



Champions for
Social Care
Improvement

inspection report

Fostering Services

**North East Lincolnshire Council
Fostering Service**

Fostering Service

2nd Floor

St James House

Grimsby

North East Lincs

DN31 1EF

12th to the 30th January 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

North East Lincolnshire Council Fostering Service

Address

Fostering Service, 2nd Floor, St James House, Grimsby,
North East Lincs, DN31 1EF

Local Authority Manager

Ms Penny Sheardown

Tel No:

01472 325555

Address

Fostering Service, 2nd Floor, St James House, Grimsby,
North East Lincs, DN31 1EF

Fax No:

01472 325605

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 ?

Date of last inspection

Date of Inspection Visit		12th January 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Ms Matun Wawryk	074037
Name of Inspector	2		
Name of Inspector	3		
Name of Inspector	4		
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. 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			

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 National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) 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 NCSC in respect of North East Lincolnshire 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 NCSC 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.

North East Lincolnshire Council provides the service.

At the time of this inspection the service aimed to provide a range of high quality foster placements to meet the needs of the Looked after Population of North East Lincolnshire Council.

The service provides a variety of foster placements including: mainstream fostering, long-term fostering, contact care, remand, single placement care and short-term breaks.

The service operates out of premises situated in the centre of Grimsby. Although the premises are accessible in terms of location the building does not lend itself to foster carer training and or formal/informal meetings and groups.

The pre-inspection material provided stated the service was supporting 157 placements.

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.)

The inspection upon which this report is based focused on the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000 and its associated regulations. The purpose of the inspection was to determine if the service was meeting required standards and fulfilling legal responsibilities in respect of management, organisation, accommodation, staffing, care practice, facilities, administration and record keeping. The service is provided by North East Lincolnshire Council and is managed by Ms Penny Sheardown. This report refers to the announced inspection carried out between the 12th January and the 30th January 2004.

Statement of purpose (NMS 1)

The service had a current statement of purpose, which had been ratified by the relevant Cabinet. This document requires minor revision to meet the requirements of this standard. A children's guide had not been issued, however following completion of the inspection the NCSC were notified that arrangements had been made to issue one.

Fitness to Provide or Manage a Fostering Service (NMS 2 & 3)

The team manager has significant child care experience and holds a recognised social work and management qualification. Management arrangements were found to be satisfactory.

Management of the Fostering Service (NMS 4 & 5)

The service had procedures and systems for monitoring its activities. Evidence was seen of a commitment to effective delivery of service.

From interviews and examination of records it can be concluded that the manager demonstrated efficient leadership of the service. In interview staff commented that the service was well managed. In the absence of the manager, clear deputising arrangements were in place

The fostering service manager is recommended to pull together, in a more discrete manner, all of the monitoring information detailed in Schedule 7 of the Regulations under the umbrella of the fostering service to make for immediate access and review of the service

Securing and promoting Welfare (NMS 6 to 14)

Evidence was seen which demonstrated the services approach to securing and promoting welfare. Support strategies, policies and procedures were available to staff and foster carers. Within the resources available it was evident that the service endeavours to make matched placements.

Requirements have been detailed in this report concerning this group of standards and these

can be found on page 11 and 14.

Recruiting, Checking, Managing, Supporting and Training Staff and Foster Carers (NMS 15 to 23)

The systems for recruiting, training and supporting staff and foster carers were well developed. These arrangements need to be supported by more detailed written guidance in some areas.

The service has an experienced and well-qualified staff group and is supported by an effective administrative team. All staff have access to supervision and employee development reviews.

The evidence gathered from children and foster carers indicates a satisfaction with services received and provided by the fostering service. Twenty foster carers responded by questionnaire. One question related to how well foster carer felt support by the fostering service. Fourteen stated they were very satisfied, five stated they were satisfied most of the time; three stated that they were quite satisfied and two stated they don't get enough support.

The findings of the children's questionnaire (9 returned) indicated that they felt cared about and involved in the life of their foster homes. Five stated that they knew how to make a complaint or raise a concern.

The children's questionnaires asked respondents to details comments they would want including in the inspection report. Comments were received as follows, one young person commented that social workers should listen more to children and one commented that they would like a permanent social worker as they had had three in the last six months and not met any of them.

