



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

Fostering Services

The Adolescent and Children`s Trust

Park House

Room 311

10 Park Street

Bristol

BS1 5HX

12th 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

The Adolescent and Children`s Trust

Address

Park House, Room 311, 10 Park Street, Bristol, BS1 5HX

Tel No

0117 9154543

Fax No

0117 9074740

Email Address

enquiries@tactfostercare.org.uk

Registered Number of IFA

D050000974

Name of Registered Provider

The Adolescent and Children`s Trust

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Ms Elaine Graham

Date of first registration

11th December 2003

Date of latest registration certificate

11th December 2003

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

27/10/03

Date of Inspection Visit		12th July 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Wilfried Maxfield	146484
Name of Inspector	2	Jacqueline Sullivan	
Name of Inspector	3		
Name of Inspector	4		
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Ms Elaine Graham	

Introduction to Report and Inspection

Inspection visits

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Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection

Statutory Requirements from this Inspection

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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 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

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.

The Adolescent and Children's Trust is a national children's charity providing fostering services. It operates a network of 6 branches spread across England and Wales. The service inspected is a new branch of this organisation based in Bristol. There are currently four approved foster carers.

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).

Brief Introduction

The Adolescent and Children's Trust was established in 1993. Having grown into a sizable organisation, the charity has developed an impressive range of policies and procedures. The Bristol branch of TACT was first registered in December 03. A small, competent team is currently developing this latest addition of the charity's branches. Because it is in its early stages, TACT Bristol is to date primarily engaged in recruiting and training potential foster carers as well as establishing a client base of children and young people.

In spite of not being fully operational as yet, i.e. of a relatively small live caseload, TACT Bristol's office is already very hectic and busy. Inspectors felt that the limited office space available to the team is already insufficient and is negatively affecting the growth and well being of the branch and its staff.

Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)

0 of 1 standard assessed were met

The Statement of Purpose requires some revision in order to meet the required standard.

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

2 of 2 standards assessed were met.

The manager was able to demonstrate she had the managerial skills and knowledge to run the Bristol office effectively and efficiently.

Recruitment records for all the staff were seen. Some gaps were noted in the majority of the records for both the form F writers and substantive staff. There was evidence on the staff files that efforts had been made to obtain this information.

Management of the fostering service (Standards 4-5)

2 of 2 standards assessed were met

The manager and staff were able to demonstrate they had clearly identifiable roles. The manager stated that she has recently been promoted to Area manager. A copy of this job description was seen on her file. Lines of communication and accountability were clear and known to all the staff team.

Securing and promoting welfare (Standards 6-14)

8 of 8 standards assessed were met. 1 standard was not assessed.

The agency's policies to ensure that carers provide a homely environment are sound. Inspectors' visits of carers' homes confirmed this. The agency is pro-active in promoting diversity in respect of the recruitment of carers. The matching process employed by the agency will be subject of a future inspection. The agency reassured inspectors that it always endeavours to obtain relevant LAC documentation from the Local Authority.

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

8 of 9 standards assessed were met

Recruitment and selection procedures for staff are sound. Management structures provide clear accountability structures for staff.

The process of assessing prospective foster parents is sound. Form F assessors, supervising social workers and a very competent fostering panel ensure approval is made after thorough scrutiny. Out of hours support makes undue demands on a small team. A duty log needs to be put in place.

Records (Standards 24-25)

2 of 2 standards assessed were met

Information in LAC files was scant. The organisation is currently auditing all records. A new filing structure was introduced very recently after consultation with staff and in response to inspector's comments in the past. In spite of all care taken staff interviewed viewed the new version 'difficult and time consuming to navigate'. Inspectors agreed with staff.

Fitness of premises for use as fostering services (Standard 26)

1 of 1 standard assessed were met

Bristol's branch office is overcrowded and demands on space is already outstripping

available options. The branch is currently trying to recruit another member of staff. The office space is deemed unsuitable to accommodate the needs of one more team member. The organisation has been searching for new office accommodation for some time.

Financial Requirements (Standards 27-29)

3 of 3 standards assessed were met

The projected deficit of the Bristol branch is in line with TACT business management expectations. Accounts are audited by Chartered Accountants and available in Annual Reports. A written policy on allowances for foster parents is in place.

Fostering panels (Standard 30)

1 of 1 standard assessed were met

Inspectors were impressed with the professional level of conduct and expertise of the Welsh panel. A 'Bristol Panel' is expected to be online in September 04.

Short Term Breaks (Standard 31)

0 of 0 standard assessed were met

Not applicable to this service.

