraised 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?	4
<p>The inspector observed formulation of members in accordance with Regulation 24. A review of the fostering assessments that were to be presented to panel confirmed that all information required in Schedule 3 has been incorporated into the report. The reports reviewed had been completed in accordance with Regulation 27 of the Care Standards Act 2000.</p> <p>On the day that the inspector was observing the panel the Chief Executive of the organization came to discuss a recent process of appeal by a carer. The discussion confirmed that the organization has procedures in place for careers to appeal against the decisions of panel. The outcome of this particular appeals process was that the organization reviewed a number of areas of practice and made improvements. During the course of the discussion between the member and the Chief Executive the inspector noted the strong commitment of panel members to promoting the welfare of children and their professional approach to the tasks that they undertook.</p> <p>Whilst observing the panel carers attended with their supervising social worker. The panel members approach was open and honest enabling the carers to represent themselves and add additional information to the fostering assessment. The Registered manager explained that the organisation encourages carers to attend panel, a booklet in currently being produced that provides carers with information relating to the panel functions and the panel members. This action has been taken in attempt to make attending panel less daunting and encourage carers to be more involved with the process of approval and review.</p> <p>As detailed in standard 12 and 13 the organisation has a strong commitment to promoting the educational achievement and health of the children in their care. The respective representatives on the panel who explored children's current needs and the progress that was being made further evidenced this.</p> <p>Interviews with panel members confirmed that they had attended BAAF training relating to the role of panel, which was very useful. Panel members will also attend training relating to the Foster Carer and Supervising Social Worker Standards and Practice Guidance.</p> <p>An interview with the Chair of the panel confirmed that the panel had made positive developments since the last inspection and she hoped that further developments would be made over the coming year. The Chair confirmed that panel's relationship with the organisations management team was positive and recommendations made by the panel were responded to.</p> <p>The organisation is to be commended on the developments that panel has made and the strong commitment of the panel members to promoting the welfare of the children cared for by the organisation.</p>		

## 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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	3
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The agency has developed a Respite Placement Policy that clearly details the responsibilities of the agency to assess and support the carers and the responsibilities of the carer to provide care and support to the child. A review of the policy confirmed that the expectations of the agency both regarding the support of the placement and the care being provided to the child is of the same standard of that of a child in a fulltime placement. A respite care case was not identified for case tracking on this inspection; therefore this area has not been fully assessed.

## 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?	0
This service is not provided.		

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

**Lay Assessor**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

**PART D**

**PROVIDER'S RESPONSE**

**D.1 Registered Person or Responsible Local Authority Managers  
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 **17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> January 2005** and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

YES

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 14<sup>th</sup> March 2005, which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.**

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

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 Kathleen Hilary Blythe of TACT Fostering Services 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 Kathleen Hilary Blythe of TACT Fostering Services 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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S0000043094.V207313.R01

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