



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

Fostering Services

Rutland County Council Fostering Service

Catmose

Oakham

Rutland

LE15 6HP

Week of Monday, 7th February 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

Rutland County Council Fostering Service

Address

Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP

Local Authority Manager

Katie Arnold

Tel No:

01572 722577

Address

Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP

Fax No:

01572 758398

Email Address

karnold@rutland.gov.uk

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

02/02/04

Date of Inspection Visit		7th February 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Trisha Gibbs	071373
Name of Inspector	2	Sharon Treadwell	071369
Name of Inspector	3		
Name of Inspector	4		
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Katie Arnold and Kate Greaves	

Introduction to Report and Inspection

Inspection visits

Description of Fostering Service

- Part A: Summary of Inspection Findings**
Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State
Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection
Statutory Requirements from this Inspection
Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection

Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings
(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

- 1. Statement of purpose**
- 2. Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service**
- 3. Management of the fostering service**
- 4. Securing and promoting welfare**
- 5. Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers**
- 6. Records**
- 7. Fitness of premises**
- 8. Financial requirements**
- 9. Fostering panels**
- 10. Short-term breaks**
- 11. Family and friend carers**

Part C: Lay Assessor's Summary (where applicable)

- Part D: Provider's Response**
- D.1. Provider's comments**
 - D.2. Action Plan**
 - D.3. Provider's agreement**

INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

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

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Rutland County Council Fostering Service. The inspection findings relate to the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services published by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000, for independent and local authority fostering services respectively.

The Fostering Services Regulations 2002 are secondary legislation, with which a service provider must comply. Service providers are expected to comply fully with the National Minimum Standards. The National Minimum standards will form the basis for judgements by the CSCI in relation to independent fostering agencies regarding registration, the imposition and variation of registration conditions and any enforcement action, and in relation to local authority fostering services regarding notices to the local authority and reports to the Secretary of State under section 47 of the Care Standards Act 2000.

The report follows the format of the National Minimum Standards and the numbering shown in the report corresponds to that of the standards.

The report will show the following:

- Inspection methods used
- Key findings and evidence
- Overall ratings in relation to the standards
- Compliance with the Regulations
- Notifications to the Local Authority and Reports to the Secretary of State
- Required actions on the part of the provider
- Recommended good practice
- Summary of the findings
- Report of the Lay Assessor (where relevant)
- Providers response and proposed action plan to address findings

This report is a public document.

INSPECTION VISITS

Inspections will be undertaken in line with the agreed regulatory framework with additional visits as required. This is in accordance with the provisions of the Care Standards Act 2000. The following inspection methods have been used in the production of this report. The report represents the inspector's findings from the evidence found at the specified inspection dates.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

Rutland County Council foster care service is a small one. At the time of this Inspection, a team of seven foster carers provided placements to half of Rutland's Looked After Children. The fostering service continues to recruit new carers, and has identified areas for the development of the service.

In February 2005 Rutland County Council supported nine foster carers. Two of these are newly approved. The others include two family/kinship carers, two respite carers and three approved for long and short-term placements, bridging, emergency, respite, parent and child, children with disabilities and preparation for independence placements.

Two supervising senior social workers work on a part time basis as the designated Managers, undertaking the overall day-to-day management and operation of the foster care service. They have the overall responsibility for the recruitment, training, approval and support of carers in addition to responding to all placement issues, attending meetings and monitoring and developing the service.

The Head of Children's Services who has overall responsibility for the fostering service visits all carers when chairing annual reviews and provides back up and support when necessary.

There is a dedicated (18.5 hours) administrative assistant supporting the foster care team, and up to 5 additional social worker hours per week.

Other functions of the service, i.e. assessment of new carers, and the management of the Fostering Panel, are provided by Compass, an independent Children's Service Agency.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

Inspector's Summary

(This is an overview of the inspector's findings, which includes good practice, quality issues, areas to be addressed or developed and any other concerns.)

This was a good Inspection. Rutland fostering service consists of a small group of carers who are developing in experience and working well as a team to support placements. New carers are being recruited, and Managers are aware that there is still unmet placement provision for children and young people with more complex and challenging needs. Very good supervision and support was seen to be provided to carers to assist them in the provision of positive placements.

For the purpose of this Inspection four carers, and the children placed with them were systematically tracked through the inspection of case files, home visits and discussions with relevant staff. This methodology subsequently informed the assessment and provided the evidence for each Standard.