Feedback from foster carer questionnaires identified the support received from placing social workers as the least helpful aspect of support offered. Mostly because of cancelled appointments, unreturned telephone calls, lack of recognition of foster carer role and turnover of social workers, resulting in children having changes in social workers and no opportunity to subsequently develop a relationship. In interview placing and supervising social workers reported that the development of the LAC team had gone some way to resolving these issues.

Placing Social workers consulted through questionnaires (36 returned) all considered the partnership working with the fostering service was very good/fairly good, one stated it to be poor.

Requirements have been detailed in this report concerning this group of standards these can be found on pages 11 and 15.

Records (NMS 24 & 25)

The inspector examined several staff, foster carers and children's files. Files seen were maintained to a good standard and were well organised. A range of policies and procedures were in evidence concerning record keeping, confidentiality and access to files. Records were held securely and appropriately

A recommendation has been detailed in this report concerning the need to produce additional guidance in respect of record keeping and to audit files.

Fitness of the Premises (NMS 26)

The service operates out of premises situated in the centre of Grimsby. Although the premises are accessible in terms of location the building does not lend itself to foster carer training and/or formal/informal meetings and groups.

Financial arrangements (NMS 27 to 29)

The local authority provides the service, therefore financial viability is accepted. Financial systems adopted by the service were appropriate and records were maintained in accordance with procedures. Delegated budgets were being managed effectively. Feedback from foster care interviews and questionnaires did not highlight any specific issues with payments although some foster carers stated that they were not always made aware of entitlement to certain allowances.

Fostering Panels (NMS 30)

The service operates a stand-alone panel. A number of changes had been made to the panel membership since the last inspection.

The service had revised the panel procedures in line with the Fostering Services Regulations. The procedures need to be revised further to include more specific guidance concerning decision-making and the provision of routine monitoring information.

Not all of the panel members had a current CRB and this must be addressed as a matter of priority.

Short Term Breaks (NMS 31)

The service provides short-term flexible breaks and respite aimed at children who have a disability in most cases but not exclusively. Respite care is made available to other children/foster carers where needed.

Family and Friend as Carers (NMS 32)

The service recognises the contribution of family and friend foster carers and endeavours to provide for their training and support needs in a sensitive way. The manager reported that the assessment and training provision for these carers is provided in ways consistent with the training and support of other foster carers.

Requirements have been detailed in this report concerning this standard. These can be found on page 14.

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:

Minor areas of shortfall noted in some standards for which requirements have been made. These can be easily rectified by the fostering service.

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	11 & 27	FS6	Foster cares must be provided with health and safety guidance which addresses the full range of their responsibilities Annual inspections of foster carer households must be completed	New timescale 30.6.04
2	11 & 12	FS9	The responsible manager must ensure safe care plans are developed and agreed for each foster carer household.	For all new placement New timescale 31.7.04
3		FS22	Foster carers must be provided with a handbook which provides clear guidance concerning policies, procedures guidance, legal requirements and insurance details	New timescale 31.7.04
4	11 & 12	YA6	The responsible manager must ensure written assessments are completed which reflects a child's needs for space and privacy	New timescale 31.4.04

Action is being taken by the National Care Standards Commission 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 _____
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 and recommendations 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	FS1	The statement of purpose must be revised to clearly set out procedures and processes for recruiting, training and supporting, approving and reviewing foster carers (ref NMS 1.4)	30.6.04
2	11 & 12	YA6	The fostering services manager must ensure annual environment inspections of foster carers homes are completed these should be linked to the annual review of foster carers.	Prior to each review 30.5.04
3	11 & 34	FS8	The fostering manager must ensure the foster carer placement agreement covers all matters detailed in Schedule 5/6. Records must show elements of matching that were taken into account when agreeing a placement.	For each new placement 31.5.04
4	40	FS8	The responsible person should develop a clear written guidance, which sets out the procedures and process to be followed when placing children with independent fostering agencies. Guidance must be detailed concerning the matching of children	30.5.04

