



Champions for  
Social Care  
Improvement

# inspection report

Fostering Services

**TACT (The Adolescent and Children`s  
Trust)**

27 Station Road

Kettering

Northants

NN15 7HH

19th,21st,22nd,23rd,24th, January 2004

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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

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

### **The role of CSCI is to:**

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

## **Inspection Methods & Findings**

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

### **The 4-point scale ranges from:**

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

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

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

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

**FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION**

**Local Authority Fostering Service?**

NO

**Name of Authority**

**Address**

**Local Authority Manager**

**Tel No:**

**Address**

**Fax No:**

**Email Address**

**Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)**

YES

**Name of Agency**

TACT (The Adolescent and Children`s Trust)

**Tel No**

01832 731734

**Address**

27 Station Road, Kettering, Northants, NN15 7HH

**Fax No**

01832 731735

**Email Address**

enquiries@tactfostercare.org.uk

**Registered Number of IFA**

H070000409

**Name of Registered Provider**

Adolescent and Children`s Trust (The)

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

Mrs Sonia Anne Bolland

**Date of first registration**

25th April 2003

**Date of latest registration certificate**

25th April 2003

**Registration Conditions Apply ?**

NO

**Date of last inspection**

3/3/03

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		19th January 2004	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		10:00 am	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Mrs Maria Johnson	081363
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>	Mrs Mary Tagon	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>	Mrs Sika Schaad	
<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 NCSC. 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>			

**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 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 TACT (The Adolescent and Children`s Trust). 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
- 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.

TACT is a voluntary organisation which is a children's fostering agency organised with a board of trustees and a chief executive: Kevin Williams, who is the designated decision maker.

The main aim of TACT is to recruit, select and provide foster carers for children placed by Local Authorities. Foster Carer approvals and reviews are managed through TACT's Fostering Panel, as well as providing support to foster carers. TACT aims to ensure that everybody who comes into contact with the fostered children promotes their welfare and safeguards their interest. TACT aims to work closely with the children, their parents and placing authorities.

TACT has a number of branches with premises and a designated manager for each region and headquarters office based in London. The Regional Manager for TACT East Midlands is Sonia Bolland, who is based at the Kettering Office.

## PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

### Inspector's Summary

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

The focus of Year 2 inspections undertaken by the National Care Standards Commission is upon outcomes for service users, progress on meeting national minimum standards from Year 1 inspections and focusing on aspects of service provision that need further development or pose the most significant potential risk to service users. This inspection focuses on the areas that are most significant for service users lives and the areas that were identified for action and development at the last inspection of this service, which took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2003. Some standards may not have been inspected on this occasion, and will be covered at the second inspection of this service, which will take place later in 2003/04. For a full overview of performance against standards this report should be read in conjunction with the report of the first full audit of this service.

This inspection is the first annual inspection completed by the National Care Standards Commission since registration. Due to the timing of the inspection the full twelve-month period has not yet elapsed since the agencies first inspection. The National Care Standards Commission acknowledges therefore that the Registered persons have not had the opportunity to put into place all the developments that they had hoped to. Therefore this report will also reflect developments that the agency is currently undertaking.

The inspection was conducted over a period of five days, during this time inspectors reviewed records, observed and met with panel members and interviewed three members of staff and the Registered manager. Inspectors also met with four foster families in their homes, met with the foster children of the families, met for lunch with foster carers, sought views from directors of Social Services, area child protection teams, and distributed questionnaires to all carers, children in placement, and placing authorities.

The following responses were received;

#### **19 Placing Authority Questionnaires returned**

*How well do you think the carer is looking after the child* responses ranged from very well indeed, to OK most of the time.

Most questionnaires confirmed that the agency kept them informed of any events that affect the child. Two questionnaires identified that that the organisations system for reporting significant incidents should be improved. 12 Placing Authorities reported that they had not received a copy of the Statement of Purpose, last inspection report, or the complaints procedure. (This issue is discussed in the body of the report.)

The comments received were positive, placing authorities confirmed that if they had concerns or issues that they were listened to and acted upon.



## **11 Foster Carers Questionnaires returned**

Most carers confirmed that they were very satisfied with the support that they received from the agency. Although some carers felt that staffing levels could be increased, that would improve staff availability.

Most carers confirmed that they would not wish any changes to be made to the way in which the agency is run. Some carers felt that improvements could be made in the arrangement of respite care.

## **11 Children's Questionnaires returned**

All children had received a copy of the children's guide, and new how to make a complaint if they were unhappy.

