



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

London Borough of Harrow Fostering Services

429-433 Pinner Road

North Harrow

Middx

HA1 4HN

21 & 23 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

London Borough of Harrow Fostering Services

Address

429-433 Pinner Road, North Harrow, Middx, HA1 4HN

Local Authority Manager

Sarah Alexander

Tel No:

020 8863 5544

Address

429-433 Pinner Road, North Harrow, Middx, HA1 4HN

Fax No:

020 8424 8054

Email Address

Sarah.alexander@harrow.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

19/12/03

Date of Inspection Visit		21 & 23 February 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Bernard Burrell	098137
Name of Inspector	2		
Name of Inspector	3		
Name of Inspector	4		
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the 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		Sarah Alexander (Group Manager Provisions)	

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 London Borough of Harrow Fostering Services. 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 Harrow Fostering Service leaflet guide outline the various areas of its aims, structure, principles of the services, foster carers tasks and range of services provided to children and young people.

The key objectives according to the Statement of Purpose are to provide safe and appropriate foster care placements for children looked after by the borough, to identify and coordinate placements of Looked After Children, to recruit, assess, train and support carers and to raise the profile of fostering in Harrow.

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 inspection took place over two days with follow-up enquires to the borough's fostering service and foster carers. Various staff and senior managers in the fostering and children services assisted with the inspection process.

The findings indicated the borough has made good progress in several key areas since the previous inspection. These included recruitment of some key staff, development of the educational opportunities and options available to looked after children, re-organising of children and young people's files, expanding the training opportunities for foster carers and recruitment of a coordinator/social worker to the kinship post.

The inspector was satisfied that based on the recorded evidence examined, interviews with social workers, senior managers, plus feed back from foster carers- good attempts have been made to safeguard the interest and welfare of Children Looked After.

However, the inspector identified a number of areas where there were shortfalls below the National Minimum Standards (NMS). These included inadequate staffing of the fostering service and lack of awareness among some staff about the business and development plans for the service.

There were shortfalls relating to duplication of records among the children services teams and the need for closer linkage and uniformity between the children and family services.

There is also the need for development of a more effective functioning foster panel. The service will need to ensure all reviews are carried out on time and there is consistency in monitoring and support to all foster carers, plus development of a uniform and accessible electronic system across the children and family services.

Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)

The Statement of Purpose leaflet provided by the fostering service was reviewed in January 2005. The Statement outlined the aims and objectives of the service, principles of the service, structure and range of services provided, number of looked after children and young people placed, foster carers tasks, services provided for children and other information relating to links with other policies and procedures.

There was reference to the numbers of complaints dealt with, summary details of how complaints are managed but no informative guide on how to make complaints to the service or to other external agencies such as the Commission. The document needed to be written in a more user-friendly style, reflecting the diversity and needs of users.

Fitness to Carry on and Manage the Fostering Service (Standards 2-3)

Two standards were inspected in this area, Standard 3 had minor shortfalls relating to clarity of tasks undertaken by social workers in the team. The borough also needs to recruit a permanent quota of staff to run the service more effectively, consistently and reliably. There is also need for reassessment/review of the team structure and the likely future impact on the services.

Management of the Fostering Service (Standards 4-5)

The two standards were inspected and both had shortfalls.

The inspection findings indicated procedures for standards of care are followed according to regulatory requirements. Business plan was in place but does not appear to be understood by all staff or how it impact on their roles and responsibilities.

Audits are undertaken by senior officers, but there was lack of clarity among some staff how these influence the overall delivery and quality of the service.

The agency will need to ensure carer's reviews are carried out more systematically and timely, data collection must be more focused with results translated into development of appropriate tools/systems to help improve the management and delivery of the service.

Securing and Promoting Welfare (Standards 6-14)

The eight standards were inspected in this category. Standards 6, 10, 12, & 14 met the requirements of the NMS. Standard 13 exceeded the NMS and Standards 7, 8, 9 & 11 had shortfalls.

The inspection findings indicated the Borough's fostering service is working well to help ensure the educational needs of LAC are catered for through a collaboration of various educational support links, professional support and services.

