



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

Fostering Services

## **Cornwall County Council Fostering Service**

The Adoption & Family Finding Unit

13 Treyew Road

Truro

Cornwall

TR1 2BY

1st October 2004

## Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

### The role of CSCI is to:

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

## Inspection Methods & Findings

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

### The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

**FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION**

**Local Authority Fostering Service?**

YES

**Name of Authority**

Cornwall County Council Fostering Service

**Address**

The Adoption & Family Finding Unit, 13 Treyew Road,  
Truro, Cornwall, TR1 2BY

**Local Authority Manager**

Mr Colin Reed

**Tel No:**

01872 270251

**Address**

The Adoption & Family Finding Unit, 13 Treyew Road,  
Truro, Cornwall, TR1 2BY

**Fax No:**

01872 260557

**Email Address**

---

**Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)**

NO

**Name of Agency**

**Tel No**

**Address**

**Fax No**

**Email Address**

**Registered Number of IFA**

**Name of Registered Provider**

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

**Date of first registration**

**Date of latest registration certificate**

**Registration Conditions Apply ?**

NO

**Date of last inspection**

Oct 2003

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		1st October 2004	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		09:30 am	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Chris Passmore	071529
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>	Jay Miles	071538
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>			
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>		Mr C Reed, Mr A Earle, Mr R Heath.	

**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 Cornwall County Council 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.**

The Cornwall County Council Fostering Service is a Local Authority Fostering Service operated under the direction of the Director of Social Services.

The service recruits, approves and supports Foster Carers and makes placements for children of all ages through a variety of placement types. These include long term, short term, emergency and some respite care placements. Also included are Kinship care placements and placements for parent and child.

The Service has a Foster Panel that meets to carry out specific functions under the terms of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002.

In addition to making and monitoring its own placement arrangements the Service is also responsible for the monitoring of other placements made by Independent Foster Agencies within the area.

## 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 was the second inspection of Cornwall County Council's Fostering Service under the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Fostering Service Regulations 2002.

Although the inspection process started with a meeting on 1 October 2004 most of the field work was undertaken during weeks commencing 11th and 18th October 2004 and week commencing 1st November 2004.

The inspection methodology required visits to County Hall to meet with managers, the placement team, to inspect children's files and to sample personnel files. In addition each of the three district offices housing Fostering Service teams was visited and inspectors attended two Foster Carers support group meetings. A sample of two foster placements from each of the three County divisions were selected at random and visits made to meet with foster carers and the children or young people placed with them. Questionnaires were sent to every fostered child over the age of eight years and to all registered foster carers. Additionally there were questionnaires sent out to placing social workers for some fostered children. There was a good response to questionnaires from both children and carers and their views and responses have been collated under general headings and are available separately to this report. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to the inspection process for his or her co-operation and assistance.

Overall the inspection was a positive one and showed improvements to the service had been achieved since the last inspection.

In particular, the structure and organisation of the service is such that it provides an effective delivery across a difficult geographically extended County. The appointment of Senior Practitioners to head-up each of the three divisional teams is seen as a positive step towards an even more cohesive service. The redefinition of divisional boundaries in two areas was causing some confusion and changes in support personnel were inevitably raising some concerns amongst carers. However, these were minimal and should settle down once the new boundaries become more familiar and carers start to become familiar with their new support staff. The appointment of a Fostering Training Co-ordinator should enable the range of training available to foster carers to be more specific to their needs and offer opportunities for joint training between foster carers and fostering staff. Similarly the appointment of Placement Support workers to provide additional support to carers and out of hours back up will assist the task of carers and hopefully reduce the risk of crisis build-up. Foster Carers are vulnerable to allegation and whilst there are sound procedures in place to deal with these matters it was of particular note that the foster carers now have recourse to Independent Persons for their own support through these stressful times. This is a clear demonstration of the service considering the needs of all, however, in their responses several carers are still unsure as to how they can contact these Independent Persons. Other areas of progress were shown to be in the production of a Statement of Purpose and a



draft version of the Children's Guide to the service. The latter still needs some small additions to fully comply with regulation requirements but these are not major. A draft revision of the Fostering Agreement has been prepared and with some further minor reference inclusions will meet the regulation requirements and it should then be introduced into use as soon as possible. No new Foster Placement Agreements have yet been introduced but there are plans to use new DoH Integrated Children's Services documentation, which, in conjunction with other sources already in use should meet the requirements.