Three of the children were unsure how they could contact the National Care Standards Commission if they were unhappy.

All children confirmed that they were asked their opinion about their foster carers by the agency.

All the children confirmed that they were happy and positive about their placements.

Information provided during the course of the inspection necessitated three immediate requirements, these related to assessment of risk, behaviour management and provision of health care. The organization has responded positively and subsequent information has confirmed that these issues have been resolved.

The conclusion of the inspection is that;

### **1. Statement of Purpose**

#### **Standard 1**

Standard not met. The agency has a Statement of Purpose. The statement includes details of the numbers of complaints but fails to determine their outcomes. Information needs to detail whether the complaint was substantiated or not.

### **2. Fitness to provide or manage a fostering service**

#### **Standard 2,3**

Both standards met. The agency has a comprehensive system for taking references. All information required in Schedule one is sought and evidenced on the individual staff records.

### **3. Management of the fostering service**

#### **Standard 4,5**

Both standards met. There are clear roles for the staff and well-established lines of communication and of accountability between Registered Managers, staff and carers

### **4. Securing and promoting welfare**

#### **Standard 6 – 14**

4 Standard were not met. 4 Standards were met. 1 Standard not assessed.

The organisation does not record shortfalls within the matching process or how they will be met. Safe caring guidelines for each placement needs to be developed. Carers reported very good relationships with supervising social workers.

### **5. Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training foster carers and staff**

#### **Standard 15 – 23**

9 Standards met . 1 unmet

The organisation has very good systems for the recruitment of staff and carers.

There is a good management structure in place that facilitates good communication.

**6. Records**

**Standard 24,25**

Both standards were met. All files inspected were well organised

**7. Fitness of premises for use as fostering service**

**Standard 26**

Standard met. Accommodation is provided on three floors and there are several meeting rooms, offices and a room that is used for training purposes. All areas are secure and well maintained.

**8. Financial requirements**

**Standard 27 – 29**

Both standards met. The Registered manager stated that the agency ensures that it is financially viable and has sufficient financial resources to fulfil its obligations.

**9. Fostering panels**

**Standard 30**

Standard met. The inspectors observed a Panel Meeting - all members gave their views very clearly, the panel appeared to function well and in accordance with Regulations 24,25 & 26 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002

**10. Short term breaks**

**Standard 31**

Standard not met. The agency is currently providing holiday and weekend placements for children the Registered manager must develop policies and procedures that reflect this service.

**11. Family and friends as carers**

**Standard 32**

This service is not offered.

## **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:**

Not Applicable

## Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

YES

**If No please list below**

### STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

**Action is being taken by the 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.**

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

**Lead Inspector**          Maria Johnson          **Signature**      \_\_\_\_\_  
**Second Inspector**      \_\_\_\_\_      **Signature**      \_\_\_\_\_  
**Locality Manager**          Mary Tagon          **Signature**      \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**      \_\_\_\_\_

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The appropriate Officer of the Local Authority or the Registered Person (as applicable) is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how requirements 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	Regulation 42	FS4	The Registered Person must review responsibilities under Regulation 41 and ensure that notifications are completed accordingly.	Forthwith
2	Regulation 15	FS6	The Registered Person must ensure that when children are receiving respite care each child's identified needs are met.	By 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2004
3	Regulation 34	FS8	The Registered Person must ensure that information relating to the matching process is recorded and is incorporated into the foster placement agreement.	30 <sup>th</sup> May 2004
4	Regulation 12	FS9	The Registered Person must develop individual safe caring guidelines each foster home, in consultation with the carer and everyone else in the household. Guidelines must be approved with the child's social worker and explained appropriately to the child.	30 <sup>th</sup> May 2004
5	Regulation 28	FS22	The Registered Person must ensure that the Foster Care Agreement for carers is in line with Schedule 5 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2001.	30 <sup>th</sup> June 2004
6	Regulation 34	FS8	The Registered Person must ensure that the Foster Placement Agreement is in line with Schedule 6 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2001.	30 <sup>th</sup> June 2004

7	Regulation 23	FS26	The Registered Person must review premises in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.	30 <sup>th</sup> June 2004
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### 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	The statement of purpose includes details of the numbers of complaints but fails to determine their outcomes. Information should detail whether the complaint was substantiated or not. Change in the local management structure should also be incorporated.
2	FS9	The Registered Person should develop procedures to ensure that child protection investigations conducted by placing authorities are monitored to ensure a conclusion to the investigation is reached and recorded.
3	FS9	The corporate policy on bullying should be developed further to ensure that carers are aware of the particular vulnerability of looked after children and their susceptibility to bullying. The procedures should ensure that carers recognize, record and address any instance of bullying.
4	FS13	The foster placement agreement should identify where financial responsibility lies for all school costs, including school uniform, school trips and school equipment.
5	FS24	The Registered Person should consider how to ensure that where instruction is given to carers they have a way of referring back to the information.
6	FS12	The Registered person should consider including a health representative on the fostering panel.

