



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

Staffordshire Social Services Fostering Service

Peel Building

St Chad`s Place

Stafford

Staffordshire

ST16 2LR

15 – 18 September 2003

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

Staffordshire Social Services Fostering Service

Address

Peel Building, St Chad`s Place, Stafford, Staffordshire,
ST16 2LR

Local Authority Manager

Tel No:

01785 277033

Address

Peel Building, St Chad`s Place, Stafford, Staffordshire,
ST16 2LR

Fax No:

01785 277106

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

N/A

Date of Inspection Visit		15 -18 September 2003	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Vivien Slyfield	075999
Name of Inspector	2	Janet Manders	
Name of Inspector	3		
Name of Inspector	4		
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection			

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Lead Inspector **Vivien Slyfield** **Signature** **Vivien Slyfield**

Locality Manager **George Plant** **Signature** **George Plant**

Date **18 August 2004**

Public reports

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

INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Independent and local authority fostering services which fall within the jurisdiction of the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) 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 NCSC in respect of Staffordshire Social Services 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 NCSC 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
- 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.

Staffordshire County Council provide a fostering service as part of the range of social services provision for the county. The fostering service provides carers from all parts of the county and they take placements from within the same remit. The head office for the department is in Stafford and this is where the manager responsible for the service is based. The fostering service is provided by four teams. One based at Madford House in Stafford is responsible for the recruitment, training and review of foster carers and the development of foster carer support groups. The same team recruits and trains prospective adopters. Two other teams have a mainly geographical split between north and south Staffordshire. They are based in Lichfield, which has a specific interest in Link care and Uttoxeter, with specific interest in Remand fostering. They undertake assessment, supervision and support of foster carers. The Adoptions Options team based in Burton on Trent provides some specific support, especially in relation to work with Asian and black carers and is responsible for the placement of children needing permanent families.

Staffordshire's fostering service offers a range of different types of fostering; Task Centred, Long Term, Link, Remand and Family and Friends Carers. Staffordshire also contract services from NCH for the provision of a specialist respite service for children and young people. Staffordshire has developed various support systems including CAMHS which focuses on mental health issues for young people, SUSTAIN which works with looked after children whose foster placements are under stress and CARS which provides advocacy and support to looked after children. There is an Out of Hours support system and regular foster carer's groups which meet at established locations across the county. A recent development is a weekend 'phone support line staffed by experienced foster carers.

Staffordshire provides a wide range of services across a wide geographical area. The approach appears open and innovative, including the use of "Reggie" a converted bus for recruitment and training. There is a sound attempt to address the needs of carers and to provide quality placements for the children and young people who need them.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

Inspector's Summary

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

This was overall a positive inspection where staff and carers were well prepared and able to contribute effectively. Foster carers and children were interviewed as part of the inspection fieldwork. These carers were selected to cover examples of the range of different types of care provided by Staffordshire Social Services. In addition to these interviews questionnaires were sent to carers, children and young people over eight and placing social workers. Of these, 59 foster carer questionnaires were returned, 54 children and young people's questionnaires were returned and 7 were returned from placing social workers. Inspectors met with a group of young people, a group of foster carers and another of family placement workers. Detailed information was received in the form of the Pre-Inspection questionnaire and Managers Self-Assessment. Information is drawn from all these sources in completing the report.

The National Minimum Standards used for the inspection are still new and there are areas that need strengthening. In summary the following addresses the standards consecutively;

Statement of Purpose. The Statement of Purpose provided does describe the services provided but needs to have more information in relation to the precise services offered and less detailed information about individual members of staff. There is an appropriate children's guide that is well presented, informative and accessible to children, but consideration needs to be given to how this relates to the range of children and young people cared for by foster carers. The policies and procedures need to be reviewed in the light of the regulations and standards from 2002.

Skills to carry on or manage, suitability to manage and effectiveness of the management. The service is well managed overall, with an attitude of openness and of creativity in developing the service. There are some issues of communication systems and delegation which need strengthening. As does the system for recording the appropriate checks, references and job descriptions are in place for staff. The information system needs strengthening to provide accessible, accurate information for the fostering service managers.