However, improvement is needed in the following areas: more and better training in diversity issues for all carers, consistency in planning and carrying out of reviews, closer monitoring of foster placements to help identify potential problems or weaknesses.

Closer attention must also be given to placement matching to help ensure the best outcomes are achieved for the LAC. For example, the right ethnic and cultural matching.

More and continued strategic recruitment of foster carers from more diverse backgrounds- particularly carers from Asian and Muslim communities- plus review of the consultation and working relationship with all foster carers, relatives and professionals such as teachers.

Recruitment, Checking, Managing, Supporting and Training of Staff and Foster Carers (Standards 15-23)

Nine standards were inspected in this category. Standards 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22 and 23 met the requirements of the NMS. Standards 17 & 21 had shortfalls.

The findings indicated the foster service complies with relevant statutory requirements plus ensures required checks and references are carried out when new staff and foster carers are recruited.

However there were missing documentations relating to the NSPCC, health and safety checks reports on a few carers' files. Inadequate staffing cover was also identified as a

shortfall. In addition, a few carers reported they felt inadequately supported by the service and that reviews and home visits were not always carried out or on time as agreed.

Records (Standards 24-25)

Both standards were inspected and both had shortfalls.

The findings indicated the fostering service has started work improving its record management, storage and organisation. However, several current working case files had important information missing and some outdated. The fostering service will need to ensure a full audit of all files is carried out in the restructuring process.

The Children In Need (CIN) team held some LAC records and it appeared lack of coordinated and uniform working relationship between the teams has resulted in unnecessary obstacles when fostering staff try to access certain records.

Fitness of Premises (Standards 26)

This standard was inspected and the findings indicated shortfalls.

At the time of this inspection, the main reception area was undergoing renovation. Space in the main office is limited and in some areas overcrowded with desks, filing cabinets and other documentations. There was also lack of adequate private spaces where families and LAC can meet when they visit the fostering service.

Financial Requirements (Standards 27-29)

All three standards were inspected and the findings indicated the agency continues to meet the NMS in Standards 27 and 28. Standards 29 had shortfall relating to review of carers' allowance and the need for increase in the budget allocation to the fostering service.

Fostering Panel (Standard 30)

This standard was inspected and the findings indicated the agency has shortfalls in this area.

The evidence received indicated the panel struggles to consider all cases presented. It has been recognised by the foster service management team that there is a need for more panel meetings and recruitment of more panel members.

The panel currently meet every other week and it is recognised that all day meetings at least every two weeks might now be necessary, plus improvements in the timescales of reports coming to the panel.

Short Term Breaks (Standard 31)

This standard was inspected and the indications are the service has made some commendable progress in meeting the needs of LAC in this area. However some short falls were identified.

The evidence received indicated there is continuity of care and some carers have provided regular short term breaks for their link children for the last 5 years.

The inspector was satisfied that necessary checks are made and support is offered to kinship carers and parents retain a central role in the placements.

However, staffing is inadequate to meet the growing demands on the service. Recruitment of additional carers plus appropriate training is needed. The service will also need to ensure

recruitment of the Practice Leader to manage the team on a permanent basis.

Family and Friends as Carers (Standard 32)

This standard was inspected and had shortfalls.

However, the inspector was satisfied the same level of support and benefits offered to non-kinship carers were been offered to family and friends who are carers.

The unit now has a temporary Kinship Coordinator, but more permanent staffing is needed to help respond more effectively to the demands and challenges of the service.

The evidence provided to the inspector indicated there is need for better awareness and knowledge in the CIN team about what Kinship placement is, plus all Reg.38 assessment needed to get to panel on time.

