



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

BGWS Fostering Service

250 Wellington Road South

Stockport

Cheshire

SK2 6NW

19th July 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

Local Authority Fostering Service?

NO

Name of Authority

Address

Local Authority Manager

Tel No:

Address

Fax No:

Email Address

Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)

YES

Name of Agency

BGWS Fostering Service

Tel No

0161 480 8677

Address

250 Wellington Road South, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2
6NW

Fax No

0161 474 0860

Email Address

pat@bgws.org.uk

Registered Number of IFA

F040000321

Name of Registered Provider

BGWS Fostering Service

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Mrs Christine Broadbent

Date of first registration

2nd September 2003

Date of latest registration certificate

4th June 2004

Registration Conditions Apply ?

YES

Date of last inspection

6/5/03

Date of Inspection Visit		19th July 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		08:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Susan Winson	096596
Name of Inspector	2	N/A	
Name of Inspector	3	N/A	
Name of Inspector	4	N/A	
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.		N/A	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		N/A	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Christine Broadbent	

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 BGWS 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.

This fostering service is part of Boys' and Girls' Welfare Society known as BGWS. The Society is a registered charity which has been in existence for over 125 years. The Society provides residential care, education and foster and adoption services.

The fostering service was created in 1997 to provide initially foster homes for children and young people who were living in residential care provided by BGWS.

The service is registered with CSCI. It currently has approximately 40 children and young people in foster placement. The service will consider placements of children of any age but predominantly cares for younger children and children with disabilities on a short and long term basis. The service accommodates children from a large number of local authorities, mainly in the North West. BGWS is developing a Remand Foster Care Scheme.

The agency offers a comprehensive support system to the carers including access to the services of the BGWS Education Service, out of hours support system and respite care.

The service is based in Stockport but has carers based in the north west.

The responsible individual is Mrs Pat Walton and the manager is Ms Christine Broadbent.

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 second inspection of BGWS Fostering Service; the report is generally positive and reflects developments and progress since the last inspection. It is clear that the agency has worked to meet, and exceed Regulation and NMS, and has been successful in many respects. The service provided is focused on safeguarding children and young people.

Statement of Purpose

The agency has a statement of purpose which reflects its policies and practices. The statement of purpose is provided to relevant people at the time of placement but there is a need for updated copies to be available. The information to parents and to children is appropriate.

Fitness to provide and manage a fostering service

The people managing and carrying on the agency are suitable people to manage an agency concerned with the welfare of children. Robust and effective systems for monitoring the functioning of the agency are in place.

Management of the fostering service

The manager has appropriate skills and experience to manage the agency and is undertaking a management qualification. The agency is well managed, lines of accountability are clear and good quality foster care is delivered.

Securing and promoting welfare

The fostering service works to promote and safeguards young people's physical, mental and emotional welfare.

Information from placing authorities is not always comprehensive enough to inform the matching process and assist foster carers in meeting the needs of young people in their care. The manager continues to be active in pursuing LAC documentation with varying levels of success.

Foster carer agreements need to have full and specific information to meet Regulation and NMS.

The agency consults with foster carers, young people, their families and others involved in the placement on a regular basis and uses feedback to inform or develop practice.

Policies, procedures and guidelines are made available to foster carers which outline the agency's expectations and supervising social workers monitor that they are complied with.

Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers

The people who work for the agency are suitable to work with children and are well managed, suitably trained and supported in ways which ensure the best possible outcomes for children in foster care.

The staff of the agency are appropriately experienced and qualified to support carers to meet the needs of the children.

The quality of support and supervision for staff and carers is high and is underpinned by a focus on meeting training needs.

The foster carer handbook is in need of revision to ensure that it is user friendly and up to date with practice.

Records

Appropriate and well organised records are maintained and the agency has policies on confidentiality. These are accessible to the agency workers and, where appropriate, to foster carers and young people.

Fitness of premises for use as a fostering service

The premises are accessible and largely suitable for purpose. However, they are on a main road and the traffic noise conflicts with the windows being opened for ventilation.