Providing suitable foster carers. There were examples of sound practice in ensuring safe, nurturing environments for children. There were some issues relating to the provision and use of appropriate equipment in foster homes but in general terms children and young people were provided with comfortable and appropriate accommodation.

Valuing Diversity. The evidence of the inspection was of carers striving hard to the range of needs of the children lived with them. Where the match was not appropriate there was evidence of work by carers, social workers and family placement workers in compensating for the shortfall. The issue of equipment provision for children with disability in respite placements remains financially problematic.

Matching. Where resources allow children and young people are matched with carers. However, placements were not always made on the basis of choice due to the pressure on the service. There were differing views about the attempts at matching from different parts of the service.

Protecting from abuse and neglect. Foster carers felt well trained in preparation for fostering and have appropriate on-going training available. It would be positive to add to the training a specific on "boosting and maintaining the child's self-esteem". There is a comprehensive Handbook available to carers, which does need up-dating in line with the new regulations, but provides accessible information in a form that is easily renewed. Work is needed to ensure that foster carers are provided with full information about the children

they care for.

Promoting Contact. There was evidence during the inspection of some excellent work between foster carers and birth families. The area in need of strengthening is the provision and recording of risk assessments prior to contact taking place. The impact on children placed outside the area was not considered in this inspection.

Consultation. The fostering service has established systems and methods of consultation with children and young people. It would be positive to ensure this extends to listening to young people's views at the time of their foster carer's annual review.

Promoting children's health. There was evidence of social services striving to work together with colleagues in both area health authorities that relate to Staffordshire. Cares were clear about their role and responsibility in relation to the health of children they care for. The area in need of strengthening is the record of children and young people's health, which could use the "red book" health record more constructively.

Promoting educational achievement. There was evidence during the inspection of foster carers valuing and promoting the education of children and young people in their care. Information systems about children's achievement and attendance needs to be collated.

Preparing for adulthood. This is covered in training and seen as an integral part of the carers work with children and young people. While there was some evidence seen of Pathway Planning [this](#) needs to be clearly and consistently in place on all appropriate files.

Suitability to work with children. There are appropriate recruitment and selection processes in place. However, there is a need to improve the recording of the selection process, ensuring that all references, including telephone contacts, qualification and CRB checks are in place and that there is full compliance with schedules 1 and 3 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. Systems should be put in place that ensure all staff undertaking fostering assessments are trained in this work with refresher courses made available.

Organisation and management of Staff. The management group was experienced, committed and innovative. The staff appeared well managed and clear about lines of responsibility. This could be assisted with clarity about delegated responsibility in the absence of the nominated manager and in the provision of relevant job descriptions for all staff.

Sufficient staff/carers with the right skills/experience. There were some good assessments of carers. There needs to be consideration of all carer assessments being completed by the teams and workers how focus on substitute family care assessments. Currently not all assessments are competency based nor do they reflect risk assessment of the carer's home.

Fair and competent employer. The evidence of the inspection was that Staffordshire was a fair and competent employer. There are clear systems for supervision, which was reported to take place regularly. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place to support practice.

Training. Training was reported to be available for staff, although not always relevant to family placement work. Managers strive to keep staff up to date with developments and changes in the field of fostering, but some felt that more specific training would be beneficial.

As yet there is no established appraisal system, which needs to be established to comply with regulation 21(4) of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. A programme of joint training with carers and staff also needs to be established.

Accountability and support. Staff are clear about lines of accountability and felt supported. There are regular team meetings, which are recorded.

Management and support of carers. Carers were mixed in their view about the amount and quality of the support they received. Some felt the need for far greater involvement from the children and young people's social workers. The majority felt well supported by the family placement team. Positive comments were also made about SUSTAIN and the initiation of the weekend support line.

Supervision of carers. There was evidence of regular supervision of carers, which is recorded. These meetings were viewed as being different from other visits undertaken by the family placement workers, indicating the successful establishment, with some carers, of this new approach. The Foster Carer Agreement needs to be updated in line with Schedule 5.

Training of carers. The content of the carers training is appropriate and well constructed. Training is well planned and accessible for foster carers. It is identified as a crucial issue for consideration in the progression of their career as carers with post approval training provided on an appropriate range of topics.

