



Making Social Care  
Better for People

# inspection report

Fostering Services

## **Leeds City Council Fostering Service**

Merrion House

110 Merrion Centre

Leeds

LS2 8QB

22nd March 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**

Leeds City Council Fostering Service

**Address**

Merrion House, 110 Merrion Centre, Leeds, LS2 8QB

**Local Authority Manager**

Rodger Walker

**Tel No:**

0113 2478700

**Address**

Merrion House, 110 Merrion Centre, Leeds, LS2 8QB

**Fax No:**

**Email Address**

---

**Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)**

NO

**Name of Agency**

**Tel No**

**Address**

**Fax No**

**Email Address**

**Registered Number of IFA**

**Name of Registered Provider**

**Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)**

**Date of first registration**

**Date of latest registration certificate**

**Registration Conditions Apply ?**

NO

**Date of last inspection**

08/12/03

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		22nd March 2005	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		09:30 am	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Dave Stanford	071351
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>	Karen Westhead	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>			
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>		Rodger Walker Resources Team Manager	

**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 Leeds City Council Fostering Service. The inspection findings relate to the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services published by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000, for independent and local authority fostering services respectively.

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

The report will show the following:

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

This report is a public document.

## INSPECTION VISITS

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

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

Leeds Adoption and Fostering Service is a part of the Local Authority Social Service Department and provides placements for children in the Leeds area who require to be looked after.

The head office is in the centre of the city with a number of the fostering officers placed in area offices located around the city.

The service is provided through three fostering and adoption teams and a family placement team for children with disabilities, though a restructuring of the service is imminent and will form two adoption and two fostering teams. The fostering services include:

- Temporary placements
- Permanent placements
- Planned short breaks, as a respite scheme
- A range of Fee Paid Schemes
- Family placements, providing long-term or shared care for children with disabilities.

## **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.)

#### **Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)**

**This standard was assessed and met.**

The statement of purpose has been reviewed and revised and is available in different formats. The statement is comprehensive and covers the range of services provided. A children's guide is also now available.

#### **Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service (Standards 2-3)**

**One of the two standards was assessed and was met.**

The present manager is suitable, capable and has sufficient experience to properly manage the service.

#### **Management of the Fostering Service (Standards 4-5)**

**One of the two standards was assessed and was not met.**

The service is making good progress in ensuring that carers alert the link worker staff when serious accidents, injuries and illnesses of children in foster care occur, though the system is still not fully functional.

#### **Securing and Promoting Welfare (Standards 6-14)**

**Eight of the nine standards were assessed and seven were met.**

Carers were sufficiently informed about the purpose of placements made. There was evidence that recruitment within a diverse population is increasingly effective. There remains a concern with the number of exemption certificates issued, causing placements over the approved number, which continues due to the resource imbalance. There was clear evidence that the service and the department as a whole is not complacent and there are a number of initiatives now in place and other new developments that aim to reduce the 'demand' side of this equation. A range of training is available to support carers in the management of unacceptable behaviour. Family contact was also found to be appropriately supported, along with the proper involvement of service users in decision making. Health and educational needs are both suitably prioritised and addressed.

#### **Recruiting, Checking, Managing, Supporting and Training Staff and Foster carers (Standards 15-23)**

**Six of the nine standards were assessed and five were met.**

There has been some lack of consistency over appropriate CRB checks being made for some staff, which is a matter that must be addressed. There are sufficient staff with appropriate experience to ensure that the purpose of the service is fulfilled. A restructuring of the service has been planned and its implementation is imminent. There remains an issue of some carers being unallocated link worker staff. The manager was able to illustrate the actions being taken to alleviate this problem. Interviews held with a range of staff and

evidence presented during the inspection illustrated the variety of appropriate training courses available to staff. Foster carers are provided with an information pack, or handbook, that informs them of the department's expectations and strategy for their support and training.

### **Records (Standards 24-25)**

**One of the two standards was assessed and was met.**

Files were found to be uniformly maintained in an up to date manner, with sufficient detail about the purpose of the placement. Carers have access to training to support their recording abilities.