Of the areas still needing improvement, serious consideration needs to be given to the high incidence of emergency placements and the lack of appropriate resources to provide matched placements within an acceptable time period. Because of these factors several children have a multi-placement history and placements still lack permanency. The Placement Team have become much stronger in their dealings with referring caseworkers in order to reduce these incidences and it is accepted that there will always be genuine emergencies, but there is still a need to address this shortfall. Carers' responses to questionnaires indicated there were more 'emergency placements' than 'planned'.

Another area for continued improvement is the communication between children's social workers, Fostering Service staff and Foster Carers, particularly in the provision of essential and relevant information and care planning. It is acknowledged that in this area the Fostering Service is heavily dependent on other parts of the overall children's services to fulfil its role, and that there have been improvements in the acquisition of required paper work before placements have been authorised. However, carers and children consistently commented at the lack of contact with caseworkers and the absence of essential paperwork relevant to the child placed. A search through the children's files supported these statements in some cases, as it was not possible to locate an up to date care plan or copies of LAC paperwork updated and shared with foster carers at the time of placement. Other files did show compliance with requirements and files where the placements were planned were the most up-to date. If access to the County Children's Management Service database is extended then this would go some way to providing a quick way of updating material for placements. Currently only one desktop in the placement team has access to this system. It was felt that not all carers are clear about the distinctions between, and different responsibilities of, children's social workers and fostering social workers. This has led to criticism, confusion and frustration for some carers.

The service is aware of its shortfalls in these areas and has implemented measures or otherwise has plans to address them. In some areas these measures were too new to evaluate fully at this inspection, others need to be subject to a considered approach by the authority across different operational sectors in order to provide a more cohesive service delivery.

The following is a numerical representation of what standards were assessed and how many were met across the inspection. Detailed information is contained in the individual standards that follow this summary.

**Statement of purpose.** This standard was met in respect of the Statement of Purpose but not the Children's Guide.

**Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service.**

Of the 2 standards assessed 2 were met.

**Management of the fostering service.**

Of the 2 standards assessed 2 were met.

**Securing and promoting welfare.**

Of the 9 standards assessed 6 were met.

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

Of 9 standards assessed 5 were met.

**Records.**

Of 2 standards assessed 1 was met.

**Fitness of premises.**

This standard was met.

**Financial requirements.**

The 1 standard assessed was met.

**Fostering panels.**

Not assessed.

**Short-term breaks.**

Not assessed.

**Family and friend carers.**

This standard was met.

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

**(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)**

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

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

NO

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

YES

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

NO

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

NO

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

As laid out in statutory requirements section.

## 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	Reg.3.3. (a-c). 4.	FS1	The draft Children's Guide must be changed to comply with Reg.3.( c ) and a copy submitted to the Commission.	31.08.04.

**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.**

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

**Lead Inspector** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Second Inspector** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Locality Manager** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

## 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	Reg.3.(3).(c) and (4)	FS1	The draft children's guide must include information on how to contact the Commission for Social care Inspection.	30 June 2005.
2	Reg.12(1)(a)	FS9	There is policy and procedural advice available to foster carers in relation to bullying of children placed.	31 May 2005.
3	Reg.28(5)(b) & Sch.5.	FS22	The draft Foster Care Agreement must be enhanced and brought into use.	31 May 2005
4	Reg.12(f)(ii)	FS25	Foster carers, children and fostering service staff have information on how to contact the CSCI regarding any concerns for child safety or welfare.	31 May 2005.

### 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	FS11	Review ways of periodically ascertaining children's views about the service and their care and producing some documentary evaluations of the Summer seminars.

2	FS13	Refresh advice to foster carers on how to seek permissions for fostered children to participate in school events. Such advice is extended to cover why and when permissions need to be sought for out of county trips, stop-overs and holidays.
3	FS24	Extend the availability and use of the County Children's Management Service database in order to meet the requirements for children's case records.