5	17	FS17	The fostering services manager must develop detailed written procedural and practice guidance, which clearly sets out all matters detailed in NMS 17.6.	31.7.04
6	17	FS21	The fostering manager must produce a clear policy which details expectations and provides a clear pathway of training from recruitment, approval, induction and post approval for foster carers	31.7.04
7	17	FS22	The fostering services manager must ensure each foster carer is supervised by a qualified social worker	31.4.04
8	29	FS22	The fostering manager must develop a clear policy framework, which outlines the circumstances and process of deregistration of a foster carer.	31.5.04
9	20	FS30	The fostering services manger must ensure CRB checks are carried out for all panel members.	For each new panel member. 31.3.04
10	26	FS30	The panel procedures must be revised to provide clear information concerning decision making and detail the range, type and frequency of monitoring information to be provided to the panel	31.5.04
11	22	YA32	<p>The fostering service manager must ensure all kinship carers are issued with and sign a foster carer agreement and ensure kinship carers are subject to the same reviewing arrangements as other foster carers.</p> <p>A foster carer review must be completed for Mrs X. Mrs X must be issued with a foster carer agreement</p> <p>Written guidance must make clear the fostering agencies policy and expectation regarding the assessment, approval, support and training of kinship carers.</p>	<p>For new placements</p> <p>31.6.04</p>

12	40	FS16	The responsible person must ensure that service level agreements are brought into line with the current fostering services regulations (2001), functions to be delegated to the fostering service are clearly defined	31.6.04
13	14 & 18	YA10	The fostering services manager is recommended to develop clear written guidance on contact which clearly sets out respective responsibilities and expectations of all parties for example placing social workers and fostering staff and carers	31.6.04
14	20	FS15	The fostering services manager must ensure before any worker takes up a post with the service irrespective of whether they are already employed by the authority a current CRB must be available	For new employees

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.		Recommendation Action
1	FS21	The fostering manager should develop and implement a core joint training programme
2	FS25	The fostering service manager must develop and implement a formal system to monitor the quality and adequacy of records.
3	FS31	The manager should develop clear guidance on support arrangements including minimum frequencies for supervisory visits to foster carers in the short break scheme
4	YA23	The fostering services manager should ensure training profiles are linked to the foster carer review process.

5	FS25	The fostering services manager should develop written guidance which clarifies what information should be kept on the foster carers file and what information is kept on the child's file.

* Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix e.g FS10 refers to Standard 10.

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods have been used in the production of this report

Number of Inspector days spent	10
Survey of placing authorities	NA
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	YES
• Child protection officer	YES
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	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	YES
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	NO
Date of Inspection	12/1/04
Time of Inspection	9.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	65

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

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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The service had a statement of purpose, which had been written broadly in line with requirements detailed in NMS 1. The statement of purpose had been formally approved by the local authorities relevant Cabinet. The document did not clearly detail the procedures and processes for recruiting, supporting, approving, training and reviewing foster carers.

The service had a children's guide but had not issued this. Following completion of the inspection the manager of the fostering service reported to the NCSC that she had arranged for this document to be issued.

Some policies and procedures required by the Fostering Services Regulations were not available and these are detailed in other sections of this report.

The statement of purpose must be revised to clearly set out procedures and processes for recruiting, training and supporting, approving and reviewing foster carers (ref NMS 1.4)

The responsible person must ensure all the necessary written guidance, policies and procedures are developed which reflect the statement of purpose are available

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
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This standard was met.

The manager of the fostering service holds a recognised professional social work qualification and a recognised management qualification.

From examination of documentation, staff and foster carer interviews it was evident that systems were in place, which support effective leadership of staff and operations.

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
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This standard was met

The manager's file was examined at the last inspection carried out in February 2003; references as set out in schedule 1 were available. However, it was not evident that a telephone enquiry had been made to follow up written references.

Evidence was seen in this inspection, which demonstrated that recruitment practice had been revised to take account of the need to follow up written references with a telephone enquiry.

The manager was aware of the requirement to ensure CRB checks are carried out every three years.

Management of the Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 4 (4.1 – 4.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

This standard was met

Matters to be monitored under Schedule 7 of the Fostering Services Regulations were for the most part monitored through the various systems for formal Looked After Children/Quality Protects and national monitoring mechanisms. The inspector saw evidence of this during the inspection.

A conflict of interest policy/flow chart was available.

In interview staff and foster carers demonstrated a clear understanding of the delegated roles and responsibilities of the management team.

The service adheres to the financial procedures laid down by North East Lincolnshire Council. Delegated budgets were routinely scrutinised by the fostering service manager on a monthly basis.

