



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

Fostering Services

## **London Borough of Waltham Forest Fostering Service**

Fostering and Adoption Assessment Team

1C The Drive

Walthamstow

London

E17 3BN

5th – 28th January 2005

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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

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

### **The role of CSCI is to:**

Promote improvement in social care

Inspect all social care - for adults and children - in the public, private and voluntary sectors

Publish annual reports to Parliament on the performance of social care and on the state of the social care market

Inspect and assess 'Value for Money' of council social services

Hold performance statistics on social care

Publish the 'star ratings' for council social services

Register and inspect services against national standards

Host the Children's Rights Director role.

## **Inspection Methods & Findings**

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

### **The 4-point scale ranges from:**

4 - Standard Exceeded (Commendable)

3 - Standard Met (No Shortfalls)

2 - Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)

1 - Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

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

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

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

**FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION**

**Local Authority Fostering Service?**

YES

**Name of Authority**

London Borough of Waltham Forest Fostering Service

**Address**

Fostering and Adoption Assessment Team, 1C The Drive,  
Walthamstow, London, E17 3BN

**Local Authority Manager**

Ms Barbarba Foster

**Tel No:**

020 8496 2437

**Address**

Fostering and Adoption Assessment Team, 1C The Drive,  
Walthamstow, London, E17 3BN

**Fax No:**

**Email Address**

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**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**

8/1/04

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		5 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> & 13 <sup>th</sup> January 2005		<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		9:30 am		
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Mr. Harun Rashid	118737	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>	Ms Vivienne Patchett	073809	
<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.		Not Applicable		
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>		Not Applicable		
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>		Barbara Foster—The Group Manager, Asha Matthew—The Quality Assurance Manager		

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## INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Independent and local authority fostering services which fall within the jurisdiction of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) are subject to inspection, to establish if the service is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the Children Act 1989 as amended.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of London Borough of Waltham Forest 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 aim of the London Borough of Waltham Forest's fostering service is to provide a quality fostering service to meet the needs of the diverse local community. They are committed to the provision of a range of placements and placement choice. Fostering services include task centred (short term), shared care/respice, pre adoptive and permanent placements and placements with friends and family for children between 0 -18 yrs who are looked after by the local authority under the Children Act 1989. Where the needs of children and young people cannot be met from within the local authority fostering service, provision is commissioned from independent fostering agencies. These agencies are monitored by the Contracts Officer linked to the Access to Resources Team and also through arrangements made within the Pan London Agreement, (this is an organisation comprising the London Boroughs who have come together to negotiate contracts and organise monitoring of children's services provided by the independent sector.) The London Borough of Waltham Forest embraces diversity and difference in all aspects of its work and strives to provide foster carers who reflect the racial mix of the local community.

## **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 announced inspection to the office took place on 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2005. A pre-inspection meeting took place with the group manager and with other managers on 12/11/04 to arrange the inspection programme. The lead Inspector attended the Agency's panel meeting on 14/12/04 and also attended one of the agency's training sessions on 15/11/04. The Inspector spoke to three of the foster carers during the break; they all expressed their satisfaction with the training and other support provided by the agency.

The lead Inspector met four foster carers and young persons who are accommodated by the London Borough of Waltham Forest. He also interviewed nine members of staff including managers and social workers and administrators. The Inspector received twenty-two feedback cards from the professionals, carers and older children who all expressed their satisfaction with the service provided by the agency.

The other inspector, who carried out the inspection last year, spoke to managers, social work staff and administrators and looked specifically at kinship care and the statutory registers. She noted that the new manager and Fostering Service team had worked extremely hard over the intervening months to ensure that there had been an improvement in the standard of service and the support given to staff and foster carers, particularly those caring for friends and family. A permanent management team had been recruited with new posts identified and implemented to improve specific areas e.g. quality assurance, the support of kinship carers, publicity and initial response to inquiries/referral taking. There had obviously been a concerted effort made by the service and the local authority to ensure that all local authority staff were working together to improve service delivery and that sufficient funds were available to meet the goals of the service. This had resulted in improved staff morale, an increase in applications by prospective foster carers plus improved service to, and increased safety for, children and young people.

Foster carers, staff and management presented throughout the inspection as people committed to the welfare and support of the child.

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (STANDARD 1)**

Standard 1 was assessed and mostly met. The registered person has a Statement of Purpose and a Child Information Book, which outlines the aims and objectives of the services provided. However, to meet this standard in full, the manager must ensure that all information listed in 1.4 of the National Minimum Standard of Fostering Services is included.