\* 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	17
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	
• Directors of Social services	NA
• Child protection officer	NA
• Specialist advisor (s)	NA
• Local Foster Care Association	NA
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	NO
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	NO
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	NO
Date of Inspection	1/10/04
Time of Inspection	09:30

Duration Of Inspection (hrs)

115
-----



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

- There is a full Statement of Purpose (SoP) that has been updated since the last inspection and endorsed by the elected members
- It is recommended that the contact details for the commission are included in the SoP also
- There was a draft Children's Guide in place at the time of the inspection
- This met most of the requirements of the regulations but must include contact details for the Commission.

## 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All those involved in the management of the service are qualified and experienced managers of child care services and the designated manager is a member of the Children's Management Board of the Social services Department.</li> </ul>		



### 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The personnel files of staff managing the service were inspected</li> <li>• These showed full employment histories, referencing and vetting checks</li> <li>• CRB applications were being processed and will be repeated every three years as recommended.</li> </ul>		

## 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 nominated manager and service managers demonstrated their awareness and monitoring records of essential elements of the service which are used to feed the quality control audit and annual report.
- The requirements of Regulation 42 and Schedule 7 and Regulation 43 are not applicable to a Local Authority service but inspectors were shown statistical analysis that supported the regular monitoring of standards including complaints records and child protection issues.

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

X

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.

1

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.

2

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

2

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

- There are clear roles and responsibilities within the fostering service management
- The designated manager will be more directly involved with the management of the service following the appointment of an Adoption Team Manager
- The appointment of three Senior Practitioners to manage each of the divisional teams has further strengthened the potential for consistency and efficiency throughout the service

## 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
---------------------------	---------------	---

- There were six Foster Placements visited for the purposes of this inspection. All were warm, safe and suitable to accommodate children in the numbers for which they were approved.
- There were good pre-placement assessments and annual reviews of the accommodation arrangements
- There is a programme of pre-approval training for foster carers
- Transport safety was well addressed and equipment supplied and fitted for carers as required. Foster Carers were well briefed as to the role of inspectors from the Commission.

### 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
---------------------------	---------------	---

- Historically the County does not have a wide ethnic mix of populous and this is reflected in the children referred
- Children fostered did have a diversity of needs including mental health, mental handicap and disability
- Foster Carers were very supportive of children's individual needs and abilities
- Foster Carers training and support was often focused around the needs of individual children
- The service was operating an equal opportunities policy in relation to potential Carers.

<b>Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)</b>		
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.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where placements are planned there were examples of good matching</li> <li>• The Fostering Service is very aware of the need for placement stability and works towards that goal</li> <li>• However, a significant number of placements still fall within the status of Emergency placements</li> <li>• Whilst efforts have been made to achieve a matched placement this had not always been possible within the recommended time scale and consequently there were a number of children with a multiple placement history</li> </ul>		

<b>Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)</b>		
The fostering service protects each child or young person from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service has a policy of CRB checking all members of a carer's household over the age of 10.</li> <li>• Carers reported receiving training in Child protection issues</li> <li>• The handbook contained clear advice and guidance in relation to Child protection, and Absence from Care. A new policy on the Fostering Services approach to bullying is imminent.</li> <li>• Not all foster carers had received full information on children placed with them</li> <li>• The new draft Fostering Agreement makes a clear statement regarding the use of punishments and can be used to inform carers on how to contact the commission. (Reg.12.2(f)(ii)). This draft document requires additional material to be added and then brought into use as soon as possible.(See also Standard 22).</li> <li>• Pre-inspection material identifies the intention of the service to ensure all Foster Carers have a package of Health and Safety Plan, Safe Care Planning.</li> <li>• There is a comprehensive record of allegations of abuse maintained by the designated manager, in conjunction with the Joint Consultancy Team</li> </ul> <p>Advice on how to contact the Commission need to be in place for those persons mentioned in</p>		
<b>Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:</b>	X	%

**Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)**

The fostering service makes sure that each child or young person in foster care is encouraged to maintain and develop family contacts and friendships as set out in her/his care plan and/or foster placement agreement.