Case records for children. There were procedures and forms in place to assist clear and effective recording on children's files. These were not used and followed consistently. Some carers felt they had inappropriately scant information about children and young people at the time of placement. There was a clear recognition that this information was sometimes not available, but some carers still felt communication of this information could improve.

Administrative records. Children's and carers' records are appropriately stored separately. There needs to be separate recording of complaints and allegations and their outcomes in order to provide an overview of these occurrences across the county and to comply with the National Minimum Standards. All such information must be stored securely.

Premises. The accommodation used by the fostering service is appropriate for the purpose in each of the office used during the inspection.

Payments to carers. Carers reported payments were regular and on time. On the occasions when overpayment was made carers reported an accessible system to rectify the payment.

Fostering Panels. The panel is still in the process of establishing full membership under the current regulations. This needs to be rectified and systems put in place to allow the panel to fulfil all its functions of monitoring and quality assurance.

Short-term breaks. Family and Friends as Cares. These services are integrated into the fostering service as a whole and the previous comments relate to carers providing short-term breaks for children and young people.

Family and Friends as Cares. The fostering service has recognised there are some deficiencies in this area. A programme is reported to be in place to allocate support workers

from the family placement teams to all Family and Friend carers. This is not yet fully in place and needs to extend to consideration of assessments being undertaken by the workers with skills in assessment of substitute family carers.

Although there are a number of areas that need to be strengthened this is an organisation which has been open in identifying areas that need to be addressed. It appears to be striving to comply with the standards and regulations and to providing good quality care for children and young people placed with foster carers. The committed innovative and enthusiastic staff group will be an asset in the development of the fostering service which is well focused on the needs of children and young people.

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:

YES

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:

YES

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:

Staffordshire County Council fails to satisfy the regulatory requirements of the Fostering Service Regulations 2000. This failure is not substantial and an action plan is anticipated to address the concerns.

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NA

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

Action is being taken by the National Care Standards Commission to monitor compliance with the above requirements.

COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)

(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)

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

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

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 and recommendations 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	20	FS3	Action is taken to ensure that there is compliance with Schedule 1 in terms of information sought and recorded on staff and carers, including telephone contact with referees	8.3.04
2	12	FS1	The Policies and Procedures are up-dated in line with the Fostering Services Standards and Regulations	25.8.04
3	4	FS1	The current Statement of Purpose is amended to comply with the areas specified in NMS1.4	8.3.04
4	30	FS4	Improvements are needed to the information system to allow managers to have the appropriate information to manage the service.	25.8.04
5	21	FS5	All staff need to have current, relevant job descriptions.	25.8.04
6	30	FS6	The service must ensure that all foster homes have the basic equipment needed to care for children within their approval range.	Within 48 hours
7	15	FS7	Equipment should be available for all children and young people while placed with foster carers to enable them to live as full a life as possible.	On going

8	33	FS8	Efforts must be made to ensure that children and young people are placed with carers who are approved to meet their range of needs.	On going
9	14	FS10	Risk assessments need to be made prior to contact taking place between children and their birth families.	25.3.04
10	15	FS12	Prior to placement as full a description as possible of children and young people's health needs and history is available to carers.	25.3.04
11	12	FS9	A system needs to be in place that ensures information about allegations relating to carers is collated and evaluated.	25.3.04
12	16	FS13	A system is needed to record and evaluate children and young people's educational attainment and school attendance.	26.5.04
13	16	FS14	Clear evidence should be consistently in place on young people's files of Pathway Planning.	25.3.04
14	20	FS15	The service ensure there is compliance with Schedule 1 of The Fostering Service Regulations 2002	25.3.04
15	21	FS15	All Family Placement Workers must receive training in assessment work, including the use of competencies.	25.8.04
16	21(4)(a)	FS20	The service needs a system for regular planned appraisals of staff.	25.8.04
17	17	FS21	A system of good, clear and effective communication needs to be established between children's social workers and foster carers.	On going
18	21	FS19	A joint training programme involving staff and foster carers needs to be established.	25.8.04
19	28	FS22	All foster carer agreements must comply fully with Schedule 5 of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002	26.5.04
20	30	FS24	Management systems need to be put in place to ensure full and appropriate recording on children and young people's files.	25.3.04