### **FITNESS to CARRY ON or MANAGE a FOSTERING SERVICE (STANDARDS 2 TO 3)**

Both standards were assessed, one met in full and one mostly met. A new manager had been appointed to the Fostering Service just following the last inspection in February 2004.



The management and staff of the Fostering agency are qualified and experienced in childcare. The fostering agency panel members have access to professional expertise in childcare and business management.

#### **MANAGEMENT OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE (STANDARD 4 TO 5)**

Both standards were assessed as met. The agency has a clear management structure. All staff of the fostering agency have job descriptions and they were clear about their role and responsibilities. However, the manager's job description needed amendment to reflect her responsibilities under the Care Standards Act.

#### **SECURING AND PROMOTING WELFARE (STANDARDS 6 TO 14)**

All nine standards were assessed, 8 met, one mostly met. All carers spoken to/visited presented as competent and committed to secure and promote welfare of the children in care. The fostering agency recruits foster carers from diverse community groups and promote equal opportunities. The fostering agency has a robust Child Protection policy and procedure in place. Information regarding Child Protection issues is given to all carers and they were aware of their responsibilities. The foster carers help each child to receive health care and enable them to assist the child's physical, emotional and social development.

#### **RECRUITMENT, CHECKING, MANAGING, SUPPORTING and TRAINING STAFF and FOSTER CARERS (STANDARDS 15 TO 23)**

All nine standards were assessed and 8 were met, one mostly met. The managers and social work staff are appropriately qualified. There has been an improvement in the recruitment and retention of permanent staff and an increase in the interest from prospective foster carers. Structural changes and increases in staffing levels have taken place to ensure that foster carers who are friends and family are assessed, supported, trained and paid in the same way as other foster carers. Annual reviews of foster care approvals are taking place and all are going to the Fostering Panel for consideration. Training for members of the management team has been implemented both in-house and from external sources. The overall training needs of the assessment team are being reviewed and Training for foster carers and social work staff was being evaluated. Meantime training on the assessment of foster carers has been provided by BAAF jointly to the Panel and social workers. In-house training has taken place on various other topics. Away-days had taken place for the whole team to set goals and monitor progress.

Social work staff supervise foster carers at least once a month. All staff receive monthly supervision from their line manager. The agency has a clear strategy for working with and supporting foster carers. An annual training programme was available. It is recommended that the registered person introduce competency-based assessments to meet the remaining standard in full.

#### **RECORDS (STANDARDS 24 TO 25)**

Both standards were assessed, one met, one not met. The fostering agency ensures that an up-to-date, comprehensive case record is maintained for each child. Relevant information from the case records is made available to the child and to anyone involved in a child's care. However statutory registers were not being kept and the computer system was not holding appropriate information.

#### **FITNESS OF PREMISES for use as a FOSTERING SERVICE (STANDARDS 26)**

This standard was assessed and met in full. The premises used by the fostering agency has spacious open plan offices with modern equipment facilities.

#### **FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS (STANDARDS 27 TO 29)**

All three standards were assessed and were met in full. Carers are paid their weekly allowances by cheques/direct debits. The service operates in line with London Borough of Waltham Forest policies and procedures with regard to financial systems, which is satisfactory.

### **FOSTERING PANELS (STANDARD 30)**

This standard was mostly met. From observation and examining documentation the Inspector was satisfied that the fostering panel have clear written policies and procedures, which are implemented in practice, about the handling of their functions. However, the Inspector recommended to the chair of the panel and the group manager to ensure that all panel members attend training. The management to recruit a panel member who has at any time been placed with foster carers or whose child has at any time been placed with foster carers.

### **SHORT-TERM BREAKS (STANDARDS 31)**

This standard was assessed as mostly met. To meet this standard in full the registered manager must develop a specific written policies and procedures for this purpose.

### **FAMILY and friends as CARERS (STANDARD 32)**

This standard was assessed as met. There was evidence of great improvement in the support, Training and funding of kinship carers. Kinship carers' payments have been increased and were due to be equalised from 1st April 2005. Kinship carers are now being offered training and the same support from link social workers as other carers. The Foster Carers Agreement - Kinship Care and the kinship care policies and procedures need minor amendment.