Family and Friends as Carers (Standard 32)

0 of 0 standard assessed were met

Not assessed on this inspection.

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:

Not applicable.

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	Schedule 1	3	Ensure all staff records comply with schedule 1 of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002.	30/06/04

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

COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)

(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)

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

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector	<u>Wilfried Maxfield</u>	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	<u>Jacqueline Sullivan</u>	Signature	_____
Regulation Manager	<u>Michael Miles</u>	Signature	_____
Date	<u>14th October 2004</u>		

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	FS32 FS1	The Statement of Purpose is reviewed so that it includes the details listed in standard one.	17/3/05
2	Schedule 1	FS3	Ensure all staff records comply with schedule1 of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002.	17/3/05
3	17	FS19 FS12	A specific training programme be in place for foster carers of children with a disability at the appropriate stage of development of this service.	17/9/05
4	18	FS24	Contact details of the CSCI are included in the complaints procedure.	17/3/05
5	23	FS26	That more suitable premises are found once the organisation expands.	17/3/05

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	FS9	That the policy on countering bullying is made available to the appropriate parties. That the Child Protection policy includes a flowchart

2	FS18	The out of hour's duty system is reviewed. That all duty calls are logged in a dedicated book
3	FS19	That a training plan is in place as detailed in standard 19 of this report.
4	FS21	That a system of respite care continues to be developed for foster carers.
5	FS24	That adequate information about young peoples previous placements is available on their files.

* 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	5
Survey of placing authorities	NO
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	NO
• 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	YES
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	12/07/04
Time of Inspection	9:30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	40.0

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

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The Inspectors read the Statement of Purpose and noted that it did not meet the required standard. The outstanding issues include the inclusion of the number of approved foster carers into the Statement of Purpose, details of experience and qualifications of the staff team at the Bristol office.

At the last inspection the Inspectors recommended that plain English be used to describe the charitable objectives. The manager told the inspectors that this wording is linked to the organisations charitable status and cannot be changed.

Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The manager currently has a CQSW and has nearly completed a suitable management course.

The manager was able to demonstrate that she had the managerial skills and knowledge to run the Bristol office effectively and efficiently.

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

Recruitment records for all the staff were seen. Some gaps were noted in the majority of the records for both the form F writers and substantive staff. There was evidence on file that efforts had been made to obtain the missing information. The Inspectors noted that some of the files did not contain the original staff CRB checks. These were stored in a separate file. Individual files had details of the date and CRB reference number noted on it.

In addition documents of staff qualifications were not complete and not all the references were followed up by telephone. The requirement to make follow up telephone calls has been carried out since April 2003 following an earlier inspection and subsequently all staff employed since this date have been checked in this way.

The agency needs to ensure that all staff records are complete in accordance with schedule 1 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

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 manager and staff were able to demonstrate they had clearly identifiable roles. The manager stated that she has recently been promoted to Area manager. A copy of this job description was seen on her file. Lines of communication and accountability were clear and known to all the staff team.

The Inspectors saw a copy of the staff handbook, job descriptions and person specifications.

The head office of the organisation manages the finances of the branch. There was limited financial information available at the time of the inspection. The financial budget sheets indicated that the Bristol branch was currently in deficit as it is a new branch that has recently opened.

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

0

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

0

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

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

0

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

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

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

0

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?****3**

The manager has a clear job description for both her role as manager and area manager, copies of which were seen. The manager has been promoted to area manager since the last inspection.

Discussions with the manager and staff showed that the levels of delegation and responsibility are clearly defined. This is supported by the agency's 'Delegation of Authority' policy.

There are clear arrangements in place for the regional manager to deputise when the manager is absent. Both the staff at the Bristol office and the regional manager stated that this works well in practice.

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
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Since the last inspection four foster carers have been approved by TACT. The carers seen by the Inspectors were able to demonstrate that they provided a homely environment that met the standards.

The agency has a policy that specifies that all children placed with its foster carers have their own room. There is also a policy for assessing whether 2nd placements are appropriate in a carer's home.

Health and safety issues are included in the carer's preparation and training and in written guidance given to them.

Vehicles used by carers to transport children are checked by the agency. Carers are asked to show current MOT and insurance certificates and to provide appropriate car seats that are paid for by the agency.

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
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Staff interviewed reassured inspectors that they were committed to the charities mission statement which "... is to help children of all ages and ethnic groups grow and mature as unique, confident individuals", and that, "All children have the right to be placed where their racial, cultural and religious requirements can be met." In practical terms this has meant that the manager has advertised for carer's in particular segments of the press aiming at certain populations. These include black and ethnic minorities, gay and lesbian communities as well as disabled people.