21	42	FS25	Separate records relating to complaints and allegations against foster carers are maintained, giving information across the county.	25.3.04
22	24	FS30	Full fostering panel membership must be revised to reflect the requirements of regulation 24 of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002.	25.3.04
23	17	FS32	All the Standards need to be reflected in the service provided for family and friends carers.	25.8.04
24	32	FS25	All records must be stored securely in all the area offices.	Within 48 hours

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	FS1	Consideration is given to the provision of a variety of Handbooks for children and young people, which are accessible and relevant for differing ages and abilities.
2	FS44	Foster carers should be made aware of their responsibility to declare any possible conflict of interest.
3	FS11	Efforts are made to ascertain and include children and young people's views of fostering at the time of their carer's annual review.
4	FS26	Regular planned meetings need to be established between the fostering panel chair and the services decision maker.
5	FS32	Efforts are made to ensure that assessments of and family and friends carers are undertaken by those trained in assessment of foster carers.

* Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix e.g FS10 refers to Standard 10.

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods have been used in the production of this report

Number of Inspector days spent	9
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	YES
• Child protection officer	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	YES
• Local Foster Care Association	YES
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	YES
• Contact with parents	YES
• Contact with supervising social workers	YES
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	YES
Interview with panel chair	YES
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	NO
Date of Inspection	15/9/03
Time of Inspection	9.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	114.5

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

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

This is a new requirement for local authorities. Staffordshire have made a sound start in the provision of a Statement of Purpose. It clearly states its aims and objectives and gives full details of staff working for the service, which needs to be anonymised for wider circulation. It needs to be more specific in relation to the services it offers in relation to fostering.

There is a Children's Handbook available which is colourful and well presented.

Consideration is needed of the provision of a Handbook for different needs, abilities and ages.

There are appropriate policies and procedures in place, but these need to be reviewed to bring them in line with the current regulations and 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?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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The fostering service is managed by a group of skilled and experienced managers, headed by a senior manager who is the "nominated manager for the service. They have the necessary knowledge of management, child care and fostering issues to work effectively. All the managers are either currently undertaking NVQ 4 in Management or have been awarded a similar qualification.	
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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?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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The system for ensuring the suitability of managers to undertake their roles and responsibilities is in need of strengthening. These relate to compliance with schedule 1 and is referred to under Standard 15 of this report.	
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The current managers of the service are not newly appointed and inspectors were aware that the systems in place at the time of some appointments pre-date the current standards and regulations.

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

There are systems in place to monitor the fostering service. However, there are difficulties which arise of differences between the teams which are geographically separate. It was not straight forward for the nominated manager to provide some areas of information for the inspection.

Information about details of the cost of the service and day to day changes are difficult for managers to access. The inspectors were told that work has been undertaken to improve the level of information available to them via the IT service, but it remains an area weakness. Improvements in the information were seen by managers as helpful in providing managers with the basic information needed to manage the service.

There was evidence that staff and managers were aware of the need for them to declare any conflict of interest. However, the same was not the case for foster carers who need to be aware of the same issue.

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

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

1

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. This information was unavailable.

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

0

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

0

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

0

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)

The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The managers appeared to work well and effectively as a team. There were clear division of responsibilities within the group. It was reported that there was clarity about delegation in the absence of members of the management group but less clarity in relation to the role of nominated manager. In her absence it was not clear who takes on this role.

There were some issues relating to job descriptions. It was felt that some did not reflect the work undertaken by the manager.

In overall terms the service is managed ethically but needs to strengthen some areas to ensure efficiency and clarity of responsibility.