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

3

- Records in the Foster Service offices, children's files and discussions with Carers, generally supported the fact that contact with families is maintained and regularly reviewed.
- The Service acknowledges that contact arrangements can be complicated by placements being made outside a child's home area.
- There were examples cited of relevant information regarding contacts outside of the family not being shared with Foster Carers by the child's Social Worker or included in a care plan. No apparent harm resulted but carers felt particularly aggrieved and vulnerable.

**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 Service currently holds Summer Seminars where children and foster service workers come together with the intention of gaining insights into children's views of the service.
- Reviews of placements, LAC reviews and support workers visits give opportunities for children to express their views
- Children's questionnaire responses evidenced the fact that Carers take their views into consideration and act on them appropriately.
- The majority of children who responded to questionnaires confirmed they were consulted regularly by the Fostering Service regarding their opinions of Foster Carers
- Most children confirmed they knew how to raise a concern or complaint but the majority did not know of the role of the Commission.
- The production of a Children's Guide to the Service may go some way to address these shortfalls.

**Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)**

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

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

- All the Foster Placements sampled had sound arrangements in place for the children's Health Care and there were individual health care records
- Children's continuing health was part of the review process carried out by support workers on their regular visits to the Placements.
- Foster Carers have the additional support of two specialist nurses from the Health Authority Looked After Children and Young Persons Team and a designated Doctor for LAC health care.
- The location of the LAC doctor at Treliske and the resulting costs in time and expenditure for carers was an issue raised during one of the support group meetings.

**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 Fostering Handbook contains a section on the role of carers in the formal education of children placed. Evidence from the Carers sampled and files examined showed the children's education was being managed within the expectations of normal parenting.
- Previous concerns expressed regarding the delays experienced in getting permissions for fostered children to attend school trips seem to have reduced. There was a general understanding within the service that Foster Carers had more delegated authority in giving permission for trips, although that view was not predominate amongst carers.
- The Authority uses Personal Education Plans (PEP's) and these are reviewed as part of the formal reviews and also Education can be discussed during the Fostering Service Support worker's visits.
- Those placements visited provided suitable arrangements for children to complete homework and private study.
- There was a clear statement in the Financial section of the Carers Handbook relating to financial responsibility for clothing that including School Uniforms
- Some carers expressed concerns about the continuing delays in getting appropriate Education Out of School arrangements for children who have been excluded from mainstream school. It is acknowledged that this is part of a wider issue between the Social Services Department and the LEA, but one that needs to be monitored.



**Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)**

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

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

2

- Foster carers expressed concerns over the lack of appropriate arrangements for children in transition and this was reflected in a lack of clear planning in the children's files and in discussions with staff and managers.
- The SSD has not had an effective Leaving care strategy in place across its children's services for some time, therefore the concerns of the carers are a reflection of concerns throughout the service
- Arrangements are in place to provide more robust Leaving Care arrangements through partnership with a National organisation
- Foster Carers and young people are consulted through the LAC reviews but carers feel strongly that children are left unsupported. Inevitably the foster carers carry on supporting the young people, unofficially, once they have moved into independent living arrangements.

## 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

- Staff are recruited to the Fostering Service through the County Recruitment procedures
- Full applications, referencing, CV and CRB checks are made in respect of new staff
- CRB applications are being worked through for existing staff and managers
- All fostering service staff are qualified and trained, or are undertaking training, to at least NVQ 4 level
- All fostering service social workers are fully qualified children's social workers
- The service also uses the facilities of the professional psychologists appointed to the department as well as those specialist services offered by the Health Authority

Total number of staff of the agency:

X

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

X

### Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

- The organisational structure of the Fostering Service had been changed before the last inspection took place. At the time of this inspection the service was settling into a further realignment of two out of three divisional boundaries and the introduction of a Senior Practitioner as Team Leader in each of the divisional offices
- Early indicators were that teams were settling into their new structures and felt that these were positive moves
- There was clear line management between the tiers of staff, divisional offices and Central services
- Arrangements for the assessment of prospective carers was well established and comprehensive
- The Placement Team sited at County Hall handles enquiries from prospective carers and new referrals. This team work effectively and efficiently together and are extending their knowledge of the service resources through regular visits to the divisional offices. Line management for this team is from managers based at County Hall.
- Clerical support to teams is provided from the overall admin support teams of the

District Office in which the Fostering teams are sited. These arrangements were seen as being reasonable but not wholly ideal by fostering staff. That is not to say that admin staff are not committed to supporting the fostering service; rather, that there is often a dilemma between the need to produce a piece of work and the availability of admin time.