**(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)**

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

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

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

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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	

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

**COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)****(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)**

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

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector      M. Harun Rashid  
Second Inspector    Vivienne Patchett  
Locality Manager    \_\_\_\_\_  
Date                    22<sup>nd</sup> March 2005

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The appropriate Officer of the Local Authority or the Registered Person (as applicable) is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how requirements are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

### STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Identified below are areas addressed in the main body of the report which indicate non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children Act 1989, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002, or the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. The Authority or Registered Person(s) is/are required to comply within the given time scales in order to comply with the Regulatory Requirements for fostering services.

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement	
1	3	FS1	The manager must ensure that all information listed on 1.4 of the NMS of the fostering services and Regulation 3 is included in the agency's Statement of Purpose.	30/6/05
2	7,10	FS2 FS3FS5	All Staff records to include all items listed in schedule 1 to the Regulations.  The Director of Social Services and the Head of Human Resources to review their systems to ensure that regulations 7 and 10 are met.	1 June 2005
3	22	FS25	Statutory Registers of foster carers and children placed with foster carers to be kept. If the information required is maintained on Computer, records must be printed off as hard copies to form a written register.	1 March 2005
4	24/25/26	FS30	Training is required for all panel members on a variety of aspects including the National Minimum Standards and Regulations, of which they should have copies.	30/6/05
5	37/38	FS31	The service must develop specific written policies and procedures regarding the provision of short-term breaks for children.	30/6/05
6	28	FS25 FS32	The Foster Carers Agreement-Kinship Care and the Kinship Care policies and procedures to be amended to include the issues noted in regulation 38(3)(d)(e).	1 April 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	FS7	Translation of vital written information e.g. the placement agreement and foster care agreements to be supplied in the appropriate language where young person or foster carer does not have English as their first language.
2	FS7	The service to unaccompanied children who are asylum seekers to be brought into the mainstream processes of the local authority children's services to enable them to access placement and fostering services in the same way as other children and young people.
3	FS17	Competency-based assessments to be introduced with training being provided for social workers, involved in the both the assessment and support/review of foster carers, and for panel members.
4	FS23	Support to be offered specifically to the young people whose parents are foster carers.
5	FS29	It is recommended that the management should introduce a system to clarify the breakdown of the allowances of the foster carers.
6	FS30	The service to aim to recruit a panel member who has at any time been placed with foster carers or whose child has at any time been placed with foster carers.

\* 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

7

Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	NO
Directors of Social services	NO
Child protection officer	NO
Specialist advisor (s)	YES
Local Foster Care Association	YES
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
Interview with children	YES
Interview with foster carers	YES
Interview with agency staff	YES
Contact with parents	YES
Contact with supervising social workers	YES
Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	YES
Interview with panel chair	YES
Observation of foster carer training	YES
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	5/1/05
Time of Inspection	9:30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	50

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
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The management has developed the Statement of Purpose further following the recommendation of the previous Inspector. However, this still needs to be amended by including the following information e.g. the number of foster cares, numbers of children placed by the fostering services and the qualification of staff as specified in Standard 1.4 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. To meet this standard in full, the registered person must ensure that all information listed on 1.4 of the NMS of the Fostering Services and Regulation 3 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 are included in the Statement of Purpose.

The London Borough of Waltham Forest Fostering services currently using (like other local authorities in England) British Association for Adoption & Fosterling's (BAAF) 'A guide for children and young people' as the children's guide.

The London Borough of Waltham Forest Social Services Department has developed a written Children's Charter and a separate guide for children and young people on how to complain, whatever type of placement they are in. These are comprehensive and attractively presented.

## 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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The Group manager, as overall manager of the Fostering service, is experienced in childcare and in the management of the fostering services. She is a qualified social worker (CQSW) and obtained B.A. in social administration, postgraduate diploma in applied social studies and also post graduate diploma in organisational and development in public services. She has been working in childcare since 1976 and holding senior management positions since 1995.

The registered manager is qualified, and competent and has long working experiences in this field. Staff and carers confirmed to the Inspector during the interview that the manager was an effective leader.

The quality assurance manager who assisted the Group manager during the inspection process is a qualified social worker has 11 years of managerial experience in childcare and family support. She has other responsibilities like reviewing cases in addition to the monitoring quality assurance.

### 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?	2
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It was evident from examining documentation and discussion with staff of the Waltham Forest Fostering Services that the staff team managing the agency are suitably qualified and experienced in this field. They are competent to run the fostering services concerned with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in care.

The fostering services obtained two reference letters for newly appointed staff prior to appointment. The manager informed the Inspector that telephone enquiries are made to follow up written references. All documents, including staff's qualification records, were available for the inspection. CRB checks were carried out for all members of staff.