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?	2
<p>The fostering service provides a wide range of carers to meet the needs of individual children and young people.</p> <p>Direct observation during the inspection indicated a provision of a good standard of foster homes which were clean, welcoming and provided an appropriate level of privacy for the children in placement. There was evidence of some high quality provision to meet the needs of specific children. The service also needs to ensure that the basic equipment needs of all children are met consistently and that checks are recorded in relation to vehicles used to transport foster children.</p>		

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>The fostering service appeared to strive to meet the needs of a wide range of children and young people. Issues of how carers proposed to meet the religious and cultural needs of children when they differed from their own were not clearly addressed in the assessments. However, information gained during the inspection demonstrated that some carers worked extremely hard to meet the needs of children recognising the value of their religion, ethnic background and culture. The development of an Asian Support Group and information line was cited as a very positive development.</p> <p>There are funding difficulties in relation to some placements where aids and adaptations are needed to support children in respite placements. It is reported that there are practical and financial difficulties in providing for some respite equipment.</p>		

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

There were differing opinions expressed during the inspection about the level and efficacy of matching. It would be fair to say that where resources allow matching does take place. It appeared that many foster carers were asked to take children and young people outside of their approval range. There was some evidence of this being presented to panel, but not consistently. Matching is not consistently based on care plans and the process did not always allow for the exchange of appropriate information. There was appropriate LAC documentation on all the children's files seen, although it was not always signed. In situations where transracial or transcommunity placements are made there was evidence of sound and effective work by carers to address the issues. It did appear that this was led by the carer rather than actively identified in the plan. There were examples of planned introductions to carers, but it was noted that this was not the norm.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

All the information presented during the inspection indicated that either police or CRB checks had been undertaken in the assessment of carers, although there needs to be greater clarity that the CRB checks are at an enhanced level. Carers received training in safe care, caring for an abused child and managing behaviour. It was not clear from the training information whether there is any specific focus on ways of boosting and maintaining children self-esteem within the training programme.

There are clear statements in procedures, guidance and Handbooks for carers and children that identify unacceptable forms of punishment. The same is so for situations where a child is missing from the foster home.

There are systems in place to collate information about allegation of abuse or neglect of children in foster care. However, it caused some difficulties for this information to be collated, with clear statements about the outcomes for the inspection.

There is information available to carers and children about bullying. This was not presented as an issue during the inspection by those interviewed.

The provision of full information about a foster child varies widely. There were examples of carers feeling they had full and accurate information. Foster carers recognised that social workers did not always have full information about children. However, there were situations where carers felt information had been withheld prior to placement.

Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied: This information is no longer included in the children's questionnaire.

0

%

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

This is evidenced in the Handbooks for carers and children and in the department's procedures and carer training. There was no evidence available during the inspection of how this worked practically for those children placed outside Staffordshire.

There was evidence that young people's and children's views were sought and responded to in terms of contact.

There was no file evidence that Risk assessments had taken place prior to contact.

There were examples of good quality contact and of carers working very closely with the department and with parents to maintain meaningful, positive links with birth families. The carers demonstrated recording of contact and systems to inform people appropriately of issues which arise.

The only shortfall within this standard is the lack of evidence of risk assessments around 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?**

2

Of the children who responded to the inspection questionnaire (53) the majority (40) felt that they had been consulted about their care. There were also examples of close involvement with children's families and carers demonstrated their awareness of the need to listen and respond to the views of children and their families. Children felt on a day to day basis that their opinions were sought and listened to. There were examples of carers undertaking specific training to enable clearer communication with the children placed with them. Some had been to the children's schools to learn the school's approach to communication with specific children. A joint funded project with the NCSC, CARS (The Children's Advice and Representation Service) provides advocacy and support for looked after children and young people.

It was felt that a clear line of communication from the child/young person place needed to be established to inform the carer's review. This view needs to be identified as well as that of the placing social worker.

In 42 of the returned questionnaires children stated they were aware of the complaints procedure and knew how to complain. However, there are very few complaints made by children in foster care, which may be worthy of further exploration by the department. The department has established a consultation system with Viewpoint and actively seeks the views of looked after children through the Young People's Forum, as well as through the review process.

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?**

2

There is clear guidance to carers about their role in relation to the health of children and young people placed with them. Training on health and hygiene is part of the preparation training with further courses also being offered.

All the children's files seen had consent signed for medical treatment, but there were examples of very limited medical histories on some children. This was reflected in comments from carers who felt a lack in medical information prior to placement. There was limited evidence of a written health record for each child placed. The "red book" health record could be incorporated effectively into this aspect of recording. This could be incorporated into the planning and review process for children.