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)

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

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NO

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Identified below are areas not addressed from the last inspection report which indicate a non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000 and Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

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	Bernard Burrell	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	_____	Signature	_____
Regulation Manager	Gail Freeman	Signature	_____
Date	14/06/2005		_____

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, 4	FS1	<p>The registered provider must ensure when the Statement of Purpose is next reviewed and updated, it must contain the information as outlined in Standard 1.4</p> <p>It must also be written in a style that is likely to be understood by most of the users.</p> <p>Summary details about the complaints procedure must also be given with contact details of external monitoring agency such as the CSCI.</p> <p>The provider must ensure the Statement of Purpose outlines clearly, how it aims to achieve its aims and objectives.</p>	30/06/05
2	8 (2) (3)	FS3	<p>The provider must ensure there is clarity of tasks undertaken by social workers in the team.</p> <p>The provider must consider reassessment of time management for staff to help ensure consistency in performance.</p>	30/06/05
3	35, 42	FS4	<p>The provider must ensure reviews of placements are managed more efficiently and consistently to help achieve effectiveness and quality performance in the service.</p>	30/06/05

3	19, 21		<p>The provider must ensure the fostering service is adequately staffed at all times so that a more effective, efficient and reliable service can be delivered.</p> <p>The provider must ensure the recruitment of a practice team leader to fill the post on a permanent basis in the Family Placement Team.</p> <p>The provider must ensure stability in management of the service is resolved to help achieve some level of consistency and effectiveness in the delivery.</p> <p>This requirement is outstanding from the last inspection and full compliance is now required in line with the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000.</p>	30/06/05
4		FS7	<p>The provider must ensure more effort is made to help promote better understanding of diversity issues among foster carers.</p> <p>Additional training and support must also be offered to foster carers in this area.</p>	30/06/05
5	33 (b) 34, 35	FS8	<p>The provider must ensure that each child/young person placed is carefully matched to help ensure carers are able to meet the varied needs of children and young people.</p>	30/06/05

6	12, 13, 17	FS9	<p>The provider must ensure where allegations of abuse have been made against a foster carer but is not proven; re-training must be offered to the carer in the areas of concern.</p> <p>The provider must ensure that all required checks and references are carried out and available on each case file to help ensure the safety, wellbeing and protection of each looked after child/young person.</p> <p>The provider must ensure the outcome of all Child Protection investigation outstanding at the time of this inspection is sent to the Commission by the timescale date.</p> <p>The provider must ensure where an investigation is ongoing about a complaint of alleged abuse, established procedures must be in place to arrange alternative and appropriate placements for the LAC.</p>	30/06/05
7	35 (3) (a) (b)	FS11	<p>The provider must ensure the views and opinions of each LAC is sought and recorded on their case files.</p> <p>Where a child/young person is unable to give their views, those of their advocates or other significant persons must be sought and recorded.</p>	30/06/05
8	21 (4) (a)	FS21	<p>The provider must ensure the strategy for working with and supporting foster carers is fully implemented.</p> <p>The provider must ensure more effort is made to seek the views of individual foster carers particularly black foster carers either through the review process, carers' meeting or during the home visits.</p>	30/06/05
9	30	FS24	<p>The provider must ensure a comprehensive review is carried out of all foster carers and LAC files in the fostering service.</p> <p>The provider must also ensure that duplication of records is minimised and more use is made of electronic recordings and documentations to help reduce the volume of paper records.</p>	30/06/05

10	22, 30, 32	FS25	<p>The provider must ensure case records are fully updated, all relevant documentations are contained in each case file, old records are archived on time and signatures must be made to verify agreement and ownership of recorded information.</p> <p>The provider must also ensure all agreed supervisory visits are carried out on time and consistently.</p>	30/06/05
11	23 (1)	FS26	<p>The provider must ensure adequate private space is made available within the fostering service where LAC, carers, staff and other significant others can meet.</p>	30/06/05
12	44	FS29	<p>The provider must ensure an appropriate system for counting the unit cost is developed.</p> <p>The provider must ensure that review of carers' allowance is carried out.</p> <p>The provider must also ensure the service is adequately funded to help achieve quality performance and outcomes.</p>	30/06/05
13	24, 25, 26.	FS30	<p>The provider must ensure a review of the foster panel current operational structure is carried out.</p> <p>The provider must also ensure improvement is made in relation to timescales of reports reaching the panel.</p> <p>The provider must ensure recruitment of more panel members and review of panel meetings are carried out.</p>	30/06/05
14	19, 37	FS31	<p>The provider must ensure more carers are recruited to help meet the identified needs of LAC who are been looked after in short-term foster care breaks.</p>	30/06/05

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action

* 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	2
Survey of placing authorities	NO
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	NO
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	YES
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	NO
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	YES
• Contact with parents	NO
• Contact with supervising social workers	YES
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	YES
Interview with panel chair	NO
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	NO
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	NO
Date of Inspection	21/02/05
Time of Inspection	10AM
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	13

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?
---------------------------	---------------

The Statement of Purpose was last reviewed in January 2005 and according to the manager, it reflected the expectations in the running of the fostering service in Harrow Council.