Financial requirements

The agency appears to be financially viable and appropriate systems are in place to monitor finances.

Fostering panels

The agency is revising its arrangements for the fostering panel, which is properly constituted, effectively chaired and efficiently administered. There is a need for further policies and procedures to inform panel functioning.

Short term breaks

Not applicable to this agency.

Family and friends as carers

Not applicable to this agency.

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?

NO

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	
1	17(1) (3)	FS8	The registered person must take all reasonable steps to obtain all the necessary information from placing authorities to ensure that appropriate decisions can be made in matching and to ensure that carers can provide the appropriate care to meet the needs of the young people placed.	1.12.05

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	
1	3(2) and 3(4)	FS1	The registered person must ensure that there is a system in place to make the statement of purpose available after revision or updating.	1.12.04
2	34(3) and Schedule 6	FS8	The registered person must ensure that full and specific information is included in foster placement agreements to meet Schedule 6 of the Regulations.	1.12.04
3	17(1) (3)	FS8 FS12 FS13	The registered person must take all reasonable steps to obtain all the necessary information from placing authorities to ensure that appropriate decisions can be made in matching and to ensure that carers can provide the appropriate care to meet the needs of the young people placed.	1.12.04
4	42(1) and Schedule 7	FS12	The registered person must ensure that medication given to young people in foster care is documented and monitored.	1.12.04

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

Identified below are areas addressed in the main body of the report which relate to the National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice issues which should be considered for implementation by the Authority or Registered Person(s).

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	FS2	The registered person should ensure that the manager has achieved a qualification in management at NVQ Level 4 by 2005.
2	FS9	The registered person should extend the agency's procedures and systems for the use of risk assessments and effective risk management planning.
3	FS13	The registered person should ensure that foster carers have all the relevant information to assist them in meeting the education needs of young people in their care.
4	FS15	The registered person should ensure that she has sight of all CRB checks received by BGWS in respect of staff of the agency.
5	FS17	The registered person should develop guidelines for supervising social workers and foster carers in regard to the people who will be interviewed during assessments.
6	FS21	The registered person should ensure that the handbook for foster carers, which is being updated, contains all the policies, procedures, guidance and information required by the standards.
7	FS20	The registered person should review and clarify the guidelines for the frequency of staff supervision.
8	FS21	The registered person should review the frequency of supervisory visits to carers.
9	FS22	The registered person should continue with work to ensure that the handbook for foster carers is updated and user-friendly.
10	FS26	The registered person should review the office facilities in regard to ventilation.
11	FS30	The registered person should ensure that there are processes in place for approved carers changing age range.

*** Note:**

You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the two-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	NO
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	19/07/04
Time of Inspection	9:30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	82

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?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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The agency has a clear and comprehensive statement of purpose which outlines its status and constitution, the management structure and details of the services provided. The procedures for the recruitment, approval, training and support of carers are outlined. The number, qualification and experience of the staff of the agency are included in the statement of purpose, as are the numbers of carers and children placed. Details of the complaints and representation procedures are outlined.

At the referral stage copies are sent to placing authorities. The agency asks placing social workers to provide the statement of purpose to parents of children placed.

Within BGWS there is a formal system for approval of the statement of purpose.

Written guidance to staff and carers accurately reflect the statement of purpose.

The statement of purpose is reviewed regularly, updated as necessary and is distributed to staff and discussed in team meetings. For new members of staff, familiarisation with the statement of purpose is part of the induction process.

The registered person must develop a formal system to ensure that updated statements of purpose are distributed, or made available, to meet Regulation and NMS.

A written guide is produced for children and young people which is user friendly and includes useful contact numbers. In addition, it is produced in languages other than English.

The agency produces a guide for parents which provides information about how foster carers are assessed and reviewed, the agency's expectations of its carers, behaviour management and a statement of values.

Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The fostering service is provided and managed by those with the appropriate skills and experience to do so efficiently and effectively and by those who are suitable to work with children.

Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.4)

The people involved in carrying on and managing the fostering service possess the necessary business and management skills and financial expertise to manage the work efficiently and effectively and have the necessary knowledge and experience of childcare and fostering to do so in a professional manner.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The manager of the fostering service has considerable knowledge of and experience in childcare and fostering, including working at a senior level. She holds a DipSW and is undertaking NVQ level 5 in management.

The manager demonstrated that she exercises effective leadership of the staff of the agency. Staff interviewed were positive in their comments about her management skills and style. The fostering service is well organised and efficiently run.

The registered person should ensure that the manager has a management qualification by 2005.

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 manager has been registered as a fit person to manage the agency.

BGWS has a recruitment and selection procedure which includes taking up references and awaiting the outcome of CRB checks prior to an appointee starting work.

The agency has a system for ensuring that CRB checks for all staff are renewed every three years.

Management of the Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 4 (4.1 – 4.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The fostering service is managed by the Chief Executive of BGWS through the Director of Children and Families and Service Manager. Lines of accountability within the organisation are well established and clear to the managers and the staff.

The agency has systems in place to ensure that the fostering service collects and collates information from foster carers, so that the manager can monitor the matters outlined in Schedule 7 of the Regulations. She also monitors through supervision and regular audits of the files.

Notifications of significant events comply with Regulation and NMS. CSCI has been appropriately notified of events during the last year which have been handled appropriately by the agency.

The agency has a development plan which is comprehensive and which includes timescales for actions. It is reviewed regularly.

Consultation with foster carers is well developed in the agency.

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

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

1

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.

2

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.

1

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

1

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

3

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

0

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)

The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The manager's job description has recently been updated and accurately reflects her role and responsibilities. She does not hold a similar position in another agency.

There are clear arrangements for senior practitioners to deputise in the manager's absence.

The agency is well managed; clear and effective procedures are in place which, along with monitoring of standards, ensure that the work of the agency is of a high standard.

The staff were complimentary about the manager's skills and style of management. They participate in decisions, are regularly consulted and said that they feel valued and listened to.

Staff have areas of prime responsibility which are allocated according to their experience, training and interests.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The fostering service promotes and safeguards the child/young person's physical, mental and emotional welfare.

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

The fostering service makes available foster carers who provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Standard met?

3

Foster carers' homes visited by the inspector were suitable for the accommodation of young people.

The supervising social workers appeared clear about their role in evaluating and monitoring foster carers' practice to ensure that the welfare of young people is safeguarded. Foster carer training covers health and safety issues and there is written guidance on the carers' responsibilities.

Health and safety checklists are completed on the foster carers' homes and are checked at unannounced visits by the supervising social workers.

Where carers transport young people, the agency ensures that vehicles are roadworthy, registered and that driving licences and insurance are up-to-date.

Foster carers were aware that they may be visited as part of the inspection process.

The agency has a recruitment strategy, which includes advertisements in the media and on their website. Open evenings are also held. There are efficient systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of recruitment drives and sources of referrals. From initial enquiries of potential foster carers the manager can track progress through to approval of carers and can monitor the timescales at each stage of the 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?
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Standard met?

4

Promoting equality and valuing diversity runs through the documentation of the agency and expectations in terms of anti-discriminatory practice are outlined in the statement of purpose. Staff and foster carer training includes working to enhance young people's confidence and self-worth, meeting their needs in terms of ethnicity, religion, culture and background and dealing with discrimination.

The manager and staff gave examples of good practice in accessing specialist training and consultation in order for carers to meet the needs of young people with disabilities.

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The agency is clearly child focused and the ability of carers to meet the needs of a young person is the prime consideration in matching. Matching decisions are made on sound principles and knowledge. Matching meetings are held where possible to ensure that full information is shared. These are documented and indicate that there is full consideration of the needs of the child and the experience, competence and wishes of the foster carers.

The agency makes unplanned placements and the manager outlined that lack of information and poor quality of written information from placing authorities is a problem. This is being addressed in a rigorous manner by the manager and has improved since the last inspection. The registered person must ensure that all information is available to inform matching and to assist foster carers in meeting the needs of the children in their care. (See also NMS 12 and NMS 13).