Inspectors visited four carers in their homes, two of whom had been recently approved and had no placements yet, one had a child in placement, (but because of particular case circumstances it was agreed that it would not be in the child's interests to interview him) and the other carer facilitated regular respite provision.

One requirement and ten recommendations have been made.

Fitness to Provide and the Management of the Fostering Service. Standards 1-5

All Standards fully met.

Good information about the fostering service is provided in the Statement of Purpose that is reviewed on a monthly basis. A Children's Guide, leaflet style, is now available for younger and older children who are placed within the service.

Rutland County Council Fostering Service is managed and provided by appropriately qualified staff. There are two named Managers of the service, both undertaking National Vocational Qualification level 4 Management. One Manager obtained a B.A. 5 years ago. There are good established systems in place for monitoring the activity of the service. Senior managers and elected members are provided with regular progress reports.

Securing and Promoting Welfare. Standards 6-14.

7 Standards fully met. 1 almost met.

Two recommendations made.

Rutland County Council fostering service continues to provide a good level of supervision, announced and unannounced visits, and information to carers to assist them in the provision of safe placements, in addition to appropriate training. Carers are made aware of the need to appropriately safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people placed with them. A commendation has been made re the use of a risk assessment on the occasion of each new placement.

Health and Education information in files tracked was good.

One recommendation has been made with regard to fostering service Managers placing copies of Placement Agreements on carer files.

One recommendation has been made that risk assessments should be undertaken when carers are supervising contact.

Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers. Standards 15–23

Four Standards fully met. 1 Standard almost met. Four Standards not Inspected.

One requirement. Five recommendations.

Rutland fostering service adheres to clear recruitment procedures for staff and carers. Good management and support systems are in place and carers confirmed that they received a good level of support and training opportunities tailored to individual placement needs. Carers are provided with a very good Carer's Handbook, which is regularly updated. Carers were familiar with the contents of this book.

During a carer meeting with Inspectors, carers raised some issues with Inspectors, which will simply require clarification from the Managers to resolve.

Although the service is now fully staffed, with two senior supervising social workers managing the operation of the whole service, there appears to be little capacity for the expansion and development of the service, and a recommendation has been made that staffing is reviewed as new carers are recruited.

One requirement has been made that all Foster Carer Agreements must state Terms of Approval as specified in Schedule 5. The Inspector had overlooked this during previous Inspections.

Two recommendations relate to Managers of the fostering service needing to clarify; respite provision, cover in each other's absence, and attendance at carer meetings.

One recommendation has been made that consideration be given to a establishing a carers children group, with the option of including Looked After Children in this.

Records and fitness of premises. Standards 24-26

Standard 24 almost met. Other Standards not Inspected.

One recommendation.

Records and files are well organised and maintained, and security and confidentiality issues are taken seriously however there is a need for carers to be reminded about the secure storage of confidential documentation, and a recommendation has been made for this to be addressed.

Financial requirements. Standards 27-29

No Standards Inspected on this occasion.

The last Inspection undertaken in February 2004 found that Rutland County Council fostering service fully complied with these Standards.

Fostering Panels. Standard 30

Standard 30 fully met.

Two recommendations.

Rutland Fostering Panel is well managed and chaired with appropriate membership.

The Panel membership was seen to take the Panel role and function seriously and worked together in a considered and professional manner. The Panel Chair was focussed, thorough, and facilitated the members' contribution.

A very good Fostering Panel Manual and Fostering Panel training are available to assist members with the task.

The two recommendations relate to the verbal confirmation of approval status to candidates immediately on approval, and thereafter written confirmation in all records emanating from the Fostering Panel. Swift written confirmation to newly approved carers has also been recommended.

Short Term Breaks and Family and Friends as carers. Standards 31-32

Both Standards 31 and 32 fully met.

A good flexible respite and day care service is provided by the fostering service. The respite provision is often utilised to facilitate foster carer breaks.

There are two family care arrangements. The service was seen to provide good support to these placements consistent with that provided to mainstream foster carers.