The manager also stated that the Statement could be used more 'regularly to remind staff of its importance in planning priorities for the service.' She also stated the Statement has been updated to reflect staff changes and current figures for carers and children in the service.

The Statement of Purpose has also been amended in line with the change of purpose and function of the Child Care Planning Panel that is reflected in the procedures of the services' policies.

The findings by the inspector indicated the Statement of Purpose should focus not only the statistical achievements by the fostering service, but also how it plans to achieve its aims and objectives.

The complaints section should also give details of how and to whom complaints can be made, for example the contact details of the Commission's area office in Harrow.

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?	
---------------------------	---------------	--

The inspection findings indicated the current principal service manager (who is due to leave the section shortly to another area of the borough) is well qualified and experienced in her role. She is also a qualified social worker with relevant experience working in childcare, protection and management of fostering teams.

The service manager has been managing the fostering service after the previous Team manager resigned in 2003. A new team manager was recently appointed. The service manager assured the inspector, she will spend several months helping the new manager as he develop in his new role before she moves to her new posting.

The service also has an acting-up Practice Manager who has been in post since December 2004. She has responsibility for the daily operations of the fostering service and supervision of social work staff in the team. There is plan to recruit a manager to the position permanently and the current acting up manager stated she might apply for the position.

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?	
---------------------------	---------------	--

The inspection findings indicated that each of the senior managers and staff working in the fostering service at the time of this inspection, were suitable qualified with a range and level of experience and expertise to carry on the service.

Reports from foster carers, plus examination of cases files and recordings indicated the welfare of the LAC were been looked after and safeguarded, despite the staffing instability in the team. The service is also benefiting from the temporary recruitment of the practice leader to the Family Link section, plus introduction of the Kinship post/co-coordinator. However, there is currently only one staff assigned to manage the growing demands of the Kinship section.

The service manager indicated in the self-assessment that areas needing improvement will be clarity of tasks undertaken by social workers in the fostering team to help ensure they are more focused and able to complete tasks within given timescales.

There is a recognition that a permanent manager needs to be in post, plus general

improvement in the recruitment of staff and review of the team structure and operation. This should help to ensure the LAC and foster carers are fully supported at all times.

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?

2

The inspection findings indicated some good practices are being carried out by the fostering service team in several areas to help achieve objectives and efficiency. Telephone contacts are made with foster carers and reports from some foster carers indicated they are satisfied with the quality, level of service and support they received.

The foster carers meetings, LAC reviews, and training sessions are also used to help identify and monitor issues and needs of carers and LAC. The inspector noted that there was a business plan in place, which contained indicators for directions in which each team is expected to work towards.

The responses from staff interviewed by the inspector indicated supervision and staff development appraisal is now being offered on a more regular basis. Recorded information of files confirmed this to be the case.

The reports received from the service manager also indicated periodic reviews of financial and budgeting procedural matters are carried out at monthly meetings.

The findings also indicated reviews of carers/placements need to be better planned and carried out on time and in line with the objectives of the Statement of Purpose and contractual agreements with foster carers.

The findings also indicated the collection of data needs to be streamlined and provide clearer analytical interpretations to help make their usefulness better understood and purposeful- internally and externally.

There is also plan for development of a new IT system by December 2005. It is hope this will help to streamline some of the above tasks and data collection procedures, plus enable better monitoring, sharing of and access to information across the children and family teams.