As a local authority provider the service does not have to comply with Regulation 42. However as a good practice recommendation, the fostering service manager is advised to pull together, in a more discrete manner, all of the monitoring information of Schedule 7 of the Regulations under the umbrella of the foster carer service to make for immediate access and review of the service.

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

X

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

X

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

X

Serious illness or accident of a child.

X

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

X

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

X

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

X

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

X

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

X

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

1

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

X

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)**The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

This standard was met

The manager had a written job description setting out duties and responsibilities. The manager does not hold any similar position with any other organisation. The level of delegation and responsibility of the manager and lines of accountability were clearly defined.

Arrangements were in place to identify the person in charge when the manager is absent.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Evidence seen during the course of the inspection indicates that foster homes are able to provide warm, comfortable and adequately furnished accommodation.

Since the last inspection, a new health and safety checklist had been developed. NMS 6.2 requires the service to annually inspect the foster carer homes to ensure it meets the needs of foster children.

The inspector cased tracked 5 children of these one, a nine-year-old boy was sharing his grandmother's bedroom and had to sleep on a mattress on the floor. Up to the latter part of last year (2003) the child shared his grandmother's bed. There was no evidence in records seen which evidenced assessment of the child's need for privacy and space. In discussion with the inspector the child reported that he was very unhappy with this arrangement. No plans were seen in records examined to address this matter

Health and safety is included as part of the choose to foster programme. Health and safety is also included in the foundation-training programme. However not all foster carers had completed this training. Foster carers were not provided with explicit guidance, which clearly sets out their responsibilities in a clear and accessible format.

The new foster carer agreement references that foster carers may be interviewed or visited as part of the NCSC's inspection process.

The fostering services manager must ensure that where children are sharing bedrooms, an assessment of the child's need for space and privacy is completed

The fostering services manager must ensure annual environment inspections of foster carers homes are completed, these should be linked to the annual review of foster carers.

The fostering service should produce written guidance and make available to all foster carer information which sets out the full range of their health and safety responsibilities

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

This standard was met

From interviews with supervising/children's social workers, foster carers and the information and training materials included in the Choose to Foster programme, it was evident that the service endeavours to value diversity and promote equality.

The service provides short-term breaks/respice to support parents with disabled children and the service has a number of dedicated foster cares to provide such placements

From interviews with foster carers, supervising and children's social workers, it was established that children and young people can have support, including finance to pursue personal interests and hobbies

In discussion with the inspector the manager and panel chair acknowledged that there was a need to recruit foster carers to support young asylum seekers and that this will be kept under consideration.

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

The authority places children with independent fostering agencies. A clear procedure and practice guidance was not available which sets out the process and procedures to be followed when using independent fostering agencies.

Within the authorities fostering service it was evident from interviews with supervising and children's social workers that lengthy discussions do take place between different professionals about the needs of children in order to make matched placements. The service carries monthly out profiling meetings.

Individual foster carer agreements are not completed. Foster placement agreements are based on the Looked After Children paperwork. The inspector case tracked five foster carers none of the agreements seen identified elements of matching that were take into consideration when agreeing the placement. Nor were all the areas detailed in Schedule 6 covered in the placement agreement.

The fostering service acknowledged the need for introductions of children to placements and staff interviewed stated this happened wherever possible. Evidence seen indicated that for planned placements introductory visits do take place.

The responsible person should develop a clear written guidance, which sets out the procedures and process to be followed when placing children with independent fostering agencies.

The fostering manager must ensure the foster carer placement agreement covers all matters detailed in Schedule 5/6 and elements of matching that were taken into account when agreeing a placement.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

North East Lincolnshire Council had in place comprehensive Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures and an Area Child Protection Committee. All staff employed have access to child protection training commensurate with their role.

From interviews with foster carers and evidence of the Choose to Foster programme and other training provided, it was evident that foster carer training covers children who have been abused and safe caring skills. It was not evident from training records seen that all foster carer had completed child protection training.

It was not evident from the foster carer files examined and interviews with that individual safe care plans had been produced and agreed for each foster carer household. Although in interview the manager reported that these were being developed for new foster carers.