Foster Placement Agreements inspected did not all include full health information or consent to medical treatment. There is also a need for more child specific information to outline the expectations of the placing authority and define which decisions can be made by the carers and which need to be referred to the placing authority. It also needs to include additional support which is put into place by the agency to compensate for any gaps in the match between carer and young person.

The registered person must ensure that the foster placement agreements meet Regulation and NMS.

Written details of introduction plans and discussions with staff and carers demonstrate that the agency works to minimise disruption for young people and allow them to familiarise themselves with carers and express their views on the placement.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

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

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

Child protection training is included in the induction training for foster carers and updated training is provided. All carer households prepare a general safe caring policy as part of the preparation for fostering and this is amended to include specific matters for each child placed.

Management systems are in place to collate information and evaluate the circumstances, number and outcomes of all allegations of neglect or abuse of a child in foster care.

The fostering service makes clear, in the foster carer agreement that corporal punishment is unacceptable. Supervising social workers monitor the use of sanctions on visits to the carers and check out the duration and specific details of sanctions used. Carers were clear about the agency's expectations in regard to behaviour management.

The agency has a recently revised the policy on bullying. Foster carers receive training on anti-bullying strategies at the initial training stage. Carers and staff gave examples of positive work done in co-operation with schools in regard to bullying issues.

The supervising social workers meet with young people directly; groups are held regularly and have included work on bullying.

There are clear procedures for foster carers to follow when a young person is missing from home.

The use of risk assessments and effective risk management planning are areas for development in the agency. They are compiled for the agency holiday with carers but are not in general use. The agency should develop guidelines on when it is appropriate to compile risk assessments, which need to be agreed with placing authorities and monitored by supervising social workers. There are also implications for staff and foster carer training in risk assessment and management.

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?

4

It is clear that the agency communicates its expectations, in regard to family contact, to foster carers, young people and their families. In addition to face to face contact, young people can expect to be able to make and receive telephone calls.

Staff and foster carers have a strong commitment to maintaining and encouraging contact which is carried out in practice. Where appropriate, the agency supports or facilitates contact arrangements and has support staff available to ensure that this happens.

The agency's foster care agreements include the expectation that carers will work in partnership with birth parents where appropriate and foster placement agreements outline the arrangements for contact. Annual reviews of carers include comments about how they have handled contact.

Young people are encouraged to make and maintain friendships and friends are welcomed in the foster homes.

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

The agency is active in working to consult with young people and their families. There are regular children's support groups which are open to looked after children and the sons and daughters of foster carers.

The agency is convening a children's panel to inform them about the service and consult them about issues which directly affect them. Young people have been invited to be part of this group.

The documents which supervising social workers complete on visits to foster carers includes a section on how foster carers are consulting with young people about decisions which affect them and aspects of everyday living. At each foster carer review placing social workers are asked to elicit the child's view of the placement.

The monthly reports written by foster carers are made available to children, of an appropriate age, and they are invited to comment.

Parents and families of young people in foster carer are consulted by the use of questionnaires, at LAC reviews or on face to face contact with the staff of the agency.

Complaints are monitored by the manager and the three complaints received by the agency since the last inspection have been dealt with appropriately in accordance with the agency's policies and procedures. None of these have been complaints raised by young people.

Supervising social workers see children in placement at least three times a year and ask them if they have any complaints. All the young people have information about how to complain and, in addition, complaints are addressed in the young people's groups. The young people know how to access Children's Rights Officers and other agencies and some have done so.

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?

2

The agency ensures that carers register young people with a local GP, dentist and optician and the supervising social workers monitor to ensure that regular health checkups are undertaken. Foster carers' practices in meeting the physical and emotional needs of young people in their care are monitored at every visit.

The LAC documentation received from placing social workers does not always include full medical details and history; details of immunisations are often omitted. Whilst the inspector acknowledges that this is the responsibility of the placing authority, the agency should be more active in gathering this information once a child is placed. (See also NMS 8 and NMS 13).

The registered person should ensure that foster carers have all the available information to allow them to meet the health needs of young people in their care.