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. Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.	6
	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?	2
<p>The inspection findings indicated the fostering service continues to undergo changes relating to the staffing and managerial cover and structure. These changes have had some negative and positive impact on the delivery, quality and reliability of the service been offered.</p> <p>The service manager briefed the inspector about the various changes been planned, including recruitment of permanent staff to adequately cover and bring some level of stability and performance to the service.</p> <p>The inspection findings indicated that despite the above, staff appeared dedicated and have been making invaluable contribution to help ensure the service is managed well and to the benefit of LAC and foster carers.</p>		

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
---------------------------	---------------	---

The inspection findings indicated the agency has been making credible attempts to ensure its recruits suitable foster carers who are able to provide appropriate, safe and nurturing environment for the LAC.

Social work staff in the team carry out home visits and assessments as part of the application process for prospective foster carers. Additional monitoring is also done during supervisory visits to help the homes continue to offer safe, healthy and nurturing environment.

The inspector examined a selection of the approved foster carers files and was satisfied acceptable procedures are followed to help ensure carers maintain the level of safety and standards as required by regulation.

The information seen on files and received by the inspector also indicated training is provided to carers in key areas such as health and education.

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
---------------------------	---------------	---

The inspection findings indicated the fostering service benefits from the borough's proactive diversity policy and practices in its social services across the borough. The evidence examined indicated good effort has been and continues to be made to recruit foster carers to reflect the demographic needs and make up of the borough.

Reports from foster carers also indicated that they were satisfied with the fostering service equal opportunity policy and practices and the effort made to promote equality and diversity in the service.

The findings also indicated foster carers could benefit from additional training on diversity issues and the fostering service must continue its efforts to try and recruit carers from more diverse backgrounds that reflect the diversity of the looked after children and young people plus the borough's communities.

One foster carer from an African-Caribbean background who has been caring for children from Eastern European background stated she found it a struggle sometimes trying to meet the

children's cultural needs. Recorded information on file showed that another carer requested help to manage the challenges faced trying to meet the cultural and challenging behaviour needs of a looked after child.

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The inspection findings indicated effort is been made to place children with the right matching foster carers that reflect their cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds and care needs.

However, the documented evidence on a few case files plus interview with foster carers, indicated the fostering service does not always managed to achieve right matching placements, particularly in some emergency placements.

One foster carer informed the inspector she was caring for children from Eastern European background. She stated she would feel more confident and able to offer support and care to children from her own ethnic/cultural background because of her sound understanding and familiarity.

She stated further, she had to learn as she went along about the backgrounds and cultural/ethnic needs of the children in her care and it has been challenging.

Examination of foster carers' files also showed that another foster couple was experiencing on going challenging behaviour from one half of a sibling group. The couple requested to have children from their own background in future.

The fostering service will need to ensure foster carer's experiences such as these are taken into account when placement matching is been considered. More effort must be made to help ensure looked after children and young people are placed in homes that are best able to meet their assessed needs.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

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

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

The fostering service has clear policy and procedural guidelines that are given to each foster carer about protecting each child in their care from abuse, neglect, exploitation and abuse.

Examination of recorded evidence showed careful monitoring is carried out and prompt reaction is made to address issues of concerns.

The inspector received information about the outcomes of 6 child protection enquiries and was satisfied the procedures for safeguarding the children and young people were followed.

Supervision of carers and placements is also carried out by the agency, but this is inconsistent because of inadequate staffing. In addition, the service relies on feedback from looked after children and young people, carers' reviews, plus safe caring training as monitoring tools to help protect the children and young people from possible abuse, neglect and exploitation.

However, a few of the current working case files for foster carers did not have evidence to verify the NSPCC checks had been received and a few cases did not have the required health and safety checks.

In addition, forms A7 and AH were missing from some files. The practice leader stated some documents maybe on the master file. The inspector advised essential documentations and references should be kept on current working files.

The service will need to address the issue of how best to ensure appropriate alternative placements for looked after children and young people when the services of a foster carer is suspended, pending the outcome of investigation into allegations.

The service will also need to ensure where allegations of abuse have been made against foster carers but unproven, the support offered to the carers should include re-training that focuses on the areas of concern.

There was also a report on a case file about a child protection strategy meeting held in November 2004 to discuss an allegation made against a foster carer.

The inspector was of the view updated recordings should be on case files to verify the stages and outcomes of investigations relating to allegations and complaints made by LAC.