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:

YES

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NA

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	
			NONE	

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	
Not applicable		
Comments		
Not applicable		

Regulation Inspector	Trisha Gibbs	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	Sharon Treadwell	Signature	_____
Regulation Manager	Sue Shaw	Signature	_____
Date	_____		

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	28	FS22	Fostering service Managers are required to ensure that all Foster Care Agreements specify the carer's approval status.	April 1 st 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	FS8	It is recommended that copies of Placement Agreements should be maintained on carer's files.
2	FS9	The Managers of the fostering service are recommended to consider providing Child Protection awareness sessions for newly approved carers when children with significant Child Protection needs are placed with them.
3	FS10	The Managers of the fostering service should ensure that a risk assessment be carried out by placing social workers whenever family contact takes place in carers homes.
4	FS17	The Managers of the fostering service are recommended to review with the Head of Children's Services, the capacity of the staff team, in relation to the overall task of the service, as new carers are recruited.
5	FS17	The Managers of the fostering service are recommended to confirm dates of all carer support meetings for all newly approved carers.
6	FS21	The Managers of the fostering service are recommended to clarify with carers how and when respite breaks can be accessed.
7	FS23	The Managers of the fostering service are recommended to consider developing a group, or an event for carers' children.
8	FS24	The Managers of the fostering service are recommended to remind carers about their responsibility to keep all confidential material (e.g. Looked After Children documents) securely stored and to explain why this is necessary.
9	FS30	The Panel Chair is recommended to specify the Terms of Approval when confirming the recommendation for approval to candidates at the Fostering Panel. This should also be detailed in the Panel Minutes and on the recommendation sheet forwarded to the Agency Decision Maker.
10	FS30	The Managers of the fostering service are recommended to ensure that the letter from the Agency Decision Maker confirming ratification of Panel recommendation and confirmation of Terms of Approval, be sent out within two weeks of the Fostering Panel hearing.

* 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	8
Survey of placing authorities	NO
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	YES
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	NO
• 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	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	07/02/05
Time of Inspection	09.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	73

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

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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The Statement of Purpose for the Rutland Foster Care Service is concise and informative and fully complies with the specification of this Standard. The Statement of Purpose is circulated to elected members, carers and all relevant staff. The document is updated on a monthly basis by the fostering service Manager and is easily accessed on the Rutland website.

A Children's Guide has been designed in close consultation with children who have been placed within the fostering service. The leaflet is brief, simple and clear. An additional leaflet has been drawn up for younger children. Children are also given the more detailed British Association of Adoption and Fostering book for Looked After Children, 'Fostering, what it is and what it means'.

Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The responsible individual, who also manages and oversees the foster care service, has a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work, a Certificate in Child Protection, a B.A. Honours through the Open University.

She has approximately 31 years experience in Social Work. Her title is that of Senior Supervising Social Worker, however for the purpose of this report she is referred to as the Manager of Rutland foster care service. She works 18 ½ hour week.

There is now a permanent part time Senior Supervising Social Worker in post that shares the same job description as the above Manager and is also responsible for management, support and development of Rutland County Council fostering service. She has a Diploma in Social Work (1999) and Post Qualification in Childcare and experience of child protection and children and family work.

Both Managers are registered to undertake National Vocational Qualification level 4 in Management.

Standard 3 (3.1 - 3.4)

Any persons carrying on or managing the fostering service are suitable people to run a business concerned with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The personnel file for the new Manager of the foster care service was seen during this Inspection. Copies of references and Criminal Records Bureau clearance were seen. (See Standard 18)

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?
This Standard was not inspected on this occasion. The Standard was inspected on week beginning 2 nd February 2004 on the occasion of the last Inspection when it was assessed as being fully met.	
Number of statutory notifications made to CSCI in last 12 months:	0
Death of a child placed with foster parents.	0
Referral to Secretary of State of a person working for the service as unsuitable to work with children.	0
Serious illness or accident of a child.	0
Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.	0
Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.	0
Serious incident relating to a foster child involving calling the police to a foster home.	0
Serious complaint about a foster parent.	0
Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.	0
Number of complaints made to CSCI about the agency in the past 12 months:	0
Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:	0

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)

The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
The Managers (Two part time posts) who operate Rutland's foster care service are supported by job descriptions and details of their delegated management duties. These include full responsibility for recruitment, assessment training, supervision of carers and the development of policies and procedures. They also attend planning meetings.	
In the absence of the Managers, the Head of Children's Service deputises.	
An Emergency Duty Team provides an out of hours' service. Carers have the home telephone number of the Head of Service and the mobile telephone number of the supervising social workers.	

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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All files inspected contained good documentation relating to Safe Care and Health and Safety. One carer's personal Safe Care policy was laminated. There was evidence of ongoing discussion within recorded supervision sessions about Safe Care and carer's visited demonstrated an awareness of this.

Carers visited were seen to offer a warm, homely and safe environment to children.