The agency needs to develop a system which allows supervising social workers to monitor the administration of prescription and non-prescription medication in foster care. The registered person must ensure that an appropriate system is put into place.

Foster carers report accidents to their allocated supervising social worker or to the social worker on duty.

Foster carers have access to health professionals and LAC nurses for advice and support. The agency has a health worker who is involved in foster carer 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?**

2

The agency gives high priority to ensuring that young people's educational needs are met and supports carers in accessing appropriate information and school placements. Education arrangements are discussed at the matching stage.

Numerous positive examples of foster carers working in partnership with schools were given to the inspector. Foster carers routinely attend school events, meetings and parents evenings and the levels of support provided to young people to allow them to take advantage of educational opportunities is high.

Where young people of school age are not in education there is the access to the BGWS education facility.

Full information about the educational needs of young people is not always received by the agency, for example, not all foster carers have access to Personal Education Plans or Special Educational Needs statements.

The registered person should ensure that all the relevant information is obtained from placing social workers to ensure that young people's education needs are met. (See also NMS 8 and NMS 12).

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

The agency has a transition policy in place and foster carers are provided with a comprehensive format for preparation for independence. Training is provided for carers which covers leaving care planning and the development of living skills.

At the time of this inspection only two young people aged 16 or over were in placements with the agency.

On a day-to-day basis, young people in foster care are supported to develop appropriate independence and are given opportunities to develop life skills, according to their ages and stages of development.

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

BGWS has a well developed recruitment and selection process which is documented on personnel files. Records of qualifications, employment histories and references are retained on file.

The manager sees personnel files, ensures that there are no employment gaps and that references have been received and are satisfactory.

The manager is sent an e-mail from the agency's personnel department about the outcome of CRB checks. The manager should ensure that she has sight of the checks.

Social work staff who are involved in the assessment of foster carers are qualified staff who have experience of family placement work and are trained in assessment. Those who do not hold a social work qualification or who have yet to gain direct experience of family placement work are allocated appropriate tasks and are supervised in carrying out assessments.

The staffing complement of the agency consists of the manager, three senior practitioners, two full time and two part-time supervising social workers, a senior support worker and two support co-ordinators. There is also an administrator, two administrative assistants and two clerical assistants.

Total number of staff of the agency:

16

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

1

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

There are clear lines of accountability within the agency. Roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are well defined. Staff are managed by people with appropriate skills and qualifications.

The manager determines priorities and allocates workloads in discussion with staff.

Senior practitioners are in place to support the manager and to deputise in her absence.

Supervising social workers have specific co-ordinating roles which works well and is a positive use of staff time and skills.

Support to foster carers is flexible and creative and allows for a quick response to crisis or emergencies.

The manager and staff examine their own practice and analyse the effectiveness of work they have done. Disrupted placements are used as a learning experience for the whole team, in a culture of no-blame examination.

The administrative staff are well managed and organised and the systems in place are efficient and effective.

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?**

2

The agency has a pool of experienced and skilled social work staff and has sufficient staff to provide a quality service. They are skilled in assessing, supporting and facilitating the training of foster carers. The team now includes support workers whose roles are clear and who are an effective addition to the service provided to carers and young people.

The agency has a recruitment strategy which aims to recruit carers with a range of skills and experience.

The agency has a fostering assessment agreement which includes timescales; this is a useful and informative document for prospective carers and could be extended to provide comprehensive information, for example, about members of the household and the receipt of adverse information.

Assessments of prospective carers are thorough and comprehensive and their quality is monitored by the manager and the fostering panel. The agency uses a competence based assessment and portfolios of evidence are presented to panel.

The agency needs a policy on who will be seen as part of the assessment process, which should be included in the written information to prospective carers. The registered person should review the practice and consider the interviewing of ex-partners of carers, employers and adult sons and daughters who are living away from home.

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

BGWS is regarded as a fair employer by the staff. There is a well established recruitment system for staff which follows the agency's focus on equal opportunities. Job descriptions accurately describe the tasks and responsibilities of the post. Staff stated that they were given comprehensive information about the agency on application.