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

100

%

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The foster carers questionnaire survey responses gave examples of how contacts are maintained, encouraged and supported by foster carers. Some foster carers facilitated contacts by encouraging looked after children and young people to contact their birth parents by phone, others help and support supervised visits.

The care plans also gave information about how contacts should be carried out, frequency and who should be involved.

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

The inspection findings indicated the recorded reports showed examples of reviews, meetings and discussions with foster carers, birth parents and significant others at LAC reviews for example.

The findings also indicated that participation officers, independent visitors and parents sometimes attend reviews as required. LAC groups also meet to give their views and feedback.

Children and young people reportedly participate in Placement Agreement meetings. Their views are requested and recorded at the Child Care Panel. In addition, the fostering service indicated the feedback from young people is also incorporated into the LAC reviews.

However, there was insufficient evidence in some case files to verify that the views and opinions of all looked after children and young people were sought or recorded.

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

The evidence on the case files plus discussions held with managers at the fostering service indicated each looked after children and young person is registered with a GP in the area where he/she lives. Carers also assist children and young people to attend medical appointments when necessary.

Information recorded on case files showed information about health checks and visits made by some children and young people to seek or get medical help. There were also examples of letters of communication between health professionals, foster carers and supervising social workers.

The service also provides training to foster carers in first aid, basic health awareness and information about management and control of medication in the homes.

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?**

4

The evidence seen by the inspector showed good effort is been made to help ensure appropriate support is offered to meet the educational needs of children and young people.

The borough produces a number of information leaflets and guides about the range of educational and extra curricular activities available to children and young people. The inspector also spoke to the chief staff member working on the Gatsby Project- a joint education support operation between the education and social services departments.

Children are also provided with computers at their foster carer homes.

At the time of this inspection, there was a draft-training programme for foster carers. The plan is to offer training support in literacy and numeracy. A pilot session of between 10 and 12 carers for each session is been planned and will be built into the training programme.

Additional educational support to children and young people included: Book of My Own project, PEPS programme, photography project, drama project and extra educational tuition (Harrow Tuition Services) for children who are permanently excluded.

An educational specialist also sits on the foster panel and the service provides an educational psychologist to help with children and young people experiencing challenging behavioural problems.

The children and young people attendance at schools is monitored through a register system that alerts the welfare link service and carers of a child/young persons' absence.

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**

The responses received from the foster carer's questionnaire survey plus discussions with the service manager, indicated support is been offered to those looked after children and young people who are nearing the age when they will move on to adult or semi-independent and supported living.

There is plan to start a Learning Care Life Skills course from Easter 2005. Areas such as budgeting, setting up a new home, housing benefit and accessing resources are among some of the topics that will be covered.

Cases are also referred to the Leaving Care Team for those looked after young people ages 16 plus. Reviews are reportedly carried out with young people by age 15+ to help identify care support needs necessary to help with development of life skills and transition to adult living.

Young people are also supported through the Pathway Plan- a project identify goals for each young person planning to leave care- plus training to carers to equipped them with the skills and knowledge necessary to help young people with transition to independent living.

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 inspection findings indicated relevant checks and references are carried out for staff and carers working for the fostering service. Each new foster carer is given a written contract of terms and conditions, which include home insurance matters, confidentiality, personal liability, changes in circumstances notification, sanctions and punishment.

Mandatory training is also provided to each foster carer applying to join the service. Follow – up training is provided in areas such as health and safety.

The inspector interviewed a selection of staff in the fostering service and was satisfied they demonstrated necessary competencies, skills and relevant experience to carry out their job.

Each social worker carries an average 12 cases and is supervised by the Acting Practice Leader.

Total number of staff of the agency:

13

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

2

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The service has been affected in the last several months from inadequate staffing and permanent senior management cover. Effort is now been made to address this shortfall.

The inspection findings indicated that the current acting practice leader has been making good efforts to ensure staff under her responsibility receives regular supervision. Staff also reported that her recruitment to the team has brought some level of stability, focus and direction.

However, the fostering service must ensure the issue of permanent management and adequate staffing cover is resolved to help ensure delivery of the service becomes more efficient, reliable and effective.

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

As indicated above and elsewhere in this report, the effectiveness and reliability of the fostering service suffers from inadequate staffing to help carry out the stated aims and objectives of the service.