A review of Health and Safety in carer's homes is also undertaken as part of the carers Annual Review, chaired by the Head of Children's Services. Evidence of this process was seen on carers' files. When undertaking the Annual Review the Head of Service visits carers' homes, inspects children's bedrooms and discusses Health and safety issues. **This is commendable.**

Commendable risk assessments were seen on file, drawn up on the occasion of each new placement.

All children placed with the fostering service have their own bedroom.

Placing social workers made positive comments in questionnaires about the provision of safe placements.

All carers are also provided with the Fostering Network Safe Care book and receive training on this.

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

The service has a clear Equal Opportunity Policy statement, and principles that are represented and embodied consistently in key documents, including the Statement of Purpose, Foster Carer Practice agreement, and Placement Principles, that form part of the Fostering Service Manual. Newly assessed carers confirmed that they had discussed Equal Opportunities and diversity issues in some depth during the assessment process.

Training on Anti Discriminatory Practice, Introduction to Special Needs, Mental Health of Looked After Children and Autism are among some of the courses foster carers attend. The Manager confirmed that diversity and equality issues are integral to all training provided.

A good flexible service is provided by one carer for children with special needs, however the fostering Managers indicated that this was an area for which a recruitment initiative was being planned.

Planning records indicate that religious and cultural needs are actively considered.

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

Rutland's child-care services, and foster care workers all operate from one base. When a placement referral is necessary, placing social workers are able to efficiently share key information about care plans and needs with the foster care Managers for the consideration of an appropriate placement. There was again very good evidence of teams working together to locate and support individual placements.

Referral documents and other placement material seen by the Inspection Officers on carer and children's files indicated that the quality of information continues to be very good.

Since Rutland fostering service has only a small group of carers, who have different levels of skills and experience, placement choice is to some extent limited and careful thought is given to each new placement. This was evident in files tracked, however it was noted that one child had been placed with carers out of approval status. A fostering Manager confirmed that the placement had been fully discussed with the Agency Decision Maker and approval formally given for the placement to be made, and acknowledged that this should have been recorded. Carers and placing social worker were in full agreement with the proposed placement, which appears to be progressing well. The fostering service managers are reminded that all decisions made to change approval status should be fully recorded, signed by the Agency Decision Maker and the information taken back to the Fostering Panel for information.

There are currently no trans-racial or trans-cultural placements within the Rutland County Council foster care service, although a recent short-term placement of young person of Chinese heritage was successful. The service, still relatively new, is unable to provide placements for more challenging young people, with complex needs. These are placed with independent agencies, however it was acknowledged that some of the carers originally recruited are increasing in experience, and it is hoped that such placements will ultimately be accommodated within the service. One carer has achieved National Vocational Qualification level 3 Award.

One carer file tracked did not contain a Placement Agreement. Carers confirmed at a carer's meeting that they were routinely provided with these. It was noted that since placing social workers and fostering workers shared office accommodation, that this information was always accessible on the child's file **however it is recommended that copies of Placement Agreements be maintained on carer files.**

The fostering services Managers are commended for introducing an Immediate Placement Agreement for emergency placements.

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?	3
<p>The foster care service has a range of good systems and documents in place to ensure that carers have a developing awareness of Child Protection issues and procedures, and of their own role and responsibility for the protection of children placed with them. The Managers of the fostering service have considerable experience and knowledge of Child Protection.</p> <p>Carers, following approval will receive training in the Area Child Protection Committee Procedures and Recognition of Abuse at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Following the tracking of a child placed with newly approved carers, where significant Child Protection issues were present, it was evident that the carers required considerable support to respond appropriately to a complex situation. Inspectors recommend consideration be given to the provision of Child Protection awareness sessions, as part of the post approval induction carried out with carers, where children who have significant Child Protection needs are placed with them. Inspectors however positively acknowledged the high level of support and instruction provided by the fostering service Manager within the supervision of the above carers, and noted that they had been booked to attend for Child Protection training in the near future.</p> <p>There was very good evidence on file, of an experienced carer responding professionally and appropriately to a young child in placement making disclosures of abuse.</p> <p>Carers are expected to maintain a diary/log in respect of the children placed with them and these are looked at and discussed within monthly supervision sessions. Carers have training and written guidelines within the Carer's Handbook on how to maintain records. Those seen during Inspection were good.</p> <p>Other key documents about Rutland's policy and procedures on Child Protection are included the Foster Care Handbook, The Foster Service Procedural Manual, and Safe Care Policy for carers, and Missing from Home Procedures. Carers are also provided with very good guidelines and training on managing difficult behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable punishments.</p>		
Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:		X

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Rutland Fostering Service and Children's Team work together to promote and supervise contact and this has been consistently evident during Inspections of the service.