The training and assessment of carers includes guidance on corporal punishment and other forms of inappropriate control or punishment. In discussion with foster carers, it was evident that they had a knowledge and understanding of the issues and concerns about bullying. A procedure on dealing with bullying in foster care was available.

Foster carers spoken to indicated that they had written guidance on what to do if a child goes missing from home and understood the actions they needed to take should this occur. A written procedure on children missing from care was available.

The responsible manager must ensure safe care plans are developed and agreed for each foster carer household

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

100

%

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?****2**

It was evident from the Choose to Foster training programme and feedback from foster carers that the importance of contact is made clear to foster carers in their training and support from their supervising social worker reinforces this. Foster carers confirmed that financial support is provided to facilitate contact.

It was evident from interviews with foster carers, supervising and children's social workers that discussions do take place concerning contact arrangements. Feedback from foster carer interviews and questionnaires indicates that generally contact arrangements were agreed at the point of a placement commencing or following the initial placement

The fostering services manager is recommended to develop clear written guidance on contact which clearly sets out respective responsibilities and expectations of all parties for example placing social workers and fostering staff and carers

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?****2**

Formal mechanisms for consulting with children were in place for example statutory reviews and exit interviews. In addition it was evident that fostering staff routinely seek out the views of children in placement as of part of the supervisory visits carried out with foster carers.

Few complaints had been received from children in foster care. In interview placing social workers and fostering staff reported that children were made aware of how to access the complaints procedure and that this was checked out reviews.

Nine completed children's questionnaires were received of these five children stated they knew how to make a complaint and four stated that they did not know how to complain. Three children reported that they were rarely consulted about the fostering service. At the time of the inspection the children's guide had not been issued. This document gives information on the services complaints procedure. Since the inspection the manager reported to the NCSC that this guide has been issued. This standard will be fully assessed at the next inspection by which time all children should have been provided with a copy of the children's guide.

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**

This standard was met

The manager confirmed that no placements would be made that would prevent a child continuing to receive any specialist health care that they might need.

It was evident from documentation seen and interviews with supervising social workers and foster cares that the service gives priority to ensuring children's health care needs are met. All aspects of NMS 12.6 were met. The team monitors health assessments.

First aid training and health awareness is included in the foundation-training programme and is available to all foster carers, however not all foster carers have completed this training. The service needs to ensure all foster carers complete this training.

Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.8)

The fostering service gives a high priority to meeting the educational needs of each child or young person in foster care and ensures that she/he is encouraged to attain her/his full potential.

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

It was evident from documentation seen and interviews with supervising social workers, foster carers and questionnaires that the service places emphasis on meeting the educational needs of children placed.

From interviews with foster carers it was evident they were proactive in contacting schools; attending parents evenings and open days. The fostering services manager reported that the education attainment of Looked After children is monitored, ref to comments detailed in NMS 4.

Foster carers reported that allowances are paid for school uniforms and trips where required, these matter were not referred to in the sample of placement agreements examined by the inspector

Foster carer agreement must clearly set out where financial responsibility lies for school costs, including uniform, school trips and school equipment.

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

While written information concerning leaving care services was provided, it was not possible to track and evidence its application in this service in terms of outcomes for younger people based on the case tracking exercise. Therefore this standard was not fully evaluated and will be addressed in the next inspection.

Recruiting, Checking, Managing, Supporting and Training Staff and Foster Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The people who work in or for the fostering service are suitable to work with children and young people and they are managed, trained and supported in such a way as to ensure the best possible outcomes for children in foster care. The number of staff and carers and their range of qualifications and experience are sufficient to achieve the purposes and functions of the organisation.

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

Any people working in or for the fostering service are suitable people to work with children and young people and to safeguard and promote their welfare.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

As a local authority service, the fostering service is subject to and uses corporate policies and procedures. Warner principles concerning the recruitment of staff are complied with. All staff and carers are interviewed and references obtained. Recruitment practice has been revised to ensure references are followed up with telephone enquiries.

The service had a worker who transferred to the fostering team from another child care team, no evidence was seen which confirmed a CRB check had been sought prior to her commencing work for the fostering service. The manager is advised that before any worker takes up a post with the service irrespective of whether they are already employed by the authority a current CRB must be available

The manager was aware of the requirement to renew CRB's every three years CBR checks had not been sought for all members of the fostering Panel and this must be addressed as a matter of priority, ref to comments detailed in NMS 30.