### **Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service(Standard 26)**

**This standard was assessed and met.**

The premises are suitably located and designed and arranged for their purpose and the restructuring of the service into adoption teams and fostering teams will support a more coherent support network for staff.

### **Financial Requirements (Standards 27-29)**

**None of the three standards were assessed.**

### **Fostering Panels (Standard 30)**

**This standard was assessed and not met.**

The fostering panel does not have the required construction in the membership and will remain inquorate and legally ambiguous until the matter is properly addressed.

### **Short-Term Breaks (Standard 31)**

**This standard was assessed and met.**

Short break schemes are properly managed. There are a range of types of short breaks to meet the diverse needs of both parents and carers.

### **Family and friends as Carers (Standard 32)**

**This standard was assessed and met.**

The service recognises the different sensitivities required in placements made with family or friends. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place to support and maintain such placements.

## **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

**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	
<b>Comments</b>		

Condition	Compliance	
<b>Comments</b>		

Condition	Compliance	
<b>Comments</b>		

Condition	Compliance	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Lead Inspector</b>	<u>Dave Stanford</u>	<b>Signature</b>	_____
<b>Second Inspector</b>	<u>Karen Westhead</u>	<b>Signature</b>	_____
<b>Regulation Manager</b>	<u>Sheila Grant</u>	<b>Signature</b>	_____
<b>Date</b>	<u>19 July 2005</u>		

## 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	42(1) Schedule 7	FS4	Though progress has been made, all serious accidents, injuries and illnesses of children in foster care must be monitored by the service.	31/03/06
2	33	FS8	The service must ensure that each child is appropriately placed with the carer.	31/03/06
3	20	FS15	Arrangements for checks on staff must be consistently applied.	31/03/06
4	24	FS30	The construction and attendance to the fostering panel must be addressed to ensure panels are quorate.	01/10/05

### 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	6
Survey of placing authorities	NA
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	
• 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	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	NO
• 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	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	22/03/05
Time of Inspection	08.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	48

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

The statement of purpose has been reviewed and revised and is available in different formats. The statement is comprehensive and covers the range of services provided. There is a clear description of the aims and objectives and sufficient information to clarify how the service goes about meeting these. There is also a newly developed children's guide that is accessible.

## 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?
This standard was not assessed.	0

### 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 local authority responsible for the fostering service ensures that all checks are carried out as required and records are maintained accordingly. The present manager is suitable, capable and has sufficient experience to properly manage the service.	3

## 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 service is making good progress in ensuring that carers alert the link worker staff when serious accidents, injuries and illnesses of children in foster care occur, though the system is still not fully functional. This is supporting the manager to be able to better monitor these incidents. There is an issue over the definition of 'serious' which is in the process of being addressed.

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

X

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

X

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

X

Serious illness or accident of a child.

X

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

X

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

X

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

X

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

X

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

X

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

X

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

X

### Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)

The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This standard was not assessed.

## 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

A number of foster carers were randomly selected and visited in their own homes and interviewed along with the children placed with them. These carers are involved in a range of different schemes within the service and had differing lengths of experience. Discussion indicated they were clear about the purpose of the placements made and the potential for the length of the placement. Each carer had a copy of a handbook which provides useful and supportive information. Carers were also aware of the complaints procedure and how to use it. All the homes visited were found to be domestic, well decorated and appropriately furnished. There were a range of suitable facilities, with toys and playthings noted that were appropriate to the ages of the children in placement. Foster carers confirmed that health and safety issues had featured as part of the discussions with their link worker and annual inspections take place within the context of the carer reviews.

### Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

The fostering service ensures that children and young people, and their families, are provided with foster care services which value diversity and promote equality.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The service recruits carers from both the Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities and a recently appointed link worker has special responsibilities for recruiting from within the Asian community and a group of black carers has been established for support purposes. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is some shortfall in numbers, there was evidence that this work is beginning to establish a profile and is supporting effective recruitment.