Carers are, through written guidance and training, made aware of the need for to support children's contact with families whenever possible and appropriate. Carers routinely assist in collating photographs and other relevant records for the children's Life Story work process.

In one of the cases tracked for Inspection purposes recently approved carers had provided support for contact between a parent and child placed, at their home. It was evident through records and conversations with the carers that the parent had become to some extent dependent on their support and was making emotional demands on them, and that a crisis ultimately necessitated that the carers, although still very committed, play less of a role in the contact arrangements at their home. The carers clearly felt a misguided responsibility towards the parent and felt it was their responsibility to help this parent. Inspectors, when looking at the case identified two issues. No risk assessment had been undertaken by the placing social worker (Standard 10.6) and in addition, the carers stated that they were at the time unclear about the respective role of the fostering service supervising social worker and the placing social worker. A risk assessment would have identified the role and responsibility of carers and of the respective social workers, and also assessed the potential demands that would be made on new carers, who had minimal knowledge of Child Protection.

Again, carer supervision notes confirmed that a very high level of support had been provided to the carers by the fostering service.

There are very good guidelines in Carer's Handbook with regard to Looked After Children having sleepovers at friends houses.

The fostering service should ensure that a risk assessment be carried out by placing social workers in accordance with Standard 10.6 whenever contact takes place in carers homes or when a carer supervises contact.

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The fostering service Managers confirmed that all children placed in foster care are provided with information about their rights and as to how they can access a Children's Rights Officer. The Children's Rights service is commissioned from National Children's Homes and the Children's Rights Officer visits all children over five years old within 4 weeks of them entering care and contacts carers of under 5's. The Children's Rights Officer thereafter sends regular communications to children.

In one case tracked it was noted that there had been an oversight and that the Children's Rights Officer had not been notified about an admission three months ago. This was immediately rectified; however there was good evidence that the child had received an information pack on being accommodated and that the carers had read and discussed the children's guide with him.

Carers, at the carers meeting showed a very good awareness of the role of the Children's Rights Officer and confirmed the procedure. The Carer's Handbook also emphasises the need for children to be consulted and to make their views known.

An elected member, who also sits on the Fostering Panel, sees all Looked After Children regularly in her Corporate Parenting capacity and recognition was given to this in last year's Inspection report.

It was also again noted that placing social workers routinely consult with the children they place, formally and informally, and provide feedback to the foster care staff easily since they work within the same office.

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

Evidence on carer files and through Looked After Children documentation confirmed that children's Health and Medical needs were clearly recorded and addressed in key planning meetings. Health care information, written for children/young people is provided to all carers to give to children as and when appropriate.

Paediatric First Aid training is provided for all carers who receive a three-year certificate for this.

Carers keep records of any medication administered (prescribed or over the counter) on a specially designed form and this is monitored through supervision. Following some observations by Inspectors while tracking files, the fostering service Managers were advised to undertake a supervision/refresher session with individual carers who administer medication, on completion of the very good record sheet.

The foster care service Managers noted that Rutland, along with other nearby Local Authority foster care services is piloting a new medical/health care passport for Looked After Children that contains health, education and medical information. However no separate health record had been provided to the carers of a recently accommodated child. (Standard 12.4) Nevertheless information on file and within carer records confirmed that his health care needs were being fully met. (Managers later confirmed that the carer had been provided with the new health passport by the placing social worker but had not had this explained to them.)

There was good evidence of a carer successfully working with a young child on a weight reduction programme.

Children remain registered with their own General Practitioner whenever possible and practicable. The service also has available, for advice and consultation, a named nurse.

Foster carers are provided with general guidelines on Healthcare in the Carer's Handbook.

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
<p>Rutland County Council foster care service provides all Looked After Children with access to a computer and educational soft wear in the foster home and carers receive I.T. training.</p> <p>Carers spoken to were again able to demonstrate that they maintained a real interest in children's educational development. There were individual examples of carer's commitment to supporting children's education.</p> <p>No children placed within the service are currently suspended or excluded from school.</p> <p>The Carer's Handbook outlines the authorities expectations of carers in relation to the educational needs of the children placed with them.</p> <p>There was only one child specifically tracked during the Inspection and although there was no Personal Education Plan on file, and some confusion about this in planning meeting minutes, the placing social worker and fostering service Managers confirmed that the Plan for the child is being completed.</p>		

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?	0
<p>This Standard was not inspected on this occasion. The Standard was inspected on week beginning 2nd February 2004 on the occasion of the last Inspection when it was assessed as being fully met.</p>		

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

Rutland Social Services Department operates a clear recruitment procedure for the appointment of all childcare staff that meets the requirements of this Standard.