Responses from the inspector's interview with staff indicated the instability and absence of permanent management and staffing in the fostering service has negatively impacted the delivery, consistency and focus of the service.

The inspection findings also indicated the inadequate staffing cover has been impacting on the consistency of reviews and support to some carers, children and young people.

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

The inspection findings indicated that the fostering service approach to employment of staff and carers is consistent with its stated aims and objectives as an equal opportunity employer. Staff who spoke to the inspector confirmed they are satisfied with the practices in this area.

The staff also reported they are now receiving necessary support and supervision, plus access to relevant training and development.

The service manager stated social workers will be undertaking training in competency-based assessments from Spring 2005.

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

As indicated above, staff will be required to undertake training in competency-based assessments from Spring 2005.

Examinations of supervision notes also showed discussions and plans have been made around staff professional development and identification of training needs. All social work staff working in the fostering section have completed the required General Social Care Council (GSCC) application to be registered as social workers.

The fostering service has a staff with responsibility for organising, identifying, co-ordinating and planning training for staff and foster carers.

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

The inspector had discussions with a few staff members and was satisfied they demonstrated professional accountability in their roles and responsibilities.

The findings also indicated a positive culture and awareness of the needs of children and young people among the staff team.

Staff reported they received planned supervision, plus informal support from each other and managers in the service.

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6)**The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

The inspection findings indicated the service benefits from procedural guidelines designed to ensure foster carers are supported in the roles. There is a 24-hour help line, duty system during office hours to answer calls and requests from foster carers, reviews and supervising home visits and reassessments plus telephone contacts.

In addition, there are regular foster carers meetings, newsletters, training, plus carers are offered respite support when needed.

The inspector had telephone discussions with some of the carers who completed the questionnaire survey. At least two carers reported they felt unsupported by the fostering service. One stated she 'had inadequate support to manage difficulties she experienced looking after a child and that she had more support from friends and family.'

Feed back from foster carers indicated they would like 'more attention paid to their views and provision of information that serves the needs of carers.' One carer who has been fostering for many years, wanted to see more efforts made to 'retain and support black carers.'

Another carer stated the fostering service must be 'more fair and equitable in the treatment of all carers when requests are made for certain help and assistance.'

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)**The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

The inspector was satisfied that supervision is offered to carers, although additional staff would help to ensure this area becomes more effective and reliable.

Training and development is also offered to all carers to help develop their knowledge and skills, plus five are currently doing NVQ3 training.

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

As indicated above, the service benefits from a good training programme and is coordinated by the family placement development officer who offers support to the fostering, adoption and family link services.

All applicants to become foster carers are required to attend the mandatory skills to foster pre-approval training, which is run over 4 sessions.

Supervising social workers also identify training and development needs of foster carers during home visits, reviews and at carer's meetings.

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

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

The inspection findings indicated work has started to reorganise filing system and archiving of old files. This should help to make accessing case records much easier. In addition a separate child envelope is used in carer's files for each child and young person. When the child moves on, the information is passed to the Children In Need (CIN) team.

All social work staff have access to a personal computer and there is plan for installation of a new IT system by December 2005.

The following areas have been identified where improvement is still needed. Minimisation of record duplication among the teams, development of closer links, rationalisation and uniformity between the different areas of the children and family services, plus speedier development of electronic filing systems to help reduce the current volume of paper materials.

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
---------------------------	---------------	---

The inspection findings indicated that a comprehensive review of all case files is required. Some important documentation, including references were missing from a few of the current working files examined by the inspector.

Many of the required administrative records required to be kept by the fostering service were available- for example: carers' case files, register, LAC register, carers training profile and financial matters.

However some files had important references and checks missing, several had no records of carers signing review notes to verify what has been discussed and recorded. There was also too much emphasis on the views of social workers in a few cases, rather than those of the carers/children and young people.

The examination of case files showed inconsistency in supervision visits to carers by supervising social workers. The inspector was informed this often relate to staffing shortfall in the service over the last several months.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			85
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			160
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			X
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			X
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			X
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	257	Maximum £	309

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The building use by the fostering service is the main location of the boroughs children's services. A new reception area was under construction at the time of this inspection. The Service Manager reported that regular health and safety checks are carried out.