Talking to participants at a training event some confirmed that they had become aware of the organisation in the way intended and described above.

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
<p>Discussion with the manager confirmed that she had a knowledge and understanding of the issues involved in the process of matching. At the time of inspection two young people had been placed with foster carers. The information on the young peoples files confirmed that they were appropriately matched with the foster carers. The Inspectors scrutinized the agency's policies and procedures and noted that they met the required standard. The manager and supervising social worker are responsible for this process when the branch becomes fully operational. The manager stated that placements are planned where possible and that additional support is provided to carers whenever it was needed. The agency was able to demonstrate they mostly obtained the appropriate LAC paperwork and background information about each child prior to placement.</p> <p>The Inspectors visited one foster carer, where a young person had been placed the previous day and the foster carers stated that she did not have the appropriate paperwork and information, but the supervising social worker was to visit later that day with a photocopy of these papers.</p> <p>The matching process will be a focus of the next inspection.</p>		

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
<p>The agency's child protection policy was seen and was satisfactory. A copy of this is given to and discussed with carers during their training. Discussions with the carers during a training session confirmed that they had a good grounding in child protection. The Inspectors noted there was little currently in the way of updating and developing this training locally. Discussions with the supervising social worker and scrutiny of the carer's files confirmed that child protection issues are discussed during supervision of carers. Carers also receive a copy of the Safer Caring handbook.</p> <p>The agency has a policy of not allowing corporal punishment and carers are made aware of this. Carers are supported to draw up a family policy on discipline and restraint that applies to their own as well as any foster children.</p> <p>The branch has created systems for collating allegations of abuse and has a missing child procedure both of which were seen.</p> <p>At the last inspection the Inspector noted that the agency did not currently have a policy or procedure for dealing with bullying. At this inspection the Inspectors were told that policy has been devised and is in draft form in the foster carers and supervising social workers standards and guidance. The manager stated that a copy would be sent to carers once it is finalised in July 2004.</p>		
Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:	X	%

This information was not available at the time of writing the report.

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 agency has clear procedures regarding contact arrangements and carer training was seen to include this. The manager stated that no contact visits have taken place. It is intended that supervising social workers and approved support workers will assist and support carers with difficult contacts. The agency will also provide financial support to promote contact. The agency will expect the carers to make written records of contact and to feedback this information to the child's social worker when they visit.

The current premises could not be used as a site for supervised contact. Unless the agency rents premises for such occasions, contact would have to be in the foster carers homes. The manager stated that she is currently looking for new premises.

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The manager stated that children's opinions would be sought through the system of Looked After Children (LAC) reviews, which supervising social workers will attend. The supervising social worker confirmed that she speaks to the child and sees their room during their visits to the carers. There was evidence on file that relevant information has been shared with the young peoples social workers, which liaise with the child's parents. The carers' training, the placement agreements, carers reviews were seen to emphasise the importance of seeking young peoples opinions on every aspect of their care.

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 has compiled a directory of local health services that covers health and hygiene. This is included in the preparation training for carers. At the last inspection the manager stated that first aid training would be offered as part of the annual training programme. This is still outstanding.

At the last inspection the manager stated that it was intended that children placed will have all of their relevant health information included in the completed LAC paperwork at the time of placement. This would be used to inform the agency and carers of the child's health needs. The information would then be updated at the child's LAC review. At this inspection the Inspectors noted that the information on the young peoples LAC forms was scant in places, there was no evidence that children had received their statutory medicals or recording that they had refused them. Discussions with the manger and scrutiny of the carers file confirmed that the agency had been given incorrect information by the placing social worker of the amount of medication a child required at the time of placement. The

inspectors recommend that training be given to foster carers on the administration and storage of medicines.

The Inspectors were told that the service intends to expand to include placing children with a disability. Once clarity about a timeframe and possible numbers have evolved it will be required that a specific training programme be developed for foster carers of children with a disability.

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

The carers' guidelines and the newly developed guidelines and standards include information about the ways that carers can promote educational achievement. The manager stated that the agency encourages foster carers to work with children excluded from school with the materials provided by the agency. Financial responsibilities for education related items are outlined in the Foster Placement Agreement.

Carers are paid an additional allowance for children that are out of school and it is expected that the carer will involve the child in alternative activities. A support worker is also provided to assist with this and home tutors can be bought in as well. There are no home tutors currently deployed by the agency and the current premises are not suitable educational activities. If any of the current children placed in the agency are suspended from school then there is little in place to assist them continue their education.

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?

9

Not assessed on 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?

