



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

Coram Adoption Service

Coram Adoption and Permanent Families
Service

49 Mecklenburgh Square

London

WC1N 2QA

6th December 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

Local Authority Fostering Service?

NO

Name of Authority

Address

Local Authority Manager

Tel No:

Address

Fax No:

Email Address

Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)

YES

Name of Agency

Coram Adoption Service

Tel No

020 7520 0300

Address

Coram Adoption and Permanent Families Service, 49
Mecklenburgh Square, London, WC1N 2QA

Fax No

Email Address

reception@coram.org.uk

Registered Number of IFA

G070000146

Name of Registered Provider

Coram Family

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Ms Gillian Anne Gray

Date of first registration

1st August 2003

Date of latest registration certificate

1st August 2003

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

2/2/04

Date of Inspection Visit		6th December 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Ms Jill Marriott	083058
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			

Introduction to Report and Inspection

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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 Coram Adoption 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.

Coram Family provides two specific fostering services.

- 1) Concurrent Planning – Places 0-2 year olds with foster carers who are also approved adopters. This enables security of placement should attempts to reunite the children with birth families fail.
- 2) HIV Project- Places children affected by HIV with ethnically and culturally appropriate foster carers.

Coram Family find families to care for children for planned periods of time which are agreed with the child's local authority and finalised at the Looked After Children's Planning meeting. Throughout the child's placement with Coram contact is maintained with the placing authority social worker, other professionals as necessary and the child's birth family where appropriate.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

Inspector's Summary

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

The inspection took place over a 2-week period starting with a pre inspection meeting on 6th December 2004. It found that all of the standards have been fully met. The overall service provided was very good. There was evidence seen throughout the inspection to show that Coram Adoption and Permanent Families Service continue to review and develop the services offered to carers and children.

The following methods were used to inspect Coram Family.

1. Pre-inspection visit and meeting with the manager. 6th December 2004
2. Discussion with carer and child 21st December 2004
3. Interview with Panel Chair 22nd December 2004
4. File tracking 9th December 2004
5. Team meeting + discussion with social workers. 16th December 2004
6. Interview with social worker

Statement of Purpose. Standard 1.

Standard fully met.

Coram Family has a Statement of Purpose and a children's guide to fostering. The Statement of Purpose has been revised and is available to staff children and care's. The Statement can be translated into appropriate languages on request.

Fitness to Carry on or Manage a fostering Service.

Standards 2-3. Both standards fully met

The fostering service is well managed by skilled and experienced managers. Personnel files were kept securely in locked cabinets. Relevant information was recorded on files seen.

Management of the Fostering Service.

Standards 4-5. Both standards were fully met.

The service has clear procedures for managing and reviewing the services. All members of staff have job descriptions and service contracts. Information Regulation 43 notification will be sent to the relevant authorities following the occurrence of any incidents identified in regulation 43(1) schedule 8.

Securing and Promoting Welfare.

Standards 6-14. All standards were fully met.

Coram Family offers an appropriate assessment and induction process to all carers. Thus ensure good quality services and a safe environment are available to children placed.

**Recruiting, Checking, Managing, Supporting and Training Staff and Foster Carers.
Standards 15-23. 1 of the 9 standards was partially met.**

The service is adequately staffed with a qualified and experienced staff team. Training for HIV project carer's has been reviewed to ensure each carer receives adequate training and support to meet the needs of the children placed.

Records

Standards 24-25. Both standard were fully me

Records seen were of a very good quality. Files were in good order. All records were kept in locked filing cabinets.

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

Standard 26. Standard not assessed.

Coram Family is based in Mecklenburgh Square WC1, the premises are appropriate for the provision of service.

Financial Requirements

Standards 27-29 both standards were fully met.

The fostering service is financially viable. Finances are monitored and audited regularly.

Fostering Pane

Standard 30 was fully met

The fostering panel is efficient and effective. It has clearly written policies and procedures. There is access to the relevant professionals who advise the panel as required.

Short term Breaks.

Standard 31. Standard fully met.

Short break carers undergo the same recruitment process as all Coram carers to ensure continuity of care for children across the whole service.

Family and Friends as Carers.

Standard 32. Standard fully met.

Coram always considers family and friends as carers. Family and friends as carers are recruited in the same way as all 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:

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?

YES

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.

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	

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	5
Survey of placing authorities	NO
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	NA
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	NA
• 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	YES
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	6/12/04
Time of Inspection	14.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	36

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?

3

Coram has developed a statement of purpose, which reflects the services provided and includes the details required to meet the National Minimum Standards.

Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The management team at Coram are registered by the Social Care Commission and have the relevant skills and experience in management and childcare to ensure the effective running of the service.

Coram's finances are monitored monthly and audited annually by registered accountants.

The Chief Executive and Trustees receive regular reports on the agency's finances.