\* 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	10
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	YES
• Specialist advisor (s)	YES
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
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	YES
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	19/01/04
Time of Inspection	09.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	80



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.

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>2</b>
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Since the last inspection the organisations statement of purpose has been reviewed, the document sets out what services that are provided for children who are placed by the fostering service. A change in the local management structure will necessitate an amendment to information relating to staffing. The statement includes details of the numbers of complaints but fails to determine their outcomes. Information needs to detail whether the complaint was substantiated or not. The registered provider has approved the statement of purpose of the fostering service, and provided a copy of the revised document to the National Care Standards Commission.

The Registered Person has developed and provided the National Care Standards Commission with the Guide given to children at the point of admission. The children’s guide includes a summary of what the service sets out to do for children and contact details of organizations that the child can contact if they are unhappy. The organization provides information to children on how a child can make a complaint. Children that completed the National Care Standards Commission Questionnaire confirmed that they were aware of the complaints procedure. The guide is not available in different formats to meet the needs of different groups of children. The Registered manager explained that when a child is admitted to a foster placement the supervising social worker should explain the leaflets to the child to ensure that they understand the content.

## 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?

4

The Registered manager has considerable experience in working with children and working at senior level within children's services. The staffing records for the Registered manager confirmed that she has a professional qualification relevant to working with children, and a management qualification that matches the competencies required by the NVQ Level 4; the Registered manager explained that she is undertaking a further management qualification equivalent to an NVQ level 5

Interviews with staff at all levels of the organization confirmed that the Registered manager exercises effective leadership of the staff and operation. Staff confirmed that the fostering service is organized, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible child care, and that child welfare is at the core of all practice and decision making.

### Standard 3 (3.1 - 3.4)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The nominated responsible individual Kathy Blythe, and the Regional Manager Sonia Bolland, successfully completed Fit Person Interviews with National Care Standards Commission. Both managers were considered suitable people to run a fostering service, having in each case the appropriate experience and qualifications. Staffing records for the Registered manager confirmed that references as set out in Schedule 1 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002, have been completed, as these references were completed sometime before the implementation of the Care Standards Act telephone enquiries were not completed. The Registered manager Police check is due for renewal October 2004.

## 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?**

1

The Statement of purpose details that there is a clear management structure. The Registered manager explained that a review within the organisation has resulted in a change within the local management structure. The implementation of the structure is underway although at the time of the inspection there had not been sufficient time elapsed to evaluate or establish the benefits or deficits. Interviews with staff confirmed that there are clear roles for managers and staff, good lines of communication and accountability. The Registered manager explained that with the new management structure responsibility for some budgets would be transferred to Area Managers. The Area manager confirmed awareness of this increased responsibility. Changes in financial procedures should be reflected in the organisations financial procedural guidance to staff.

Written information supplied during the course of the inspection confirmed that documentation is provided to purchasers of services this includes charges for each of its services. Discussions with the Registered manager and a review of Human resources policy identified that agency does not inform carers, or staff of their responsibility to declare any possible conflicts of interest.

During discussion with the Registered manager, and the Registered Person there was confusion regarding who in the organisation had responsibility for notifications to the National Care Standards Commission and the nature of incidents that should be notified. During in discussion with the Registered Person she confirmed that she was not aware of her responsibility under Regulation 41 to report on matters as detailed in Schedule 7. (This issue is subject to a requirement)

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

1

**Death of a child placed with foster parents.**

0

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

0

**Serious illness or accident of a child.**

0

**Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.**

0

**Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.**

0

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

0

**Serious complaint about a foster parent.**

0

**Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.**

1

**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?****3**

Staff records confirmed that the Registered manager has a clear job description setting out duties and responsibilities. With the growth of the numbers of carers in the region and the increased responsibilities the Registered manager explained that she has reviewed the level of delegation and responsibility, from the information supplied through out the inspection process it was confirmed that there are clear lines of accountability.