3

Inspector's studied the organisations recruitment and selection procedure handbook. This is a comprehensive document giving guidance to senior management about all the important procedures and factors to consider when recruiting. Generic job descriptions and person specifications are available and found to be suitable. The manager and the supervising social worker all have relevant social work qualification and significant child care practice experience. Job offers are always subject to two references followed up by a telephone conversation, CRB checks and medical clearance. Interview guidelines were seen and found to follow Human Resource Best Practise.

Induction is perceived as part of the recruitment process and staff files showed examples of good practise in terms of the induction of new members of staff. The initial probation period is set to be 6 months and an appraisal takes place before the eventual confirmation in post.

Total number of staff of the agency:

6

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

0

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

A clear management structure exists within TACT on a national, regional and local level. Nationally a senior management team undertakes the organisations day-to-day management. A regional or area manager manages individual teams. The Bristol area team manager is line managed by regional management in Wales.

All staff receive an induction, probation and review programme. They are monthly team meetings, regionally and locally. Regular supervisions monitor and regulate the workload of staff. Examples of supervision records inspected were of a good standard.

Procedural guidelines are available to ensure carers are assessed, approved and reviewed. There was good evidence that the assessments and registration process is well managed, robust and thorough.

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
<p>The agency is currently trying to recruit an additional supervising social worker. The process of assessing prospective foster parents and their approval and registration is clearly outlined. After an initial visit the supervising social worker makes a recommendation to proceed to the form F assessment stage. References and CRB checks are taken up and a form F assessor is allocated. Applicants attend preparation courses before all the above stages are completed and taken to the Fostering Panel for recommendation. Applicants are invited to attend panel.</p> <p>Carers are supported by their supervising social worker and by ongoing training.</p> <p>Comments are made in relation to the duty system in the next standard.</p>		

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)		
The fostering service is a fair and competent employer, with sound employment practices and good support for its staff and carers.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>There are health and safety policies in place for staff and carers. The Inspectors note in standard on premises that there are health and safety concerns about the photocopier being in the same space as the staff team.</p> <p>The insurance certificate for the agency was seen by the inspectors. A whistle blowing policy is also in place and is known to the staff team.</p> <p>The Out of hours support is provided 24 hours on a rota system between the manager and the social worker. The Inspectors noted that this is an arduous system, particularly during holiday periods and covering staff sickness. At the time of inspection the social worker had driven to Wales until late in the evening and was involved in staff training and also had taken prospective foster carers to Wales for the panel. The inspectors noted that, as a new branch there are a lot of demands on the staff, which in turn make the job interesting and demanding. The Inspectors are concerned that the balance between these aspects are tenuous and could easily lead to very tired staff. Currently there are four foster carers but by the end of the year the number will triple. The organisation will also employ more staff. However, in the here and now the inspectors opinion was that the duty system must be revised. The Inspectors also noted that there is no system in place to log duty calls other than the current foster carers files. The Inspectors recommend that duty calls are logged in a dedicated file.</p>		

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)		
There is a good quality training programme to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
At the last inspection the Inspector noted that the he agency did not currently have a training and development plan and needed to develop one. This remains the case. Current staff training includes the management of files. Staff receive a quarterly appraisal during which training needs are discussed.		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)		
All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
Discussions with the staff and scrutiny of the supervision records confirmed that staff receive monthly supervision plus extra support as needed. The proximity of the two offices and the size of the branch facilitate good communication systems. Supervision is planned in advance and recorded and records of this were seen.		

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
Feed back from the existing, very small group of approved carers is positive about levels of contact and support. TACT Bristol will follow clear procedural guidelines operated nationally including strategies to support carer's provisions through supervising social workers, telephone contact, support groups and 24-hour emergency support. Supervision visits for carers are recorded and a checklist defines issues to be discussed. Supervising social workers (will) have a limited caseload of no more than 12 families. Agreements and support strategies for carers include an annual training plan with a minimum of 3 courses per year for each carer. Foster carer groups meet in small regional groups. The fostering panel considers an Annual Review of the carers prepared and conducted by the Team Manager. Plans mentioned in the last inspection report to offer 10 days respite care per year provided by a small group recruited for this purpose have not been realised as yet. Similarly the setting up of a support group is taken the branch longer than expected.		

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)

The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The Foster Care Agreement sets out the supervision process. Discussions with the foster carers and evidence on their files confirmed that each carer is appropriately supervised by a qualified social worker.

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

The Inspectors observed the pre-approval and induction training for carers and noted that it is of a good standard and will provide a sound base for further more in depth training on the issues covered. The carers who spoke with the Inspectors stated that they were happy with the standard of the training and feel confident that have a sound knowledge of how to provide a high quality for the young people in their care.