Referees for foster carers are interviewed in person as part of their assessment. Proof of identity documents were being obtained for all new foster carers.

All staff involved in completing approvals and assessment for new foster carers held an appropriate social work qualification.

The fostering services manager must ensure that before any worker takes up a post with the service, irrespective of whether they are a current employee of the authority a current CRB must be available

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?****2**

The management structure of the fostering team is documented and clearly understood. Management and supervisory staff were seen to have appropriate knowledge, experience and training to enable them to effectively manage the team.

A good range of training is available to staff and foster cares. Interviews with supervising social workers confirmed staff have access to formal and regular supervision and development reviews. Records seen confirmed this was the case.

In interview the manager and administrator confirmed that a mechanism was in place to monitor annual and three yearly reviews. The inspector asked to see a copy of the Business Objects report, which unfortunately was not available.

Comments received from the manager and administrative staff indicated that the level of administrative support to the team was appropriate

All staff had job descriptions and had access to all the policies identified in NMS 16.16

The authority places children with independent fostering agencies (ref to comments detailed in NMS 8). The authority must ensure delegated functions are clearly defined.

The responsible person must ensure that service level agreements are brought into line with the current fostering services regulations (2001), functions to be delegated to the fostering service are clearly defined

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.7)

The fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff and recruits a range of carers to meet the needs of children and young people for whom it aims to provide a service.

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

In interview the fostering service manager and staff indicated that there were sufficient numbers of qualified workers to carry out the full range of duties and responsibilities when the service is fully staffed. The turnover of staff working in the fostering service was low which showed that the service retains its staff.

It was established from staff interviews and documentation seen that the service had a proactive approach to recruiting foster carers to meet service demands. However the manager acknowledged that there is a need for more foster carers particularly for teenagers and young asylum seekers.

The fostering service had developed written guidance, however it did not set out all matters detailed in NMS 17.6.

The fostering service carries out competency-based assessments and these were in evidence on the foster carer files examined and address the areas outlined in NMS17.7.

The fostering services manager must develop detailed written procedural and practice guidance, which clearly sets out all matters detailed in NMS 17.6.

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

The service employs corporate policies and procedures for staff recruitment and selection. Evidence from the case tracking exercise indicates that employment practices for staff and carers are generally satisfactory. However CRB checks had not been sought for all fostering panel members and the temporary worker seconded to the team.

Since the last inspection changes had been made to the out of hour's arrangements, which had been previously been provided under joint arrangements with a neighbouring Local Authority. A local emergency duty team now supports the service. Feedback from foster carer questionnaires and interviews highlighted no specific concerns regarding out of hours support.

The service makes available considerable corporate and departmental health and safety information. Health and safety is included in the choose to programme which all-prospective foster carers must complete. The foundation-training programme also includes health and safety training, which is made available to all foster carers who choose to attend. The service does not provide all foster carers with a comprehensive service specific health and safety policy, which covers all legal requirements please refer to comments detailed in NMS 6.

A corporate and service specific whistle-blowing procedure was available.

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

This standard was met

The Local Authority provides a pathway of training and development through induction, in-service and post qualifying training. Whilst the inspection was in progress no staff were following an induction programme, ref to comments detailed in NMS 21.

In interview staff reported that they felt supported by the service managers, all had access to formal regular supervision and employee development reviews. Regular team meetings were held and examination of a sample of team meeting minutes showed that these

meetings addressed both management and practice issues

Supervising social workers in the fostering service reported that they felt that they were kept informed about new legislation and guidance.

While there were training events that supervising social workers, children's social workers and foster carers could attend they were not set up as part of a structured joint training programme ref to comments detailed in NMS 21

The service operates a formal choose to foster programme and a foundation training programme. The foundation programme is well developed and comprehensive. However records seen showed in some cases that training events were poorly attended.

The fostering service is to be commended for its foundation training programme

Standard 20 (20.1 – 20.5)

All staff are properly accountable and supported.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

This standard was met

All staff had been issued with job descriptions and contracts.

All staff interviewed confirmed that they received regular supervision and employee development reviews. Written records were maintained. Staff reported that they felt the service to be well managed.

All staff had access to relevant policies, procedures and practice guidance; in addition staff had access to the intranet as a means of keeping abreast of policy and legislative changes.