The manager of a local authority fostering service is required (Reg 10) to meet regulation 7 and 8 as to their fitness to manage the service. One of the requirements of the last report was for the Director of Social Services to provide evidence to the Commission to satisfy them that the person appointed met the regulations. This evidence had not been supplied by the target date of the 1 April 2004. The inspector therefore examined the personnel file of the manager. This contained an application form, CRB check, copies of qualifications plus

two references which had been signed by two senior managers as satisfactory. The manager said that she had been through a rigorous, competitive interview but there was no evidence of this on the file and no indication of how or why the manager had been chosen for her post. The job description included on the file did not include her responsibilities as the manager of either the Fostering Agency or the Adoption Agency or the specific legal duties embodied within these two roles. The personnel file did not include proof of identity, including a recent photograph.

The evidence available at the inspection and the outcomes observed indicated that the manager had the skills, expertise and experience to manage the service efficiently and effectively and the necessary knowledge and experience of childcare and fostering to do so in a professional manner. However, the Director of Social Services and the Head of Human Resources must review their systems to ensure that regulations 7 and 10 are met.

The pre-inspection questionnaire stated that 'there is a high level of case allocation in the London Borough of Waltham Forest, declared in the recent DIS as 96% of all children'.

## 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

Nine members of staff interviewed by the Inspector confirmed that they all had clear job descriptions and were aware of lines of accountability and communication was clear. Team meeting held on weekly basis and the minutes of the meetings were available for the inspection. Staff receives four weekly supervisions from their line managers and foster carers receive four weekly supervision from the allocated social workers. Staff said to the Inspector that they were aware of the need to declare any conflict of interest as and when required. Information on fees and charges was included in the prospectus provided to placing officers. Statements of the amounts paid to foster carers were detailed in the information provided. The Group Manager is the budget holder of the services who has access to weekly budget information of the services which is electronically maintained by the council called 'SAP' System. The Group Manager is the responsible person for future planning of the services and reports this to the portfolio Councillor.

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

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.

1

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

2

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

2

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

1

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

0

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

1

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**

Since the change of the management in early last year, the Group Manager (who was appointed in February 2004) has appointed the following managers in post at access to resource team, fostering assessment team, fostering support team and a quality assurance manager. The Inspector was able to interview all respective managers; they are all professionally qualified and highly experienced in the relevant fields.

Managers interviewed by the Inspector informed that they all had a clear job descriptions setting out duties and responsibilities. The level of delegation and responsibility of the managers, and the lines of accountability, were clearly defined.

In absence of the Group Manager, her peer (the family support services Group Manager) substitute for her in order to make decisions and chairing meetings of the fostering services. The two Group Managers do not take annual leaves same time.

## Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The Inspector visited the homes of four foster carers on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2005. All of the homes were warm, adequately furnished and decorated and maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene and were free of avoidable hazards. Within the homes visited, all of the fostered children had their own bed and accommodation arrangements reflected the child's assessed need for privacy and space.

In-house foster carers were aware that they may be visited as part of the Commission's inspection process but one carer did not appear to have been given this information.

The group manager informed the Inspector that foster carers' homes are inspected annually by the social workers to make sure that they meet the needs of the foster children. The foster carers confirmed this statement to the Inspector during the visits on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2005.

As part of induction training, health and safety issues are covered, including the provision of transport, and foster carers receive written guidelines on their health and safety responsibilities. The local Foster Care Association is also giving "refresher" advice and guidance. Overall, the Inspector was satisfied that this standard was met but there are some areas for improvement as noted above.

### 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?	2
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It was evident from examination of documentation and discussion with carers, children and staff that children were given basic key information about help and support available for them. Matching issues were evidenced as discussed during placement meetings and in the panel meeting for the prospective foster carers. Carers employed by the agency were of a mixture of racial backgrounds including Afro Caribbean, Asian and white European.

At present there are fewer white foster carers than white children needing placement. This is being addressed by the recruitment drives and also by forming a consortium with the London Borough of Havering. There is also tracking of trans-racial placements.

Publicity materials and the web site have been expanded to include information in community languages. It is suggested that translation of vital written information e.g. the placement agreement and foster care agreements be supplied in the appropriate language where young person or foster carer does not have English as their first language.

The agency ensures that each child with learning/ physical disability receives specific services and support helps her/him to maximise her/his potential to deal with all forms of discrimination. Foster carers' preparation and training cover this. Foster training programmes designed by the agency value diversity and promote equality for the foster children and carers.