**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**

- Staffing levels have remained consistent through the Fostering Service
- New appointments to Senior Practitioner posts have been made and a further 9 new support worker posts were being created
- The service has been actively recruiting new foster carers and has plans in place to continue this process. There is acknowledgement of the need for more specialisms or diversity amongst those carers recruited
- There is a thorough vetting and assessment procedure for prospective new carers, which includes some basic induction training, before approval.
- Recruitment of new carers has to be tempered by the time taken by this process and the regular workload of the service

**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**

- There are sound employment practices in respect of staff and carers
- Out of hours management was clear to carers
- Health and Safety is covered in the Handbook and there is a programme in place for each home to have a full H & S plan.
- Support, supervision and appraisal arrangements for carers were in place
- Staff and carers have access to a 'Whistleblowing' policy

**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

- Staff training is provided partially through Children's services and partially directly from the Fostering Service
- Pre-inspection material gave indications of training provided and that a new years training audit was being prepared to feed into the overall children's services training plan
- Some joint training with foster carers has taken place and it is hoped that this will increase with the appointment of a Foster Carers Training Co-ordinator.
- The County Council operates an appraisal scheme for staff and responsibility for appraising fostering service staff falls to one of the service managers. Not all appraisals were up to date. However, given the number of staff, the demography of the county and the changes that have occurred in past months, these shortfalls are understood but will need to be caught up.

**Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)**

**All staff are properly accountable and supported.**

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

2

- Roles and responsibilities are clear across the staff range
- Staff meetings take place on a team basis and minutes are kept
- Senior practitioners have regular meetings with service managers
- Appraisals were in place for most staff
- There are new recording formats for structured supervision of staff that show the signatures of both supervised and supervisor.
- Regular, recorded supervision had been started by the new Senior practitioners and will need to be maintained
- Supervision of staff in the Placement Team is less well structured and needs to be formalised. Staff from this team feel they are well supported and have ad hoc supervision but there is no management evidence in support.

**Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6)****The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

- There is a strategy for working with carers on a regular basis through support visits
- Carers are encouraged to contact their named supervisory workers by phone or through visits to the team offices
- Annual reviews were being carried out and was evidenced from records
- Carers generally felt they had good support from foster service staff. They knew how to contact their support workers via their mobile phones and were aware of the 'out of hours' arrangements.
- Carers contribute to reviews and some discussed the particular support given by staff during periods of particular difficulties or crisis.
- Carers are encouraged to attend support groups that are both locally organised and as part of the National Foster Care Network. Two of these meetings were sampled as part of the inspection process.

**Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)****The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

- A new draft Foster Care Agreement has been prepared which is more in line with the requirements of Schedule 5.
- It needs to be further developed to include;- (Sch.5.6.) details of how to make representations; (Sch.5.12.) Child protection procedures; (Sch.5.13.) Behaviour management. The Agreement document should also inform carers about the Commission and how to contact us.
- The frequency of supervision of carers has improved since the last inspection and is now more regular and consistent across the County.
- The complaints procedures have been revised and were in draft form at the time of the inspection. The document is comprehensive in content but uses formal language and is likely to be of use to staff more than foster carers or children. Children, carers and staff need to be aware of how to contact the Commission with concerns; therefore the Complaints Procedure and Children's Guide should contain these details.
- Independent support for carers facing allegations has been developed and independent support persons appointed. Although the fostering manager stated that all carers have been circulated with the contact details for these people, not all carers had clear recollections of how they could access the independent persons. This could easily be reinforced through support groups or inclusion in newsletters from the service.

**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

- Discussions with carers and reviews of records evidenced carers were given pre-approval training and opportunities for post approval training in core topics. This was further evidenced by pre-inspection material regarding training offered this year.
- The Fostering Service has now appointed a Fostering Training Co-ordinator. This person was in the process of conducting an initial survey of Foster Carers training needs and methods of delivery. Through this appointment It is hoped that the service will be able to identify and provide appropriate training, some of which is anticipated to be joint training between carers and staff. The overall training plan for foster carers needs to be moved forward from its draft format into a definite format.
- Reviews of carers' files evidenced training undertaken during the previous twelve months
- Carers felt that training was not always specific enough to the particular needs of the children in their care at the time. Also there were feelings expressed that where training has been provided it has been at times of the day that made attendance difficult to fit in with other commitments.