Regular recorded staff and team meetings were held, minutes of these meeting were available.

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

Information on aspects detailed in NMS 21.2 with the exception of training and development was in place. However the service as yet does not have a foster carer handbook, which brings all information detailed in NMS 21.2 in structured and assessable format, ref to comments detailed in NMS 1, 22 & 23.

From staff and foster carer interviews it was evident that the role of the supervising social worker is made clear.

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

The fostering service had reviewed and revised its Foster Care Agreement to reflect the new National Minimum Standards and Requirements. However none of the foster carer files examined contained this new document. The fostering service is advised to issue the new agreement to all foster carers.

A structured approach to the supervision of foster carers was in evidence. In interview supervising social workers and foster carers reported that they do meet regularly and this was evidenced in the foster carer files examined by the inspector. With the exception of one all supervising social workers held a social work qualification.

A system of out of hours support is available to foster carers.

The fostering service did not have a foster carer handbook. In interview the manager reported that work had commenced to develop a handbook. The manager is advised to develop and issue a foster carer handbook as a matter of priority.

Feedback from foster carers via their questionnaire and interview indicated that they were informed about the complaints procedure and how to use it.

Records of allegation of abuse were maintained and monitored. The service had a procedure for Management of Allegations of Abuse by Foster Carers. A clear policy framework for deregistration of a foster carer was not available.

The fostering services manager must ensure the foster carer handbook is completed and issued as a matter of priority

The fostering services manager must ensure each foster carer is supervised by a qualified social worker.

The fostering manager should develop a clear policy framework, which outlines the circumstances and process of deregistration of a foster carer.

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 fostering service has a well-designed approval-training programme that makes good use of both staff and existing foster carers. It includes provision for both adult members of the applicant's household, the applicants own children and is flexible in its delivery and includes safe caring.

The service operates a formal choose to foster programme and has implemented a comprehensive foundation training programme for which the service is to be commended. A clear policy, which clarifies expectations and articulates the pathway of training and development from recruitment approval, induction, post induction was not available.

Individual training needs analysis had been produced for four out of the five foster carers files selected for case tracking. However it was not clear how these linked to the foster carer annual/three year review process.

The fostering manager must produce a clear policy which details expectations and provides a clear pathway of training from recruitment, approval, induction and post approval for foster carers

The fostering services manager should ensure training profiles are linked to the foster carer review process.

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?
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	2
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The local authority does not hold children's records in the fostering team. The majority of records are held within the childcare teams.

The fostering service issues record keeping guidance and carers are encouraged to keep appropriate memorabilia to help children make sense of their 'history'.

There was a clear policy on case recording, which includes most of the matters detailed in NMS 24.2. However information seen did not clarify what information should be kept on the foster carers file and what information is kept on the child's file.

Foster carers in interview with the inspector were aware of the issues of confidentiality and the importance of keeping information secure.

The fostering services manager should develop written guidance which clarifies what information should be kept on the foster carers file and what information is kept on the child's file.

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?
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	2
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The service had a clear policy and procedures for establishing and maintaining case files. Records about complaints and allegations were held and maintained with an individual record sheet on each foster carer file to log these.

With the exception of the short-break service, it was not evident that the fostering service had adopted a formal system to monitor the quality and adequacy of records.

Separate records as detailed in NMS 25.2 were kept. Foster carers and children were made aware, through leaflets and procedures of how to gain access to their records.

Storage and security arrangements were adequate.

All foster carer and staff files examined contained records of checks and references

The fostering service manager should develop and implement a formal system to monitor the quality and adequacy of records.

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

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

This standard was met

The service operates out of premises situated in the centre of Grimsby. Although the premises are accessible in terms of location the building does not lend itself to foster carer-training, meetings and pop in visits.

This matter was discussed with the manager who reported that the local authority was actively looking for more suitable premises.

The office is available to provide for matters detailed in NMS 26.3.

In interview staff reported that they had access to sufficient equipment to enable them to carry out their role effectively.

Adequate insurance and or replacement arrangements are provided by the local authority

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

This standard was met

The Local Authority provides the service, therefore financial viability is accepted. The inspector found no evidence to suggest the Council is not financing its fostering service appropriately

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

This standard was met

The services budget is subject to the accounting and auditing processes of the central financing section of North East Lincolnshire Council.