The personnel file for the new fostering service senior supervising social worker was routinely inspected in order to confirm that appropriate recruitment procedures had taken place. There were neither references nor Criminal Records Bureau documentation on file. This was raised with the fostering service Manager who ascertained from the Personnel Section that these had been removed for 'data protection' reasons. The documents were submitted to the Inspector the following day. One reference was followed up with a telephone call and recorded.

The assessment of prospective foster carers is commissioned by Rutland Social Services Department from an independent agency. The contract between the Department and Agency was seen on the last Inspection by the Inspection Officer and note was made of confirmation of staff Criminal Records Bureau checks. The Independent agency in question is also the recipient of Commission for Social Care Inspection Inspections.

Total number of staff of the agency:

4

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?

0

This Standard was not inspected on this occasion. The Standard was inspected on week beginning 2nd February 2004 on the occasion of the last Inspection when it was assessed as being fully met.

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Rutland County Council foster care service although becoming more established, continues to develop both in the recruitment of more carers, and in the identification of future initiatives, necessary to meet local need and the Fostering Service National Minimum Standards and Regulations.

There is now a new permanent part time senior supervising social work in post for the fostering service working in a management capacity along with the other part time senior supervising social worker. This now provides the fostering service with f.t.e. supervising social worker/manager, one 18.5 administrative assistant, in addition to the Head of the Children's Service.

Up to five hours additional supervising social worker support per week is provided by an independent social worker, usually utilised for following up expressions of interest and other separate small pieces of work.

The overall foster carer numbers have increase from 7 to 9 since last year and 2 sets of carers are coming to Panel in the near future.

Currently it is the two senior supervising social workers that undertake all of the various layers of the fostering service tasks. They support each other's caseload, covering each other's work, when the other is not working. Some carers in questionnaires said they were unclear as to whom they should contact in their supervising social workers absence, referring on these occasions to the placing social worker or administrative support worker. Others said they 'tried to keep going' until their supervising social worker was on duty again. Managers however said that cover arrangements are routinely explained to all carers and that additionally, the Head of Children's services would always be available out of hours.

The Managers of the fostering service are advised to confirm to all foster carers in a carer support meeting the arrangements for cover in their absence.

The Inspectors, while acknowledging the positive impact of the new post for both carers and the other senior supervising social worker, believe that this staffing arrangement is just about sufficient to maintain the current group of carers and to manage the service, but that there will not be enough staffing hours to embark on developing the service. The Managers confirmed that more carers are needed to provide a service to children with disabilities, and to young people with more complex and challenging behaviour, so that these children can be accommodated within the county. In addition to this, as noted in this report there is a potential need for children's groups (both carer's children and looked after children) to be established.

The Managers of the fostering service are recommended to review with the Head of Children's Services, the capacity of the staff team, in relation to the overall task of the service, as new carers are recruited.

The assessment process for the approval of new carers is made clear to them and detailed in writing. The foster service team sends out information packs and undertakes home visits. The Managers of the service then provide Choosing to Foster sessions, and an independent assessor subsequently undertakes the full assessment function.

Evidence of this process and assessment material was seen on carer files. There was an example of an excellent and rigorous standard of assessment taking place. Carers who had recently been approved were spoken to.

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?

0

This Standard was not inspected on this occasion. The Standard was inspected on week beginning 2nd February 2004 on the occasion of the last Inspection when it was assessed as being exceeded.

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?

0

This Standard was not inspected on this occasion. The Standard was inspected on week beginning 2nd February 2004 on the occasion of the last Inspection when it was assessed as being fully met.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)

All staff are properly accountable and supported.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This Standard was not inspected on this occasion. The Standard was inspected on week beginning 2nd February 2004 on the occasion of the last Inspection when it was assessed as being fully met.

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

There is a comprehensive Procedural Manual for the operation of the Rutland County Council foster care service. This includes a section on the Management and Review of Foster Carers, and a section that identifies support systems for Foster Carers, i.e. Rutland's strategy for working with and supporting carers.

Carers are provided with a Carer's Handbook containing information relevant to the fostering task. The Handbook is concise and accessible. **The service is commended on the clarity and range of information provided in Handbook.** Supervising social workers go through the Carer's Handbook with new carers. Carers were familiar with the content of their Handbook and indicated that they referred to it. There was good evidence of updates being circulated for carers to add.