The agency has a clear fee structure for services, which is made known to all purchasers of services.

Evidence of qualifications and experience has been seen by the inspector on staff files and is detailed in the statement of purpose.

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?	4
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Evidence showed that the persons managing the fostering service had been appropriately recruited and have relevant references including Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures.

The responsible person and the managers have been interviewed and registered by the CSCI as fit persons to manage the service. During the inspection information seen by the inspector showed that the service is managed appropriately. From the files seen and from discussion with staff and carers it was clear that the safety and welfare of the children placed by Coram Family is of paramount importance.

Management of the Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 4 (4.1 – 4.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The roles of the staff team are defined and included in the statement of purpose. Staff who talked with the inspector are aware of their position and their line of accountability. The inspector was shown evidence that the service has proper financial procedures, which are audited and reviewed yearly. All purchasers of service are given information regarding the charges for each service, statements of the amounts paid to carers and itemised amounts paid for wider services. Costs for services are discussed and agreed with purchasers prior to each placement being made. Records regarding service charges were seen by the inspector.

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?

3

The manager has a clear job description setting out the duties and responsibilities of the post. Lines of accountability are defined in all of the staff job descriptions. Staff who spoke to the inspector understood who they were accountable to should the manager not be available. The inspector saw appropriate job descriptions and recruitment records during the inspection.

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?

4

From information available in the files seen it is evident that foster carer's are visited regularly by their link worker and receive support and information regarding appropriate methods of behaviour management and policies and procedures related to safe caring. Information recorded on files showed that foster homes are health and safety checked prior to approval and then at yearly intervals.

All carer's and children have access to out of hours support.

The carers who spoke with the inspector felt the support and guidance received by the team at Coram was excellent.

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

Coram has an equal opportunities policy, which was seen by the inspector. The recruitment process used to employ staff and recruit carers is appropriate.

Coram recruits carer's from under represented groups by advertising in the relevant press. In some cases Coram advertise for specific carers from appropriate backgrounds. From the files seen it was evident that Looked after Children reviews are held regularly to ensure the needs of children placed are being met.

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
<p>From discussion with staff it was evident that Coram place particular importance on appropriately matching carer's and children. All matches take into account the religious, cultural, racial and linguistic needs of the children. Issues regarding matching are fully discussed at the Placement Planning Meeting prior to agreeing the match.</p> <p>Information recorded on files showed, that children placed within the HIV project are all closely matched with people from their own countries.</p>		

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>Coram has engaged NSPCC consultants to train senior Coram staff as child protection trainers. The trained staff will then cascade the training to other staff and carers in the organisation.</p> <p>The Coram Child Protection Procedures have been written in conjunction with the London Child Protection Procedures 2003 and have been agreed by the local authority as appropriate.</p> <p>Members of staff have regular supervision and cases are reviewed within the supervision process. All carers are visited by their supervising social worker at least monthly and more regularly if necessary.</p> <p>The carers or social workers at the project closely supervise contact with birth families where necessary. Carers have access to 24-hour support from Coram and are given the phone number of the local authority emergency duty team.</p> <p>Carers who talked to the inspector were aware of the child protection policy and understand that they must contact their link worker if concerns are raised. Social workers attend strategy meetings and subsequent planning meetings.</p> <p>Information is available regarding bullying, missing from care, and behaviour management. All children and carers have copies of the complaints procedures.</p> <p>Copies of reports were seen on files of regular social work visits with carers and children.</p>		
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?**

4

Contact visits with birth families and friends are an important part of the work undertaken by Coram. There is evidence on all files seen of regular contact between children, relatives and friends in both of the projects.

The Concurrent Planning Project deals particularly well with very difficult situations. Children cared for are all under 2 years. The foster carer's who are also approved to adopt the children placed are aware throughout the process that children may be reunited with their birth parents. Despite this they continue to support the contact in a positive way. It is clear from the files and from discussion with carers that the project social workers positively support foster carers and birth parents throughout the fostering/adoption process.

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?**

4

Carer's and children are seen regularly by their link social worker. It is evident from the files that children where appropriate are able to talk with the social worker in private.

Children and where possible their families are involved in Looked after Children's reviews. Children where appropriate are also asked for their written comments on the placement as part of the carer's review.

The inspector was given a copy of the children's guide to the service, which includes appropriate information and explains how a child can contact their social workers, and how to make a complaint to Coram or to the Commission.

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

All of the young people supported by Coram receive regular Looked after Children medicals. Medical reports and health information was seen on files. Each child is registered with a GP and younger children are also registered with a health visitor. Regular dental, vision and hearing checks are recorded.

Specialist medical resources, e.g. HIV clinics and local Child and Family Consultation Services, are available for children with specific health needs.

The health of children placed with Coram carer's is reviewed regularly at Looked after Children reviews and more often if specific problems arise.