**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 service must ensure that each child is appropriately placed with the carer. There remains a concern with the number of exemption certificates issued, causing placements over the approved number, which continues due to the resource imbalance. There was clear evidence that the service and the department as a whole is not complacent and there are a number of initiatives now in place and other new developments that aim to reduce the 'demand' side of this equation. It is acknowledged that this matter can only be addressed over the long term due to the complexities inherent in this system. The issue requires continuous monitoring. There were examples available providing evidence of the process that involved the issuing of exemption certificates and illustrated the checks and balances in the system, which includes a change in the management oversight and aims towards the best and most secure placement.

**Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)**

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

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

3

Discussions held with carers and interviews with link workers and managers confirmed there is a range of training available to support the management of young people who have been abused. Foster carers spoken with were clear that corporal punishment is unacceptable, and all those carers spoken to had developed reasonable methods of dealing with unacceptable behaviour that was said to be understood and agreed with by the children. A new protocol has been introduced that provides a clear written procedure for carers to follow in the event of a child being absent from the foster home without permission.

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

X

%

**Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)**

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

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

3

Records showed good supporting evidence that contact with family or with significant other people was properly supported, where appropriate. Files of foster carers examined showed that with the support of the link worker they were encouraged and enabled to maintain appropriate contact with birth families. Carers spoken with were aware of the importance and value of these arrangements and said that arrangements, whilst sometimes difficult were in general well organised and supported by the social workers. Children and young people spoken with talked of their contact and with an understanding of the purpose of that contact.

**Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.5)**

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

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

3

Discussions held with some of the children in the placements visited indicated they had an understanding of their rights to be involved in decisions about their lives and circumstances. They talked of being invited to contribute to and attend reviews and to making their day-to-day views known to their carers and social workers.

**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

Each placement is provided with a 'health diary' in order that there is a record and continuity of information for each young person. This diary remains with each child should subsequent moves occur. Carers were able to indicate a range of training to assist their knowledge on health matters and young people have information accessible to them through their social worker, where this is appropriate. Therapeutic services are available, alongside the department's 'looked after' nurses, both of which can be called upon to inform and add to the support of a placement. It is acknowledged that there can be delays in providing details relating to a placement to carers in a reasonable timescale, however, in general carers spoken with were satisfied that information was being received in a timely manner.

**Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.8)**

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

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

3

It was clear that the service places a proper emphasis on meeting the educational needs of looked after children and the appointment of a worker specifically to support the educational needs of young people in foster care was seen as a valuable asset. Carers spoken with were committed to supporting children to meet their full potential. Discussions held with a number of carers indicated their involvement in supporting children through assisting with homework and attending parents' evenings or other school events. Information systems are in place to monitor attendance, attainment and exclusion rates.

**Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)**

The fostering service ensures that their foster care services help to develop skills, competence and knowledge necessary for adult living.

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

0

This standard was not assessed.

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

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Interviews and discussions held with a range of staff showed there is a clear professional understanding of the purpose of the unit and good levels of practice skill was evident from case recordings inspected and from anecdotal information gleaned from carers. There was evidence that the link workers, managers and other staff, including administrative staff, contracted to work with the service have suitable work experience and qualifications and there was a good appreciation of the legislation that the unit works within. There has been some lack of consistency over appropriate CRB checks being made for some staff. This matter must be addressed.

Total number of staff of the agency:

38

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

3

### Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This standard was not assessed.

### 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

There are sufficient staff with appropriate experience to ensure that the purpose of the service is fulfilled. A restructuring of the service has been planned and its implementation is imminent. This will create specific adoption teams and fostering teams and will impact on the present location of staff. Recruitment of an additional team manager is in process to complete the restructuring. There is a dedicated recruitment officer for carers and a clear policy for the recruitment of a wide range of carers. Samples of recruitment material was seen during the inspection, some of which is available in different languages and formats. The selection and assessment of carers remains properly robust and an example of a competency style assessment was also seen being presented to a fostering panel. This assessment provided comprehensive and detailed information that enabled an

understanding of the context, experience and abilities of the prospective carers.