The fostering service is allocated a budget on an annual basis, which is subject to regular monitoring, by the fostering service and senior clerk.

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

This standard was met

The authority had written information on current foster carer allowances. Allowances are reviewed annually. Feedback from interviews conducted with foster carers and foster carer questionnaires indicate no specific concerns regarding payments and allowances. Kinship carers are paid the same allowances as other foster carers.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The service operates a stand-alone panel. A number of changes had been made to the panel membership since the last inspection.

The service had revised the panel procedures in line with the Fostering Services Regulations. The procedures need to be revised further to include more specific guidance concerning decision-making.

Not all of the panel members had a current CRB and this must be addressed as a matter priority.

The fostering service had access to medical expertise.

No evidence was seen from past panel minutes examined by the inspector, which demonstrated that the panel was provided with routine management information (ref NMS 30.6). Panel procedures did not confirm the range of information to be provided and the frequency.

It was not clear from past panel meeting minutes examined how the panel discharged its responsibility to monitor the range and type of carers available to the authority in comparison with the needs of children (ref NMS 30.7).

The fostering services manger must ensure CRB checks are carried out for all panel members.

The panel procedures must be revised to provide clear information concerning decision making and detail the range, type and frequency of monitoring information to be provided to the panel

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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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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The standard was met

The fostering service provides a discrete short break/respice service aimed at children who have a disability in most, but not all cases. The service recruits and supports specific foster carers for the short break/respice service.

In interview the senior practitioner who line manages the service confirmed the service has established close working links with specialist social workers and agencies. Evidence was seen which confirmed this in practice.

In interview the senior practitioner spoken to was clear about the different nature of these placements, and of the need to work in partnership with parents.

A range of documentation and practice guidance had been developed to support service delivery arrangements.

The inspector examined the file of one short-term/respice service. The file was well maintained and evidence was seen that a system for auditing foster carer files was being introduced.

The manager is advised to develop clear guidance on support arrangement including minimum frequencies for supervisory visits

Each foster carer must be supervised by a qualified social worker ref to comments detailed in NMS 22

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?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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It was evident from the interviews with the fostering service manager, supervising social workers and records seen, that the service does recognise the contribution of family and friend foster carers and endeavours to provide for their assessment and training needs in ways consistent with the training and support of other foster carers.

The inspector case tracked one kinship carer. This carer had been fostering for seven years. The carer had never been issued with a foster carer agreement nor had she ever had a foster carer review. This carer was sharing her bedroom with her nine-year-old grandson. This individual must be issued with a foster carer agreement and a foster carer review must be completed as a matter of priority

Kinship carers are paid the same allowances of other foster carers.

The fostering service manager must ensure all kinship carers are issued with and sign a foster carer agreement.

Kinship carers must be subject to the same reviewing arrangements as other foster carers. A foster carer review must be completed for Mrs X.

Written guidance must make clear the fostering agencies policy and expectation regarding the assessment, approval, support and training of kinship carers.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____
Date _____

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on <enter date(s) of inspection here> and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

"Firstly, I believe that Local Authority Fostering Services are unfairly scored against the Standards, when compared to IFAs. This is clear in the case of our fostering Service. We are not comparing like with like as the universality of the services a Local Authority has to provide in this area clearly cannot compare with organisations that, as private providers, can protect their own front door. I know these are common complaints across the country but the CSCI must start to take such views on board, as they are undermining the morale (sic) of Fostering Agencies nationally."

"Furthermore, I do not believe Fostering Inspections of Local Authorities fully take account of the added value that can be provided by being part of a much larger corporate whole, which links into a range of other education, leisure housing and child care services. This is something the private sector cannot match."

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

Comments were received from the provider

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

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

Note:

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

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 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

Action plan was received at the point of publication

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

Public reports

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

D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I _____ of _____ confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that I agree with the statutory requirements made and will seek to comply with these.

Print Name _____
Signature _____
Designation _____
Date _____

Or

D.3.2 I _____ of _____ am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:

Print Name _____
Signature _____
Designation _____
Date _____

Note: In instance where there is a profound difference of view between the Inspector and the Registered Provider both views will be reported. Please attach any extra pages, as applicable.