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

It was evident from children's files that Coram social workers support carers to assist young people to obtain and maintain suitable school placements. Coram assist with the process where a child needs an educational statement. Link workers attend educational reviews and attend meetings regarding **Personal Educational Plans**. It was evident from files seen that excellent support is given to the young people and carers regarding school placements.

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?**

4

Coram carers assist children to be as independent as possible according to age and ability. Some children in placement are in their early teens. Link social workers support young people to understand issues related to further education, career prospects, independent living and sexual health issues. Information on one file clearly showed the young person to have specific health needs. The Coram link worker has been very much involved with supporting the young people to come to terms with the diagnosis.

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

Coram has an appropriate recruitment procedure, which has been seen by the inspector. Staff personnel files were seen and included appropriate information regarding appointments of staff. New members of staff are only offered employment following a successful interview and subject to appropriate CRB disclosures and references, which are telephone checked. Personnel file, also include supervision records, training profiles, job descriptions and contracts.

Evidence showed that all members of staff have appropriate qualifications for their posts. Staff spoken to by the inspector demonstrated good knowledge of the agencies policies and procedures and of relevant legislation.

Total number of staff of the agency:

17

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

1

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Members of staff who spoke to the inspector are aware of their line of accountability. All Coram staff are supervised regularly notes of supervision are recorded and a copy kept on file. There is an appraisal system, which informs the development of the staff training programme which was seen by the inspector.

Policies and procedures related to working practices, health and safety and equal opportunities are available. Members of staff told the inspector that they have open access to the manager at all times and are supported by a competent administration team.

Social workers are very much aware of the role of the children's social workers from the local authorities and work together with them where possible to support carers and children.

The inspector was shown the policies and procedures in place to assess approve and review all carers recruited by them.

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
<p>Coram has an experienced and stable staff team.</p> <p>The fostering service has an appropriate recruitment policy and procedure for recruiting staff and carers, which includes suitable references and CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) disclosures. Prior to approval carer's are made aware of the assessment process, fostering task and the stages of recruitment. The process explores a range of issues for carers to consider and understand including child rearing, contact, child abuse, promoting attachment, and understanding behaviours. A full list of areas covered is available to all prospective carers.</p> <p>All carers undertake the same recruitment and approval process.</p> <p>Evidence was gained from discussion with staff and carers, staffing files, the recruitment process and the agency files and records.</p>		

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
<p>The inspector was shown the agencies Statement of Purpose and policies and procedures, which included the whistle blowing policy and grievance procedures. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the recruitment of staff and carers. There is an appropriate equal opportunities policy and members of staff who spoke with the inspector are aware of the disciplinary and grievance procedures.</p> <p>Evidence was seen of the Coram out of hour's service for children and carers, files showed that carers also have access to the child's local authority out of hour's service.</p> <p>Members of staff and carer's are supported through the supervision process. Supervision records were available to the inspector.</p> <p>The project manager had an open door policy and staff and carers have access at all times. The public liability and professional indemnity insurance for all staff and carers was seen as appropriate by the inspector.</p>		

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
<p>Evidence was seen to show that the service has an adequate induction programme for staff. Members of staff have access to a range of in house and external training, which is developed from information gained at yearly appraisal meetings.</p> <p>The staff team told the inspector that new legislation and changes in legislation are reviewed on identified team days.</p> <p>The team is also involved in the review of policies and procedures during team meetings and in one-to-one supervision.</p>		

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

Members of staff explained their line of accountability to the inspector. It is evident from information seen that the staff team is supervised regularly, attend team meetings and have open access to discuss issues with the project manager.

All members of staff have an appraisal after six months of being in post and then yearly. From discussion with the team the inspector is clear that staff are aware of their duties and responsibilities.

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**

Evidence was available to show that social workers maintain regular contact with all carers either at the project or on an arranged home visit. Regular support groups are available for the concurrent planning carers.

Carers and children have access to professional counselling. Coram has very few HIV placements just two at present. HIV carers are visited monthly and telephone support is available on a 24-hour basis. Study days, Christmas parties and summer picnics are organised by the project.

Information seen on the files by the inspector showed that the project leaders monitor support for carers during regular supervision and case discussion with social workers.

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**

Evidence seen by the inspector showed that foster carers have a range of support open to them through the project and through the child's local authority social worker. Appropriate training is available during the assessment and approval process and from ongoing training. Issues are identified in supervision and dealt with during discussion between the link workers and carers. Support to carers is offered in a number of ways, which includes linking with other agencies such as health and education as necessary.

Carers told the inspector that appropriate guidance and information was available regarding a number of support networks available to them.

Evidence available showed that carers are paid on time and understand the payment system.

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

Evidence seen by the inspector showed that all carers are approved following a successful assessment and induction process. Training includes safe caring, child protection, dealing with loss and life story work.