## 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

- Children's case records are managed by the children's services casework teams rather than fostering service managers
- In the sample of files inspected compliance with children's recording requirements varied considerably
- Not all case files had up to date information in a format consistent with records required to inform the most recent placement
- This supported foster carers claims that they did not always have adequate or accurate information regarding the children placed with them
- Where emergency placement had been made there was not always evidence of the placement having been reviewed within the stated time scales
- There was also a general lack of records kept by foster carers. Some were recording visits to doctors, dentists and family but there was no consistency across the placements sampled.

### 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

- There were separate files in place for staff, carers, children, complaints and allegations. Because this is a LA service these records are retained in different locations across the County. The co-operation of staff and managers in bringing children's files together in one place for the purpose of inspection was appreciated.
- The monitoring of significant events and the central collation of allegations of abuse and complaints has been improved and was evidenced from records.
- Records on carer's files were consistent in content across the County and recording levels were good.

<b>Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:</b>			X
<b>Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:</b>			X
<b>Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:</b>			X
<b>Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:</b>			X
<b>Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:</b>			X
<b>Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £</b>	X	<b>Maximum £</b>	X



## Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

3

- The service managers, their admin support and placement team are housed in County Hall. Access is suitable and there are appropriate IT and storage arrangements in place there
- Other Fostering Service Teams, including fostering social workers, supervisory and support workers are located at three of the SSD District Offices. The suitability and access to these vary considerably but was overall in line with the requirements of the standards
- The St.Austell and Bodmin team facilities are however, cramped for the number of staff working in them, and not easily accessible to carers, other than by using general interview rooms. The Penzance team facilities are better in that the team are sited in a building away from the main office, but, at the time of the inspection, part of the conference room was being used as a temporary workstation for one of the general administrative staff.
- Communications systems and IT are in place but no networks have been set up
- There are appropriate arrangements for the storage of files under secure arrangements in the satellite offices.

## 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?	9
---------------------------	---------------	---

### 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?	9
---------------------------	---------------	---

**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 Carers handbook contains details of the Foster Carers payment arrangements
- Payments were usually made to carers on time though there were some exceptions mentioned
- specific issues concerning finance were raised by individuals at the support meetings and fostering service managers noted these at the time.

## Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

0

- This standard was not assessed at this inspection as the Panel meeting was cancelled
- The Chair of the Panel had recently stood down and the service was in the process of appointing a new Panel Chairperson
- From evidence gathered during inspection visits to the team offices and from discussions with managers it was evidenced that the functions of the panel are still appropriate.

## 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?
---------------------------	---------------

0

- |                                                                                                      |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This standard was not assessed at this inspection.</li></ul> |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

## Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- Local authority fostering services' policies and procedures for assessing, approving, supporting and training foster carers recognise the particular contribution that can be made by and the particular needs of family and friends as carers.

### Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

These standards are all relevant to carers who are family and friends of the child, but there is recognition of the particular relationship and position of family and friend carers.

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

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There were Family and Friends operating as approved foster carers within the County.</li><li>• The service does not apply any different arrangements for Kinship carers to usual approved Foster Carers</li><li>• There is a commitment from the designated manager of the service to enhance training for this specific group bearing in mind the individuality of each placement made.</li></ul> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

**Lay Assessor** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 1 October 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

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

YES

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

NO

**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 11 February 2005 , which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.**

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

**Public reports**

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

**D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT**

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

**D.3.1 I Colin Reed of Cornwall County Council Fostering Service 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 Colin Reed of Cornwall County Council Fostering Service 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.

**Commission for Social Care Inspection**  
33 Greycoat Street  
London  
SW1P 2QF

Telephone: 020 7979 2000  
Fax: 020 7979 2111

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120  
[www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)

S0000041126.V187154.R01

© This report may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of the Commission for Social Care Inspection



The paper used in this document is supplied from a sustainable source