Clear and well-documented annual review reports were again seen in carer files. These were comprehensive and evidenced good consultation with all relevant individuals, including children placed and carer's children. Ample evidence was also available of appropriate consultation and communication between placing social workers and the foster care service Manager.

Carers meet regularly as a group, now meeting in each other's houses on a rotational basis. Carers visited strongly indicated that they highly valued these meetings. There appeared to be confusion as to how soon newly approved carers could attend these meetings. The Managers of the service indicated that all approved carers were invited, however those (newly approved) visited were not aware of meeting dates. **The Managers are recommended to clarify dates of all meetings to all carers.**

The fostering service provides carer respite, arranging short breaks/respice for carers and to support individual placement stability. Evidence of this was seen on carer files and some good examples noted of carers supporting each other through this provision. Carer needs are individually responded to. At a carer group meeting however, attended by an Inspector, there appeared to be genuine confusion about access and entitlement to carer respite. **The fostering service Managers are recommended to clarify with carers how and when respite breaks can be accessed.**

Carers are paid members of local and national fostering networks. The local fostering association has had minimal involvement with the service to date, and the Inspectors advised that a representative should be invited to a carer group meeting to describe the role of the association. The fostering service Managers confirmed that a visit had already been arranged.

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

Carers all sign Foster Carer Practice Agreements on approval. Currently these agreements do not contain Terms of Approval as required under Regulation 28 Schedule 5 and the **fostering service Managers are required to ensure that all Foster Care Agreements specify the carer's approval status. The Inspector on previous Inspections had overlooked this.** Managers are advised to check carer files to ensure accuracy of carer approval status and to include this on the carer profile at front of file for clarity.

Foster carer files again contained **commendable** evidence of regular detailed formal recorded supervision from the fostering Managers, covering all aspects of their role and responsibility, in addition to two unannounced visits a year.

Carers confirmed that they valued their supervision sessions highly and expressed and valued the individual support offered to them.

Some concerns were raised about whether they would receive the same amount of support and supervision if the service expanded and more carers were recruited. Some, as already indicated, said that they felt more comfortable seeking support when their supervising social worker was on duty, and reluctant to seek help during the half of the week their supervising social worker was not working. They did however acknowledge that there would always be someone they could talk to.

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

Within the last year carers have attended a range of courses, some identified in view of the needs of specific placements. Inspectors saw details of these, and individual carers confirmed on visits the real value of training they had attended.

Currently, apart from on the occasion of initial assessments and Annual Reviews when carers' natural children are consulted and included, there is little additional time and attention given to the natural children of carers. In line with Standard 23.7 **the Managers of the service are recommended to consider developing a group, or event for carers' children.** This could be with, or without placed children. There is evidence that natural children of carers have a significant impact on the success of a placement and that more actively including and involving them can assist with positive outcomes.

One Looked After Child commented on the questionnaire 'It would be nice to go out with other foster children'

Recently approved carers spoke positively about the quality of consultation given to their child during the assessment 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?	3
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Rutland County Councils Child Care Procedural Manual contains good detailed guidelines on record keeping and policy guidelines on case recording. All case records are monitored and audited by the Head of Service. Inspectors noted evidence of this. The Fostering Procedural manual also contains details about case records relating to foster carers.

Carers indicated that they are provided with sufficient and appropriate information about the children placed with them, and are supported to actively participate in life story work activity both in provision of materials and also in training sessions. Guidelines for doing this are provided in the Carer's Handbook. Carers are consulted about and included in the childcare planning and reviewing and helped through training and supervision to understand the process.

The Foster Service Procedural Manual includes a Confidentiality policy that outlines the principles of confidentiality and how information should be recorded, stored shared and maintained in respect of both carers and children.

Some carers seen during the Inspection did not have confidential documents stored securely but stated that they were currently acquiring a lockable cabinet for storing records. **The fostering service Managers are recommended to remind all carers about their responsibility to keep all confidential material e.g. Looked After Children documents, securely stored and to explain why this is necessary.**

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?**

0

This Standard was not inspected on this occasion. The Standard was inspected on week beginning 2nd February 2004 on the occasion of the last Inspection when it was assessed as being exceeded.

With regard to information below;

- 11 placements were for 10 children, including respite.
- 3 placements were to Independent Fostering Agencies.
- 2 placements were to Residential Schools.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:

8

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

11

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

5

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

3

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

1

Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £

70

Maximum £

150

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?