Staffordshire has undertaken some effective work in establishing systems with the two Health Authorities it relates to. There are a range of CAMHS projects across the county. SUSTAIN was viewed very positively by carers as an inter-agency project responding to the needs of looked after children whose foster placements are under stress. SUSTAIN was seen by carers and staff as providing a quick response to situations at the time it was needed. The work of the department in this provision is commendable.

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?**

2

There was evidence that education for children and young people was highly valued within the fostering service. Foster carers demonstrated a sound commitment to facilitating children's education. Carers gave examples of their contact with schools, some working closely with teachers to assist the development of particular children in addition to their attendance at open evenings and parents evenings.

There appears a weakness in systems for collating the educational attainment for foster children, including accessible information about the numbers, which are excluded. Similarly there is a lack of clear written information about responsibility for the provision of school uniforms.

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?

2

Some carers worked especially with young people moving towards independence. The difficulty with matching creates issues about carers working within specific areas, as pressure for placements will lead to carers working with different needs. However, training and support is provided for carers working in preparation for adulthood and those with younger children saw their work as significant in relation to this long term goal. The support from the Leaving Care team was reported to be variable and the recording of Pathway Plans was not consistent.

However, there were examples of carers who worked effectively in supporting young people into independence and in providing on-going support to them.

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

There are systems in place to ensure those working in the fostering service are suitable to work with children and young people. The written recruitment and selection procedures are clearly understood by the personnel staff involved in the inspection. However, there is a need to update these processes in line with current standards and regulations. The staff records did not comply with requirements of Schedule 1. There were no photographs on any of the files. At present the department do not update CRB checks. The files indicated that qualifications are not always checked and there was no evidence on some files of these checks having taken place. It is not evident on the files that telephone references are undertaken in addition to written references. The inspector was informed that there are often discrepancies on files as the interviews are undertaken in the area and although Personnel/HR give guidance it is up to the individual areas to conduct the interviews and they do not always complete all the necessary checks. Some, but not all staff has attended training in assessment of foster carers.

Carers identified a lack of understanding and knowledge from some children's social workers about fostering practice.

Total number of staff of the agency:

45

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

5

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

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

Staff met during the inspection was experienced, skilled and committed. There are clear lines of accountability and responsibility. The individual teams work well together in the provision of the service and are aware of those who take on delegated responsibilities in the manager's absence. Not all staff has well defined job descriptions reflecting the work they undertake. There is a need for greater clarity in relation to delegation of the nominated manager's role has already been referred to. The family placement workers were clear about their role and responsibility in relation to the children and young people's social workers. They demonstrated an awareness and understanding of the pressures on their colleagues and a commitment to work effectively with them.

There is a supervision policy in place and some staff found this was maintained effectively, although this was not unanimous. There is currently no joint training involving staff and foster carers. Training needs for carers are identified in their Portfolio which is used in the progression of their fostering career, but is currently not in place for all carers.

It was reported that there has been progress in the adequate provision of administrative support. Inspectors were told of recruitment difficulties in one area. The department was reported to have taken action to attempt to minimise the difficulties this caused and made use of skilled and experienced administrative staff in doing so.

Staff were aware of the department's policies and procedures and had access to written copies of them.

There is a clear and effective system for dealing with enquiries from prospective carers.

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.7)

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

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

Most of the staff in the Family Placement Teams were experienced child care workers who are well established in their role. There appeared to be a good level of staff retention within the service.

Staffordshire have made a clear decision about their recruitment strategy. There is a distinct division between the recruitment and assessment work. One team covering the county has responsibility for recruitment of foster carers. They are assisted in this in relation to work with Black carers and those from ethnic minority groups by the Adoptions Options Team. This division appears to allow for a rapid and appropriate response to enquiries and ensures a change of focus when the assessment is undertaken.

The standard of assessment reports was variable, although it should be noted that the inspection included reports completed prior to the introduction of the current standards. However, although there was an expectation from managers that assessments were competency based, this was not reflected in the reports seen. There were also issues relating to the lack of risk assessments off the foster home including appropriate

consideration of pets. Driving licences and Road Tax were not consistently checked and recorded. Reports did not include detailed information as to how foster carers could care for a young person from another religion, although they did include information about the carer's own religion. The same was felt to be the case regarding carers' ability to meet young people's racial and cultural needs.