As previously stated, the Inspectors were concerned that there is not an annual plan of training in place for the carers at the Bristol branch. The training at the Welsh office is open to carers but this is a substantive distance from Bristol. The Inspectors recognise that this is a new branch and accept the manager's statement that more local training will be available.

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The agency accommodated two children at the time of the inspection; therefore this standard is assessed on the basis of the contents of these two files. The Inspectors noted that the appropriate information was on file and that TACT makes all efforts to seek out as much relevant information as possible from the placing authority. However as mentioned above and on the evidence available in the content of the two files seen and all other evidence provided by TACT there was inadequate information about previous placements which would inform the matching process and the quality of the information about children's health included in the L.A.C forms was scant.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

According to the area manager the organisations Head of Social Work is currently planning an audit of all records to ensure compliance with the Fostering Services Regulations. Staff files are held at the organisations London headquarters and were made available for this inspection.

There was a secure and private record for each child and foster carer. A new filing system for foster carer's files has recently been introduced after consultation with staff and in response to inspector's comments in the past. In spite of all the care taken and taking into account that staff will need time to adapt to the changes it was nevertheless made clear to inspectors that approval amongst the staff group interviewed was limited. Inspectors found the system difficult and time consuming to navigate and recommend simplification.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:

4

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

2

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

2

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

4

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

0

Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £

312

Maximum £

470

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 office premises are two rooms within a large office building in the centre of Bristol. Currently two staff occupy one room and the manager uses the second room. The manager stated that they could hire other rooms if the need arises.

The inspectors noted that the room that housed the administrator and supervising social worker is overcrowded. Every inch of space is utilised to the full. The small room contains the files, photocopier, all policies and the staff. The staff stated they find the room stuffy in the summer and it is difficult for the supervising social worker to make phone calls, particularly difficult calls in these conditions. The Inspectors were particularly concerned about the photocopier being in the same small room as the staff.

There is no space for the support staff to work with children apart from hiring other office space and these rooms are not child friendly. In September 2004 another staff member will be joining the team and it is envisaged that another member of staff will be recruited shortly afterwards. This space will then be unsuitable for so many people. The Inspectors are aware that the organisation is looking for other premises that are more appropriate.

The Inspectors concluded that the current space is stretched to its limit and other premises must be found as a matter of some urgency. The commission was informed that the agency had been looking to find new premises for some time and that a positive outcome was dependent on external factors such as the property market.

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

As previously stated the branch is currently in deficit but the projection is that it will ultimately be financially sound. The inspectors did not have any undue concerns. The projected deficit is in line with TACT'S expectations. The Commission is in receipt of a copy of Bristol's 'Financial Results – March 04'.

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

All finances are administered by head office. A cooperative financial policy handbook is in place. Accounts are audited by Chartered Accountants and available in annual reports.

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 needs to be reminded that carer's need to be paid on time. This is after inspectors received evidence of difficulties in at least one case in the past. A written policy on allowances is in place including a detailed list of additional qualifying payment types such as birthday allowances, training attendance incentives, long service awards, etc.

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

The Bristol branch of TACT is currently in the process of setting up their own panel, which, inspectors were told, will be functional in September of this year.

The Inspectors observed the panel based in Wales, which approves Bristol foster carers and meets monthly. It is planned that the chairperson of the Welsh panel will also be chairing the newly established Bristol panel to ensure continuity in the early setting up process.

The panel observed has the required membership the required policies and procedures were seen to be satisfactory. The Inspectors noted that the panel was thorough in their approach to approval of foster carers. The discussions confirmed that each of the members had a sound understanding of the arising issues. The chair of the panel was able to demonstrate a sound understanding of the cases discussed.

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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As previously stated the Statement of Purpose needs to be updated to include details of the short break service for children with a disability.

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?
Not currently applicable.	9

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Not applicable

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

D.1 Registered Person's or Responsible Local Authority Manager's comments/confirmation relating to the content and accuracy of the report for the above inspection.

We would welcome comments on the content of this draft report relating to the Inspection conducted on 12th July 2004 of inspection at The Adolescent & Children's Trust and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

Comments received dated 20th September 2004. These are held on file at the CSCI Bristol North (LO), and are available on request.

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

Amendments to the report were necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments were received from the provider	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provider comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 13th September 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	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan was received at the point of publication	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provider has declined to provide an action plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: <enter details here>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 The Adolescent & Children's Trust 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 The Adolescent & Children's Trust 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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