Historically Waltham Forest social services has offered a service to unaccompanied children who are asylum seekers through their Asylum Seekers Team not through their children and families services. They are looking at ways to bring unaccompanied children into the mainstream processes of the local authority children's services to enable them to access placement and fostering services in the same way as other children and young people. This should be pursued as quickly as possible.

**Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**3**

Protocols and guidelines have been put in place to assist the Access to Resources Team in their roles of matching for potential placements and gate keeping. Requests for placement now have to be agreed by the managers of placing social workers and documentation received prior to placement. A new weekly placement /LAC panel considers all requests for placement and reviews these three-monthly. Family Group Conferencing is being instituted to avoid children, where possible, needing to be accommodated by the local authority. The process of placing children in an emergency with friends or family is being monitored, with the fostering assessment team undertaking rapid initial assessments to ensure the welfare of the children and, if necessary, the approval of the carers under regulation 28 within the six-week time-limit. The manager of the assessment team was satisfied that the local authority was now meeting regulation 35(2).

The inspector was satisfied that the service aim to effectively match children with appropriate carers of the same racial, religious and cultural background. Where a full match had not been possible the closest match available had been offered. However, at present there are fewer white foster carers than white children needing placement. This is being addressed by the recruitment drives and also by forming a consortium with the London Borough of Havering. There is tracking of trans-racial placements.

Where practicable, each child has the opportunity for a period of introduction to a proposed foster carer so she/he can express an informed view about the placement and become familiar with the carer, the carer's family, and any other children in placement, and the home, neighbourhood and any family pets, before moving in.



<b>Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)</b> <b>The fostering service protects each child or young person from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>All foster carers were given training in safe care and child protection. Four of the carers interviewed by the Inspector were aware of safe care issues. All foster carers were clear as to the fostering agency's guidelines on the non-use of corporal punishment. Child protection guidelines were included in the foster carers information manual and the overall policy manual.</p> <p>A bullying policy was in place which included matters such as how bullying is identified, addressed and what help and support is available.</p> <p>The fostering service makes sure that all foster carer has a clear written procedure for use if the foster child is missing from home.</p>		
<b>Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:</b>	100	%

<b>Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)</b> <b>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.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>It was evident that contact issues had been discussed and agreement reached at the placement meeting with subsequent discussion at each review. Contact was supported in carer's homes, the family home, or at a previously agreed setting. Carers views on maintaining contact were assessed prior to them being recommended to panel. Carers visited by the Inspector were informed that carers kept records of the contact visits and how these had progressed.</p> <p>It was also evident from examining documentation that the views of the child or young person are sought and given weight in determining contact arrangements. Financial support is provided to the carer for transport or other costs involved in ensuring contacts take place at the desired frequency and in the most suitable place.</p>		

<b>Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.5)</b> <b>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.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>In questionnaires and interviews with young people they confirmed that they were listened to by their carers. The complaints procedure was issued to all young people of suitable age as part of the child information book. The need for carers to discuss all aspects of their daily life with the child and to listen to their view was examined in the foster carer training. This was observed to occur in an age appropriate manner during visits to foster carers. Carers were also noted to be raising concerns with social workers on behalf of the child.</p> <p>Quality assurance forms are being completed to give feedback from social workers, young people and foster carers when a child leaves any placement.</p>		

**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

Children have a written health record called "Health Fax". This has been developed by Waltham Forest Community Services and Waltham Forest NHS Primary Care Trust. It contains relevant information on the health needs of every child, the health services available and general health advice. In addition there is health screening and a nurse designated to work with looked after children. The group manager informed the Inspector that they are now in the process of recruiting another part-time nurse in addition to the current full time post. It is intended to employ additional administrative support for ensuring that medicals are undertaken on a regular basis.

The handbook for foster carers contains information about health promotion, hygiene and first aid.

The Inspector was satisfied that 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, and that children/young people are enabled to make informed decisions about health needs.

Following the recommendation of the previous Inspector the management now ensure that the placement agreement, prior to placement, (or as soon as possible afterwards) contains a full description of the health needs of a child and clear procedures governing consent for the child/young person to receive medical treatment.

**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

It was evident from discussion with foster carers and observation of Inspector that foster carers provide an environment in which education and learning are valued. All foster carers are provided with a computer for use by the children/young people in foster care.

There is a mechanism whereby attendance at school is monitored by an education advisor of the Local Education Authority.

Suggestions for the role of the foster carer if any child is not in school are included in the Foster Care Handbook.