In addition, the inspection findings indicated there is limited space for carers, children and young people to meet at the fostering service. However, space is reportedly been made available at the early years centre.

There was also overcrowding in some areas, including workstations and inadequate communal areas for staff.

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

Reports given to the inspector indicated the fostering budget is currently in satisfactory position and payments to carers are made on time and in line with the foster care contractual arrangements.

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?

2

The report from the service manager indicated that the fostering service will need better system for counting the unit cost of children who are been looked after. In addition, correct coding is also required for placement payments.

A new system is been developed that will reportedly able to monitor payments and calculate spend per child more effectively.

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?

2

The recorded information received showed that each foster care is paid a regular weekly allowance on time for each child.

The weekly allowance covers the possible cost that may be incurred by each foster carer, including equipment, clothing, food, pocket money, holidays, religious festivals household costs and expenses incurred in maintaining contacts with a child's family.

This weekly allowance also covers travelling expenses incurred by each carer unless the destination is more than 20 miles from the carer's home or the Borough's boundaries.

The service manager indicated the service has recognised the need for increase in budget allocation for the 2005-6 year, plus review of carer's allowances and recruitment of additional social work staff.

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
<p>The inspector did not attend any foster panel meetings during this inspection process because of time constraints and other planned programmes. However, discussion was held with the services manager and Practice manager about the structure, organisation and operational procedure of panel meetings.</p> <p>The inspector also examined copies of previous panel meetings, plus the self-assessment comments made by the service manager.</p> <p>The findings indicated the panel is made up of members from diverse backgrounds and professionalism, including one member who was a looked after young person. The minutes of panel discussions and decisions indicated, sound professional assessments and recommendations are offered when applications are received for consideration.</p> <p>The findings also indicated the panel currently meets every other week. However, there appears to be difficulties trying to consider all the cases/applications received. This has caused delays in processing of applications by the panel.</p> <p>The service manager also indicated improvement in timescales of reports to the panel is also needed to make the panel more effective.</p> <p>Consideration is reportedly be given to having all day panel meetings once every 3 months that can hear carers' reviews. There is also recognition that recruitment of more panel members is needed. It is hope this will help with the process and rotation of members who perhaps have other commitments when panel meetings are scheduled.</p>		

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?
---------------------------	---------------

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

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

The inspection findings indicated that the fostering service has been able to provide continuity of care with some carers who have been providing regular short term breaks for their link children for the last five years.

The evidence seen on case files, plus interview with staff indicated the fostering service carries out the same checks with short-term break carers as with all other carers.

The birth parents retain central role in the process, which enables empowerment and participation in the arrangements.

The fostering service has recognised the need to recruit more carers and offer more training to carers to help meet the increasing demands.

There is also need to increase the social work staffing level and stability to the staffing- including recruitment of a permanent practice manager/leader.

The structure of the team is currently under review and it is hope this will help to bring some level of consistency and reliability to the service.

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?	2
----------------------------------	----------------------	----------

The inspection findings indicated that there are increasing numbers of families and friends who able to become carers. The increasing caseload has placed extra pressure on the only staff who is currently the Kinship Placement Coordinator.

The manager reported the service is developing and there are still areas been explored to help identify what works and does not. She also indicated careful monitoring is been carried out of the Kinship Placement Coordinator's caseload.

The fostering service has acknowledged that better knowledge, awareness and understanding is needed in the Children In Need team about what a kinship placement is and the legal requirements are.

There is also a recognition by the fostering service that all Regulation 38 assessments must reached the panel on time and the need for the permanent appointment of the kinship co-ordinator.

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 **21 & 23/02/05** and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

YES

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

NO

Note:

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

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 13 May 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 Mr Richard Marks of London Borough of Harrow Fostering Services 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 Mr Richard Marks of London Borough of Harrow Fostering Services am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:

Print Name _____
Signature _____
Designation _____
Date _____

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

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

Telephone: 020 7979 2000
Fax: 020 7979 2111

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120
www.csci.org.uk

S0000042990.V204700.R03

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



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