**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**

There remains an issue of some carers being unallocated link worker staff. The manager, at interview, was fully aware of this situation and was able to illustrate the actions being taken to alleviate this problem; this includes 'holding' visits being made by other link worker staff. Unplanned for circumstances will inevitably arise to which the service has to be able to respond flexibly and should have ready efficient contingency plans in place for such events.

**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**

Interviews held with a range of staff and evidence presented during the inspection illustrated the variety of appropriate training courses available to staff. Most courses are accessible and staff expressed general satisfaction with the quality. There were comments that the training section were not always to be as responsive to the particular needs of the fostering service in that more specialist training was either not well catered for, or had to be sought from external sources, causing some problems with accessibility. The training needs of staff are properly identified through the supervision and appraisal meetings. There are programmes identified within the training calendar that show joint training with carers takes place.

**Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)**

**All staff are properly accountable and supported.**

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**0**

This standard was not assessed.

**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**

Foster carers are provided with an information pack that informs expectations and the strategy for support and training and outlines where and how to access other information and advice. Discussions with carers revealed this is seen as a useful document.

**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

All carers have a foster carer agreement and handbook on approval. In discussion carers showed their understanding of the fostering task and acknowledged the support received by the link worker. Case files indicated proper supervision is taking place, though as mentioned previously there is an issue over all carers being allocated a worker at all times. The service aims to develop carer skills and is poised to introduce a 'payment for skills' scheme, with the objective of providing financial incentives for continual learning through attending training and developing their practice. There was good evidence of independent support provided to carers during investigations following allegations made against them.

**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?**

0

This standard was not assessed.

## Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Case records were made available for the inspection, which supported a tracking process from a randomly selected number of carers. The files were found to be uniformly maintained in an up to date manner, with sufficient detail about the purpose of the placement. Carers have access to training to support their recording abilities, which includes for example life story work.

### Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This standard was not assessed.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:

X

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

X

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

X

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

X

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

X

Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £

X

Maximum £

X

## Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

3

The restructuring of the service into adoption teams and fostering teams will support a more coherent support network for staff. There is to be an increase in the administrative support which should alleviate some of the difficulties experienced by staff in being able to access consistent support when in the area offices. The premises are suitably located and designed and arranged for their purpose. There is a satisfactory development to IT and communication systems and access is now arranged for email capability.

## Financial Requirements

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The agency fostering services are financially viable and appropriate and timely payments are made to foster carers.

### Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.3)

The agency ensures it is financially viable at all times and has sufficient financial resources to fulfil its obligations.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This standard was not assessed.

### Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.7)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This standard was not assessed.

### Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This standard was not assessed.

## 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?

1

There are two fostering panels held by this service and one was observed for the purpose of this inspection. There are issues relating to the membership of both panels; the one attended was in fact inquorate, though continued its business, this is a serious matter. The construction and attendance to the fostering panel must be urgently addressed. It is required that at least one elected member attends each panel, whilst training has been developed for this role and repeated requests been made no elected member has yet taken up the position. The chair of the panel was interviewed and confirmed all members have had the appropriate CRB checks prior to attending panel. Good examples of assessment forms were presented to the panel and the chair maintained an informal approach putting attendees at ease. They were properly dealt with and kept informed of the process and of the recommendations reached by the panel.

## Short-Term Breaks

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.2)

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

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

Short break schemes are properly managed. There are a range of types of short breaks to meet the diverse needs of both parents and carers. Discussions with carers, staff and the manager of the service indicated that the policies and procedures in place are suitable and ensure that where appropriate parental control remains central to the placement.
--

## Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

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

	3
--	---

The service recognises the different sensitivities required in placements made with family or friends. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place to support and maintain such placements.	
--	--

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

**Lay Assessor** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**PART D**

**PROVIDER'S RESPONSE**

**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 22 March 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

Comments were received from the provider

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

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

**Note:**

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

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

Action plan was required

Action plan was received at the point of publication

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

**Public reports**

It should be noted that all 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 Rosemary Archer of Leeds City Council Fostering Service 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 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 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](http://www.csci.org.uk)

S0000051076.V158061.R01

© 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