The Foster Placement Agreement identify where financial responsibility lies for all school costs, including school 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?****3**

A policy for preparing young people for independent living was in place. Carers received training on preparing young people for independent living. The management advised the Inspector that carers were also informally working on these issues with the young people. The planned training programmes for the young people; to enable them to work towards independence; promote awareness of drug and alcohol problems; provide sex education training; and prepare for leaving care are provided by the Pathway Panel who provide services for the children are sixteen plus.

## 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

The Inspector was satisfied from examination of documentation and discussion with the management that there are clear written recruitment and selection procedures for appointing staff which follow good practice in safeguarding children and young people. (However see standard 3 and its requirement re the manager's file). Three carer and four staff files were examined. Two members of staff, the manager and the responsible individual and carers have enhanced CRB checks in the files. The management have several years of working experience in social care with children. They have sound knowledge of the Children Act, Regulations and Guidance, relevant current policies and procedures etc.

The organisation (personnel unit) always ensures that two written references are received prior to the employment of any staff. The management ensures that a dated and signed record is held detailing when the original identity documents were verified and that references are followed up with a telephone call.

Detailed carer assessments had been carried out by qualified social workers and copies of these assessments were held on carers' files in addition to the panel's decisions and terms.

**Total number of staff of the agency:**

25

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

0

### Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

A clear management structure existed. The managers were operationally line managed by the group manager and received monthly professional supervision. The link social workers who are lined managed by their managers, supervised carers and ensured that reviews and approvals of carers took place when required.

The fostering agency has a system in place to determine, prioritise and monitor workloads and assign tasks to appropriate staff.

Staff have a copy of the policies and working practices, details of the service offered, the equal opportunities policies, health and safety procedures.

Staff and carers undertake ongoing training and appropriate professional and skills

development. Carers maintain a training portfolio.

Annual reviews of foster care approvals are taking place and all are going to the Fostering Panel for consideration.

**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**

There has been an improvement in the recruitment and retention of permanent managers, social workers and administrative staff.

The service has a web page on the Waltham Forest web site and there is a dedicated phone number for fostering inquiries. A new post of Information and Training Officer has been established to link with external trainers and also to take initial inquiries and referrals from prospective foster carers. Targets have been set for an initial response within one day, for social workers to contact within seven days, a visit to take place within 15 days. The effectiveness of this new strategy is being monitored, and at the time of the inspection, had resulted in an increase in interest from prospective foster carers and more demand for preparation groups. These consist of 12 to 15 people and had been planned for the year ahead but extra ones are being slotted in to cope with demand.

The managers and the link social workers are qualified social workers with several years of experience in childcares.

There is an assessment process, which follows BAAF format covers many of the areas defined in this standard. The previous Inspector recommended that the competency-based assessment to be introduced with training being provided for social workers, involved in the both the assessment and support/review of foster cares, and for panel members. The group manager informed the Inspector that they are now working towards implementing the competency-based assessments and expecting to provide staff training before December 2005.

**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**

Carers received supervision monthly from the support social workers. Where concerns were raised with carers practice this was processed through supervision. Staff and carers stated that the out-of-hour's service was effective. Suitable insurance was provided by the agency for both the office and carers.

There is a comprehensive health and safety policy for carers, children and staff, which cover all legal requirements. There is a whistle blowing policy, which is made known to all staff and carers. The Inspector was satisfied that the agency has valid indemnity insurance.

**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**

The training programme was distributed to all staff and carers. Training for carers were planned included life story work, behaviour management, Children exposed to parental substance misuse.

The Inspector attended training on 15/11/04, designed for the foster carers called 'advanced parenting'. The contents of the training were appropriate to the topic. However, the attendance was pretty poor due to the festive season, which was acknowledged by the managers and the trainer.

Training programmes for the panel members are planned and majority of the members attended this.

Training for members of the management team has been implemented both in-house and from external sources. The overall training needs of the assessment team are being reviewed and meantime training on the assessment of foster carers has been provided by BAAF jointly to the Panel and social workers. In-house training has taken place on recording, on aspects of Care by friends and family, the National Minimum Standards and Regulations, including legal training on regulation 38 and placement with friends and family. Away-days had taken place for the whole team and the management team to set goals and monitor progress.

It was evident from examining documentation that there is a clear plan for training and development of all staff involved in fostering work through induction and in-service training. The effectiveness of training programmes for the staff providing the fostering service is routinely evaluated and training programmes are reviewed and updated at least annually.

**Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)****All staff are properly accountable and supported.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

The managers, support social workers received supervision monthly in one to one sessions. The minutes of the supervision were available for the inspection. These supervision sessions covered organisational needs, case work and training issues, records were maintained.

All staff have clear written details of the responsibilities expected of them, together with the policies and procedures of the organisation. New policies and procedures are going to the Director's management team for approval e.g. regulation 38.

All staff receive regular, planned appraisals from their line manager. Each member of staff has the opportunity to attend monthly staff meetings. The minutes of the meetings were available for the inspection.

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

Information received from foster carers visited in their home and questionnaires, and at the training day were that foster carers felt very well supported by the agency. Structural changes and increases the staff have taken place within the social work teams to ensure that foster carers who are friends and family are supported and trained in the same way as other foster carers.

There is a clear strategy for working with carers that is documented and understood which included arrangements for training and development and supervision.

Children's social workers commented in their questionnaires that good communication systems existed between the agency and themselves. The agency is encouraging foster carers to attend Foster Carers Support Group meetings where carers can meet together to discuss various issues with regard to sharing information and raise concerns as required. These groups usually take place during the day but five times a year will be in the evenings.

Following a recommendation in the last report, the service has been looking at ways of offering its support specifically to the young people whose parents are foster carers. This is to be encouraged.

**Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)**

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

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

3

It was evident from discussion with staff, management and carers that carers were supervised by the support social worker. Feedbacks from carers were that the agency provided high levels of support and staffs were always available to listen to them and offer support. All carers have access to twenty-four hours a day support. Supervision occurred at least on a monthly basis. On approval, carers are given a handbook, which covers policies, procedures, guidance, legal information and insurance details, this is updated regularly. Records about allegations of abuse are kept and monitored and there is a clear policy framework, which outlines the circumstances in which a carer should be removed from the foster carer register. All carers submitted monthly reports to the manager.

**Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)**

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

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

3

The agency provides pre-approval and induction training for each carer including opportunities to benefit from the experience and knowledge of existing carers.

The training fits within a framework of equal opportunities, anti-discriminatory practice and training on safe caring is provided.

The training plan for the foster carers included Behaviour Management, First Aid training, working with un accompanied minors, life story work, safe caring, helping children cope with separation and loss and post approval training for foster carers.



## Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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Most carers were clear on the agency's requirements on record keeping. Carers interviewed were clear as to the type of information, which needed to be shared with the field managers. The agency gives the foster carer access to all relevant information to help the child understand and come to term with past events. 'Life story work' training for the foster carers was given for this purpose.

The agency has also developed a monitoring system for foster carers, for example if a carer has not sent his/her monthly report, then the agency send a reminder.

### Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
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The Inspector was satisfied from the tour of the office, discussion with staff and observation that separate accessible records were securely held for staff, carers, children, complaints and allegations. Records of any allegations, accidents or complaints were also held on the child's file and carer's files. There is a system to monitor the quality and adequacy of case records, remedial action is taken when necessary. Confidential records are stored securely at all times and there is a clear policy on access. Written entries in records are legible, clearly expressed, non-stigmatising, and distinguish between fact, opinion and third party information. There is a system for keeping records congruent with the Looking After Children system/integrated Children's system.

Mechanisms had been put in place for tracking trans-racial placements, CRB checks, health checks and foster carer annual reviews. Systems were also in place for recording complaints and the events listed in schedule 8 (Although as a local authority fostering service this is not a legal requirement, it is seen as good practice.)

There has been a change to a new computer system (Isis) with a central record of children accommodated. However, one record sampled gave no indication of where the child was placed or the legal basis on which they were placed with foster carers. Registers of foster carers and children placed had not yet been established on ISIS. A written Register of Foster Carers was in place but needs amended to include all statutory information listed in Reg 31. There was no Register of children placed in foster care which is urgently required

and must include all of the information listed in regulation 22/schedule 2. The requirement outstanding from the 2003 report is therefore repeated. If the information required is maintained on Computer, records must be printed off as hard copies to form a written register.

See also standard 3 re manager's file.

<b>Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:</b>			113
<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>			21
<b>Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:</b>			1
<b>Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £</b>	127.32	<b>Maximum £</b>	375.49

## 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 Inspector was satisfied from the tour of the premises and discussion with staff that the premises are suitable for the purpose in accordance with standard and fostering services Regulations. The group manager informed the Inspector that if there is in need of having meetings of more than 25 peoples, the agency will have opportunity to use Vestry Road premises which is a council property and very close by.