The agency's employment policies are available to staff.

Carers sign that they have read and discussed the policies of the agency, including those on whistle blowing and complaints.

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

BGWS has its own training department and holds courses for the staff of the agency. Staff reported that the training is informative and useful and that within the agency there are opportunities to develop skills and expertise through other routes, such as co-working, team development meetings and skills sharing.

Staff said that they found the agency's induction training package informative and useful.

Annual appraisals of staff identify training needs and the manager informs the training department of the needs of the agency. External training courses can be accessed or commissioned and the staff stated that they can initiate their own training. Administrative staff training is well developed and includes access to NVQ's.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)

All staff are properly accountable and supported.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

Staff supervision agreements are all in place and those staff who supervise others have received appropriate training.

The staff reported that supervision is useful and meets their needs. They also commented favourably about the availability of informal supervision, or consultation, from the manager and colleagues.

Formal supervision is recorded and includes case discussions, individual needs and training. Records indicate that formal supervision does not take place as often as laid down in the supervision agreement. The registered person should review and clarify the frequency of staff supervision.

Staff were very positive about the support they receive, including times when the work is stressful or distressing. It is clear that the agency has a strong ethos of support to its staff and that management support is available when necessary.

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?****2**

Foster carers reviews are held within the required timescales. The first annual review is held by the fostering panel. Subsequently, they are done in-house and are chaired by an employee of BGWS who does not work directly within the fostering agency. The outcomes of these reviews, which include action planning, are recorded and presented to the fostering panel.

The reviews include a contribution from the supervising social worker, the placing social worker and the carer. The carers' level of satisfaction with the support of the agency is checked at every review.

Written policies and procedures state that all carers will be visited by a supervising social worker every month. The visits do not always take place at this frequency (nor do they always need to), particularly where young people are in settled, permanent placements. The agency should review these practice guidelines.

Carers reported good communication with the agency, frequent consultation and a high level of satisfaction with the support provided. Support outside office working hours is provided by the agency staff on a rota basis. Carers commented that they value this service and can always contact someone.

Respite arrangements for carers are documented, well organised and available as needed to carers. The respite carers also have an allocated supervising social worker and the workers ensure that information is exchanged about the young people at the time of transfer.

Support groups are held monthly and the agency makes efforts to make them as accessible as possible to carers in terms of location and times. Carers are encouraged to attend. The groups are facilitated by supervising social workers and have an agenda which includes information from the agency and a training element.

The manager stated that the foster carer handbook is in need of revision to update and to make it more user friendly. In some aspects, the practice of the agency has overtaken the written documentation. The registered person should ensure that the foster carer handbook is revised.

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?

4

A supervision contract is completed with all foster carers which stresses the two-way and supportive nature of supervisory visits.

The agency uses a proforma for the recording of supervisory visits which includes all the matters included in NMS in respect of securing and promoting welfare as well as the young person's, their parents' and their carer's views on the placement. These are completed fully by supervising social workers and are retained on files. They are effective working documents.

Unannounced visits to foster carer's homes are carried out annually.

Supervising social workers look at foster carers' diaries on every visit and monitor the quality or the recording.

The supervising social workers are very clear about their role in terms of both supervision and support. Foster carers value the input from supervising social workers and said that they are able to approach them with any concerns, queries or problems.

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The agency has a comprehensive training programme for carers which is reported to be of high quality and relevance by all.

The manager and supervising social workers work to ensure that all carers participate in training. Where there are 'reluctant trainees', supervising social workers will include training in their visits to foster carer's homes.

It is clear from the assessment stage that carers are expected to undertake induction and ongoing training and supervising social workers continuously discuss training needs with foster carers.

The induction training programme, which is attended prior to approval, is appropriate and experienced foster carers co-train with supervising social workers. It is made very clear to applicants that this training is part of their assessment and they are provided with a written evaluation report. The aims of the training are also clear to applicants in that the agency is looking to recruit carers who are open, reflective and willing to learn. There is a system for feedback from the trainers to the assessing social workers.