Not all reports give clear recommendations to Fostering Panel, on some of the files seen the recommendations appeared vague. Whilst some files indicated that CRB checks have been undertaken it does not indicate that these were at the enhanced level.

There appeared to be some effective assessment work, but this needs to be reflected in the assessment reports which should be seen and used by workers as an effective tool, an intrinsic part of the assessment process.

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)

The fostering service is a fair and competent employer, with sound employment practices and good support for its staff and carers.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The information presented indicated Staffordshire was a fair and competent employer. There was no negative information about employment practice. Support is available to both staff and carers. There is an out of hours service for carers and this has recently been strengthened by a specific carer run weekend hotline providing carers with direct telephone contact with experienced carers.

Insurance is addressed in the department's policies and procedures. The whistle blowing policy was reported to have been recently reviewed. Staff and carers demonstrated an awareness of how to respond to situations of concern.

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?

2

There was evidence of a range of training made available to staff. It was noted that not all staff had received training in assessment work although this is an area where there was an expectation from managers that such training was essential.

There is current no joint training offered to staff and carers as recommended in NMS19.7. However, there appeared to be a commitment to training and evidence of an effective programme being implemented.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)**All staff are properly accountable and supported.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

Staff were clear about their responsibilities and felt well supported within the organisation. If support was not available from the line manager staff were able to identify other sources available to them.

There is an established supervision policy which the majority of staff found effective. Inspectors were informed that there is currently no formal staff appraisal system, but some managers use supervision as a method of providing feedback to staff on performance. There are regular planned and recorded Team meetings for the various groups within the organisation.

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

There are systems in place for working with and supporting carers. Carers' view of support is mixed. Of 62 returned questionnaires 30 carers stated they felt "very satisfied" with the support they received, 6 felt it was "OK most of the time", 17 were "quite well" supported and 7 said they did not "get enough support". Some of these related to support from both the social worker for the children and to their own family placement worker. A recurring issue was the support specifically from the child's social worker, with difficulties relating to lack of response to messages and three with no visits. Carers were aware of the pressures on workers and repeatedly referred to the limited number of social workers.

The carer's annual reviews are undertaken by the Madford team to allow an independent view of their fostering work. After the first review these are available to the fostering panel rather than actually on the agenda for discussion.

There were systems that carers viewed very positively. SUSTAIN was seen as directly supporting carers with difficult situations and usually within a short time scale, which was seen by carers as essential. The development of the weekend telephone support run by carers for carers was again viewed positively although had not been running long. Managers have given their telephone support to this project, in addition to their usual duties. There are developments, which aim to address the support of carers, while these are very positive the experience of a high percentage of carers did not feel it supported them personally.

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

All foster carers had named family placement workers who provided support and supervision. A Foster Carer Agreement was in place on all the files seen. However they did not comply with Schedule 5 in the following respect;

- The terms of foster carers approval
- Specifying the training needed
- No clear statement about how the annual review will be undertaken.
- No information about procedures for placing children. The form states that the Foster Placement Agreement should be replaced and updated annually.
- The need for foster carers to give information regarding their ability to care or any request or application to adopt, or for registration for day care or child minding.
- Information in respect of child protection is limited.
- No information about unauthorised absences.
- No mention of the need to co-operate with National Care Standards Commission inspection
- Only includes illness and hospitalisation in significant events to be notified to the fostering service provider.

This is the first inspection of the Standards and Regulations of 2002; therefore some of the practice predates these.

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The training for foster carers is organised and implemented by one central team based at Madford House with courses operating across the county. A Training Catalogue lists the courses available and incorporates application/nomination forms for the courses. Training is incorporated into the Payment for Skills payment scheme, which aims to reward carers for the skills they develop and use in the fostering task. Each annual review considers training needs. However, some reviews gave a general reference to training rather than addressing specific areas of training need.

There appeared to be a genuine effort to prioritise training and to actively encourage training for all carers.