0

This Standard was not inspected on this occasion. The Standard was inspected on week beginning 2nd February 2004 on the occasion of the last Inspection when it was assessed as being fully met.

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?

0

This Standard was not inspected on this occasion. The Standard was inspected on week beginning 2nd February 2004 on the occasion of the last Inspection when it was assessed as being fully met.

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?

0

This Standard was not inspected on this occasion. The Standard was inspected on week beginning 2nd February 2004 on the occasion of the last Inspection when it was assessed as being fully 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?

0

This Standard was not inspected on this occasion. The Standard was inspected on week beginning 2nd February 2004 on the occasion of the last Inspection when it was assessed as being fully met.

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?

3

An updated Panel information file is now in place that contains more detailed Terms of Reference, and additional information to assist Panel members to carry out their responsibilities. A copy of Standard 30 from the National Minimum Standards and Fostering Regulations is included. **This is commended.**

The membership of the Fostering Panel meets all of the regulatory requirements. All members have been subject to the required Criminal Records Bureau checks. One Panel Member (Foster Carer) has recently resigned.

The overall management of Rutland County Council Fostering Panel is commissioned from an Independent Children's Service Agency. The contracts and agreements drawn up between the agencies were looked at during the last Inspection.

The Inspector observed the Fostering Panel consider one application for approval. The assessment provided was comprehensive and contained good analysis of competencies and skills. The Fostering Panel considered the assessment with the Panel Chair, prior to the assessing social worker and then the applicants joining the Panel. It was evident that all Panel members had read the assessment. The Chair managed the Panel process in a clear focussed manner, putting the candidates at ease while ensuring questions were answered to members satisfaction. All Panel members were provided with opportunities to represent questions and views and candidates were facilitated to give open and frank answers. The Fostering Panel worked well together and the candidates gave positive feedback to the Inspector during the Inspection about their experience of being assessed and approved.

The application was a positive one and the candidates were recommended for approval following discussion between Panel members.

The Panel Chair is recommended to specify the Terms of Approval when confirming the recommendation for approval to candidates at the Fostering Panel. This should also be detailed in the Panel Minutes and on the recommendation sheet forwarded to the Agency Decision Maker.

In addition the Managers of the fostering service are recommended to ensure that the letter from the Agency Decision Maker confirming ratification of Panel recommendation and confirmation of Terms of Approval, be sent out within two weeks of the Fostering Panel hearing. There was evidence to indicate that this information had been taking up to a month to process.

Training is provided for the Fostering Panel Members and a day event is planned for March. Annual reports summarising the activity of the fostering service will be presented. As an agenda item the Panel is routinely provided with information about the fostering service.

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?

3

The foster care service offers a flexible day and short stay respite service for children who have disabilities. The Manager confirmed that carers are provided with training and support to specifically meet the needs of the children placed with them. Evidence of this was again seen in carer files and training records. Excellent Day Care Agreements were seen on file.

The Inspector visited a carer who is approved to provide respite breaks and day care. This carer has much experience in childcare and qualified as a Nursery Nurse several years ago. She clearly had much to offer parents of young children through flexible day care as well as parents of children who have a disability and require a short break. She demonstrated a commendable non-judgemental attitude towards parents, and genuine satisfaction about her role. She was also able to be honest about her limitations but was modest about her strengths. She confirmed that she received a very good level of supervision and support.

The Managers of the fostering service have identified that respite provision for children with disabilities and special needs is an area of the service that needs developing.

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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Rutland foster care service supports formally approved family carers, who have agreements, terms and conditions that totally comply with the National Minimum Standards. The Managers confirmed that Family and Friends carers receive the same supervision, training and allowances as other carers. Managers have also acknowledged that ideally, specific training and support should be provided for family carers to supplement other training, and that this is actively being explored.

During the carer group meeting some carers indicated that they felt that family carers were not provided with as much support as other carers. There was no evidence seen during the Inspection to support this, and returned questionnaires did not indicate this. A family carer visited last year was extremely positive about the support offered to her by the fostering service. The Managers of the fostering service have said that they would follow this issue up.

Currently the fostering service supports 2 kinship care arrangements; one carer was visited during last years Inspection.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Not applicable

Lay Assessor

Not applicable

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 week beginning 7th February 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

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

YES

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

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 Tuesday, 12 April 2005 , which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

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

NO

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

NO

Other: <enter details here>

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

Print Name _____
Signature _____
Designation _____
Date _____

Or

D.3.2 I Colin Foster of Rutland County Council 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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