The manager and staff regularly review, revise or update the content of the in-house training they provide following detailed analysis of the feedback from attendees.

Foster carers can access the NVQ programmes and two of the agency's carers are assessors.

All carers are registered with Fostering Network by the agency.

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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Registers of foster carers and of children placed are maintained.

Appropriate separate records are maintained by the agency. The agency has written guidance on confidentiality and safe keeping of records. Carers and young people are informed of their right to see their case records.

It is clear that foster carers work to help young people to understand their history and that they encourage the keeping of memorabilia.

Records of supervising social workers visits to carers are retained on foster carer files; the quality of these are high.

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**

Files have been re-organised and indexed and accessibility to information has improved.

The agency has a new administrative manager in place. The administrative team are well organised and provide effective systems and support. All are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Further developments of the systems, including databases, are planned.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:

40

Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:

32

Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:

37

Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:

18

Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:

3

Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £

328.61

Maximum £

439.12

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- The premises used as offices by the fostering service are suitable for the purpose.

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

Premises used as offices by the fostering service are appropriate for the purpose.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The premises are used by the fostering agency and other departments of BGWS. Space is sometimes at a premium.

The building is on a main road and the traffic noise presents a problem when windows are open for ventilation. The alternative is that the rooms are uncomfortably hot and lack proper ventilation, when the windows are closed. The registered person should review the office facilities in this regard.

Appropriate fire and health and safety procedures and checks are in place, and are documented, and all electrical equipment is checked annually. Where necessary risk assessments are carried out.

The premises and contents are adequately insured.

Financial Requirements

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The agency fostering services are financially viable and appropriate and timely payments are made to foster carers.

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.3)

The agency ensures it is financially viable at all times and has sufficient financial resources to fulfil its obligations.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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At the time of this inspection the audited accounts for BGWS for year ending April 2004 had not yet been prepared. From previous years, it is evident that the agency has sufficient financial resources to fulfil its obligations.

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The service has proper financial procedures which are reviewed regularly. The budget for the fostering service is set centrally and is managed by the fostering manager, who demonstrated an understanding of financial procedures. Information about charges and fees is supplied to placing local authorities.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)

Each foster carer receives an allowance and agreed expenses, which cover the full cost of caring for each child or young person placed with him or her. Payments are made promptly and at the agreed time. Allowances and fees are reviewed annually.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The agency has documentation which sets out allowances and fees.

Payments are made to foster carers each fortnight and are produced on time. Carers expressed satisfaction with the system.

Administrators produce end of year statements for foster carers for tax purposes.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- Fostering panels are organised efficiently and effectively so as to ensure that good quality decisions are made about the approval of foster carers, in line with the overriding objective to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in foster care.

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

Fostering panels have clear written policies and procedures, which are implemented in practice, about the handling of their functions.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

At the time of this inspection the agency was in the process of splitting the adoption panel from the fostering panel and new arrangements for chairing the panels were in place.

The panel is properly constituted with members who have a range of relevant experience. It is well chaired and allowed for constructive and in-depth discussion of issues.

There is a written framework for panel interviews of applicants who attend the panel either at approval or review stage.

The panel has a clear quality assurance function.

Panel training is ongoing.

Administrative support to panel is efficient, papers go out to members well in advance to allow time for reading and minutes are produced shortly after the panel. This allows for a decision to be made within reasonable time scales by the agency decision maker.

The agency would benefit from having procedures which would inform the panel, in respect of systems for carers to change the age range of their approval. Although the inspector is confident from discussions with the manager and staff that these decisions balance the needs of the agency with the assessed skills, abilities and preferences of the carers, the agency does not demonstrate this in its decision making. The registered person should ensure that there are clear processes for the change of age range of approved carers.

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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Not applicable to this agency.

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
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Not applicable to this agency.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Not applicable.

Lay Assessor N/A **Signature** N/A

Date N/A

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 19th July 2004 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

NO

Comments were received from the provider

NO

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

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

Note:

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

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 7th December 2004, 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 _____ 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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