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The recording in relation to the children and young people placed with foster carers is kept and maintained by their own social worker. The department uses LAC documentation and the details on these documents was variable. None of the files seen had fully completed documentation. There was one example of a clear initial assessment, flowchart, ecomap and chronology, giving a clear picture of the child and situation.

The Placement Agreements were mainly lacking consent for trips and overnight stays. Consent for medical and dental treatment were not signed consistently.

Appropriate forms were seen to be available but were not used consistently.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The forms and guidance was available for maintaining records, but there are issues with the full and precise completion of them. In terms of monitoring managers are not supported by the current information system. It was problematic for managers to produce some of the information requested as part of this inspection. Complaints and allegations were recorded in the areas and not automatically drawn together into a county view. There was no record of the number of children thought to have been involved in prostitution while placed with foster carers. It appeared that the IT system did not assist managers in providing accurate, easily accessible information. This was also apparent in that the system for recording current foster carers gave the names of some who were no longer fostering for the department. Some sensitive information in areas was not stored securely. This varied between the areas.

Documentation for children and young people is based on LAC forms and does provide an integrated system. The need for workers to maintain a clear and effective communication system between the teams appears to be recognised and achieved.

In addition to the statistical information below;

Respite placements were made for 111 children who had 1366 episodes of respite. This is an average of 12 per child.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			290
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			775
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			517
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			42
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			36
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £		70.49	Maximum £
			378.98

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 premises used in the different areas for the operation of the fostering service appeared appropriate for their purpose. The offices are clear about the opening times and staff did not report any difficulties with access. The offices were suitably equipped for running the service.

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?
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	0
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This is not included in Local Authority inspections

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?
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	0
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This is not included in Local Authority inspections

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

There is a written policy describing the payment process for carers' allowances. This was presented as working effectively. There were a number of carers who reported receiving "over payments" when the payment section had not been informed the child or young person had moved on. Carers found this frustrating but felt the response from the payments section was reasonable and they were able to rectify the situation without too much difficulty.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- Fostering panels are organised efficiently and effectively so as to ensure that good quality decisions are made about the approval of foster carers, in line with the overriding objective to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in foster care.

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

Fostering panels have clear written policies and procedures, which are implemented in practice, about the handling of their functions.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Written policies and procedures are in place in relation to the functioning of the fostering panel. At the time that panel was observed there was some confusion about its role in relation to NCH's membership and use of panel in its provision of carers for a joint project with Staffordshire. This has now been resolved.

The panel members had an appropriate range of skills and experience. However, there was a problem with the full membership, which lack a councillor and a foster carer from another organisation.

The observation of panel showed it to run in an effective, efficient manner. There was full and appropriate discussion of relevant issues. All panel members were actively involved and appeared well prepared.

The panel did not appear to be able to fulfil its function of monitoring the range and type of carers due to lack of general information about the fostering service and some lack of clarity about its role.

The systems of communication between the senior managers of the service and panel appeared tentative. There was no regular meeting with the chair, other than with the panel adviser. Such a forum would be beneficial, particularly when there are differences between panel's recommendation and the decision made by the department.

A system of review and feedback to panel should be established to promote good practice and further development of panel and its functions.

Short-Term Breaks

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.2)

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

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

	3
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Short-term breaks are provided by the fostering service directly and also via Staffordshire's arrangement with NCH. Issues relating to this aspect of the service have been incorporated into the findings throughout the report.

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?	1
<p>Managers were aware that the current approach to placements with family and friends needs further work. The current system allows assessments to be completed by the children's social worker and after approval carers should now be given a support worker from the family placement team. Until recently a separate support worker was not available. There are still situations where there is no specific support worker for the carers. Family and friend carers were not in receipt of the same support and training as other carers.</p>		
<p>Issues of assessment and full support to these carers needs to be addressed and it is recognised that the department has made a start in the right direction to do so.</p>		

C.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 15 & 18 September 2003 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

A copy of the Providers comments and action plan are available at the Area Office, where these have been submitted.

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

Amendments to the report were necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments were received from the provider	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provider comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provider comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate	<input type="checkbox"/>

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.

C.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 15 September 2004, which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

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

Action plan was required	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan was received at the point of publication	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provider has declined to provide an action plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: <enter details here>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

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

C.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

C.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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