The office had suitable computer systems for administrative functions. The agency is suitably served by phone and fax facilities. Records were stored in a lockable cabinet. Appropriate insurance certificates were displayed.

Filing rooms have been identified and equipped with lockable cabinets to ensure efficient storage and confidentiality of records.

## 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

The service operates in line with Waltham Forest policies and procedures with regard to financial systems. Feedback from the manager and staff indicated that, the supply of necessary equipment e.g. stationery, fax machines, and the printing of the Children's Guide had been available.

The group manager informed the Inspector that Government grant funding for fostering services was available to improve the placement choice. This was additional to local government funding.

### 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

The service operates in line with Waltham Forest policies and procedures with regard to financial systems. Overall, the Inspector was satisfied that this standard was met.

**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 Inspector was satisfied from the discussion with the group manager and examining documentation that there is a written policy on fostering allowances. This and the current allowance levels are published and provided annually to each carer. Since the last inspection, payments to kinship carers have been increased and, from April 2005, will equal those of other carers in all respects. The group manager informed the Inspector that allowances for all foster carers including kinship foster carers were increased from 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2004. The holiday payment for foster carers has also increased. The allowances for foster carers vary according to their level of skills and qualifications. The structure of payment to carers is to be reviewed. During the visit of foster carers the Inspector was informed that they receive weekly payments by cheques, which is regular. However, a carer informed to the Inspector that they do not receive the breakdown of allowances as they expect. For example allowance sheet does not clarify whether extra allowance is for holiday payment or clothing money.

## 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 Inspector attended the fostering referral panel meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2004, which was chaired by an independent chair who has several years of experiences in childcare. The panel represented a wide range of professional expertise including medical, health, and educational experts. The panel members also consisted a councillor, which is required by the Fostering Services Regulations.

All panel members' references had been taken up and CRB checks are carried out by the agency. The chair of the panel informed the Inspector that where a concern had arisen during panel regarding the readiness of the proposed carer the panel had deferred their judgement. The membership of the panel was almost in line with that required under the Regulations. However, the Inspector feedback to the panel chair and the group manager that the agency was unable to recruit a panel member who has at any time been placed with foster carers or whose child has at any time been placed with foster carers. The group manager informed the Inspector that training was offered to all panel members though all panel members are still need to attend the training.

To meet this standard in full training is required for all panel members on a variety of aspects including the National Minimum Standards and regulations, of which they should have copies.

All annual reviews are now being presented to and considered by the panel.

Training on the assessment of foster carers has been provided by BAAF jointly to the Panel and social workers.

The service is considering setting up a separate foster care panel for agreeing permanent placements. This would be held on the same day as the adoption panel although separately constituted.

## 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?	2
---------------------------	---------------	---

The group manager informed the Inspector that the agency provide such a service as and when needed by purchasing from voluntary and private fostering services. The group manager also informed that foster carers arrange short-term breaks between themselves. This is an agenda items for the future Support Group meeting. The Inspector advised the management to develop a specific written policies and procedures for this purpose. The service is looking at developing its own provision for short-term breaks for children, particularly those with disabilities.

## 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

The group manager informed the Inspector that the agency appointed additional staff who were funded by Choice Protects Grant to support kinship foster carers. The policy and procedures are now in place to ensure that legal requirements are being met and allocated social workers keep records of updated reviews.

The managers responsible for managing kinship foster carers are trained by the local authority's legal department. Staff and foster carers are now fully aware of their role and legal responsibilities in order to care foster children in their care.

There was evidence of great improvement in the support, Training and funding of kinship carers. Their payments have been increased and were due to be equalised from 1st April 2005. They are now being offered training and the same support from link social workers as other carers. The kinship carers have decided at present to have separate meetings and support groups from other carers in order to address their specific needs. A seminar was run by Social Workers for kinship Foster Carers on the National Minimum Standards.

The Foster Carers Agreement-Kinship Care needs to be amended to include the issues noted in regulation 38(3)(d)(e) and the kinship care policies and procedures need to be amended where a vital section of regulation 38 (2) had been omitted. See standard 25.



**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 5<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> January 2005 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Comments were received from the provider	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Provider comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report	<input type="checkbox"/> 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	<input type="checkbox"/> YES

**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	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Action plan was received at the point of publication	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Provider has declined to provide an action plan	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Other: <enter details here>	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

**Public reports**

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

**D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT**

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

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

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Designation** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Or**

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

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Designation** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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