The concurrent planning carers attend support groups where they have opportunities to gain further knowledge and experience from existing carers.

The HIV carers gain further training on a one to one basis from their link worker during supervision. Coram recognised that each child's needs are different and the training to work with each child is tailored to meet the individual need.

The inspector saw evidence that Coram have during the past year offered a range of training opportunities to the HIV carers to enable them to meet together as a group despite their small numbers.

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?

4

The inspector examined 8 files 4 children's files and 4 carer's files. Information seen showed that carer's are given relevant information regarding children before placement. Children and carer's files seen were up to date and in excellent order.

It was evident from information seen that carers keep records for each child regarding their time in placement. The files contain information regarding regular contact with birth families where appropriate. Supervising social workers ensure that foster carers have adequate storage facilities for the paperwork they hold on the young people.

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?

4

The inspector was shown appropriate administrative records, which are in line with the National Minimum Standards. The agency has a system for keeping confidential records in a secure environment. All relevant records are up to date including the complaints book, fire records and the accident book. The records of child protection concerns are kept on relevant files and also in a separate incident book. Records regarding staff, carers and children are kept safely in a locked room and are available on a need to know basis.

Evidence was seen by the inspector of an appropriate policy and procedure for staff regarding the keeping and retention of confidential records.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:

8

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

8

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

4

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

7

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

0

Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £

210

Maximum £

231

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Evidence showed that Coram has two specific sites at Mecklenburgh Square both sites are appropriate for the purpose. Coram store there archived files on an alternative site to alleviate on site storage problems. Files kept on site are kept in locked cabinets and stored in locked rooms. The office space was adequate and provided good facilities for workers and visitors. IT equipment is password protected and Coram has insurance cover for both offices and equipment.

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

Coram is a long established organisation with an excellent finance department supporting it. Coram has money invested and back-up should there ever be a serious financial shortfall. Evidence also showed that Coram has income from fees and grants, which are accounted for in the service business plan.

Finances are audited and reviewed regularly. Carer's allowances are paid through the relevant local authorities. Evidence showed that payments to carers are received on time. If any problems do arise regarding payments to carer's the link worker intervenes on the carer's behalf.

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.7)

The financial processes/systems of the agency are properly operated and maintained in accordance with sound and appropriate accounting standards and practice.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Evidence showed that Coram has a finance manual, which includes policies and procedures regarding the finances of the organisation. The manager monitors the budget each month. External auditors are used to ensure the finances are in order and all tax and VAT demands paid regularly.

The inspector saw the agencies three monthly financial reports, which are sent to the Trustees and Chief Executive of Coram to ensure the budget remains within the spending limits.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)

Each foster carer receives an allowance and agreed expenses, which cover the full cost of caring for each child or young person placed with him or her. Payments are made promptly and at the agreed time. Allowances and fees are reviewed annually.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Evidence showed that Coram carers are paid by the child's "looked after" Social Service department. Carers offering respite care are paid directly by Coram. From information seen it is apparent that there are rarely difficulties with payments to carers. Evidence on one file showed that if any problems arise the link worker supports the carer to resolve the issue. All allowances and fees paid to carers are discussed annually at the carer's review or more regularly if the placement warrants.

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
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The Coram Fostering Panel is established in accordance with the fostering service regulations. It was evident from discussion with the chair of the panel and from records seen that there are clear written policies, procedures and guidelines, which are reviewed regularly. All panel members have CRB disclosures and training regarding policies, procedures and relevant legislation.

Members of the panel consider approval of carer's, deregistration, complaints, and hold yearly carers reviews. Panel recommendations are considered by the Chief Executive of Coram who makes the final decisions with regard to all panel business.

Short-Term Breaks

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- When foster care is provided as a short-term break for a child, the arrangement recognises that the parents remain the main carers for the child.

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.2)

Where a fostering service provides short-term breaks for children in foster care, they have policies and procedures, implemented in practice, to meet the particular needs of children receiving short-term breaks.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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The inspector was shown information regarding a short-break carer approved to support a long-term placement of a child with behavioural difficulties. Evidence showed that short break carers are subject to the same recruitment process as all carers. Placement reviews for children with short break carers would always include a review of the short break care offered to the child.	3
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Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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Coram actively promotes placements with family and friends as carers. The recruitment process for family and friends as carers is the same as for all recruitment of Coram carers. Evidence seen by the inspector showed that Coram would always consider and positively promote placements with family and friends for children referred to the project.

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 6th December 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

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 9th February 2005, which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

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

Action plan was required

NO

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

NO

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

NO

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

NO

Other: NO Action Plan Required

NO

Public reports

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

D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

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

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

Print Name _____
Signature _____
Designation _____
Date _____

Or

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

Print Name _____
Signature _____
Designation _____
Date _____

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

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