## 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

During the course of this inspection four foster homes were visited and each was seen to be warm, adequately furnished, decorated and maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene. Each foster home is reviewed at the point of the annual review by the supervising social worker. The Registered manager explained that the policy of the organisation is that each child placed has her/his own bed and foster children have their own bedroom or may share with a sibling of the same sex, if that is appropriate, foster children are not permitted to share bedrooms with the carer's own children.

Interviews with staff confirmed that if a child has been abused or has abused another child, then the child's needs and the needs of all other children in the home are assessed before any decision is made to allow sharing of bedrooms. The outcome of the assessment is recorded in writing.

Staff interviewed confirmed that at the point of assessment a Health and Safety check is completed to ensure that the home and immediate environment are free of avoidable hazards that might expose a child to risk of injury or harm.

Interviews with carers confirmed that carer's preparation and training cover health and safety issues.

When meeting with carers they had been informed that the inspection was taking place and understand that they may be interviewed or visited as part of the Commission's inspection process.

### Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The organisations referral format part one and two identifies each child's of gender, religion, ethnic origin, language, culture, and special needs. However the format does not make provision to identify child's individual needs in relation to the identified area, how they will be met or shortfalls in the proposed placement. The Registered manager explained that if a foster placement has to be made in an emergency and no suitable placement is available in terms of the child's specific needs, then the placement is reviewed every 6 weeks. The agency provides carers with training and preparation that raises awareness in caring for a child and ensuring that ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic needs are met.

Interviews with staff confirmed that the organisation raises carer's awareness to the need to work cooperatively with the agency and the placing authorities through out the assessment process and preparation training. During the course of the inspection it was noted that the relationship between carers and placing authorities varied, some carers reported difficulties when making requests from or to placing authorities, which in some instances had a

negative outcome for the foster child. Carers reported that their relationships with their supervising social workers was positive and requests were responded to.

When reviewing records it was identified that when children with disabilities are with their substantive carers considerable efforts are made to ensure that accommodation arrangements reflect the child's assessed need for privacy and space and specific needs resulting from the disability. Records identified that equipment and, adaptations of the carer's home and vehicle had been made after consultation with the appropriate community health professionals. However when time is spent with a respite carer it was not possible to evidence through records or interviews that the same level of assessment of need had been completed, or that the necessary arrangements had been made. (This issue is subject to a requirement)

**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.**

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>2</b>
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When reviewing the organisations duty system for taking referrals it was noted that the processes for gathering information was of a good standard. The organisation has systems in place to share information involving the placing authorities, the child and her/his family, potential carers, their families and other children in placement. Through discussion with various staff members it was established that matching children with carers, is achieved by means of information sharing and consideration, the organisation does not formally record this process of decision-making or shortfalls in the placement. Records identified that written agreements were in place and identified the child being placed, but failed to contain specific reference to elements of matching which were taken into consideration in agreeing the placement and identify areas where foster carers need additional support to compensate for any gaps in the match between the child and carer. (This issue is subject to a requirement)

Interviews with staff confirmed that where an appropriate placement cannot be identified then the agency would not accept the referral. Interviews with carers evidenced that they can refuse a placement if they feel unable to meet the needs of the child. Discussions with staff confirmed that placement decisions consider the child's assessed racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic needs and match these as closely as possible with the ethnic origin, race, religion, culture and language of the foster family.

Records and discussion with staff confirmed that where practicable, each child has the opportunity for a period of introduction to a proposed foster carer so she/he can express an informed view about the placement and become familiar with the carer, the carer's family, any other children in placement. When reviewing records it was evident that when bridging children into another placement carers and children have the opportunity to express their views.

**Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)**  
**The fostering service protects each child or young person from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.**

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>2</b>
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The Registered manager and an independent contracted member of staff have responsibility for foster carers training in caring for a child who has been abused, safe caring skills, managing behavior and recognising signs of abuse. Interviews and staff records identified that both trainers were very experienced in working with children that have been abused. The trainers have recently reviewed the format and content of the training to ensure that the content is relevant and up to date.

General safe caring guidelines are provided, based on a written policy. The records identified that specific guidelines had not been developed for each foster home, in consultation with the carer and everyone else in the household. Subsequently the guidelines had not been approved with the child's social worker and there was no evidence that they had been explained appropriately to the child. (This issue is subject to a requirement)

Interviews with carers confirmed their awareness that corporal punishment is not acceptable. This is set out clearly in written information for foster carers. Staff members confirmed that they were aware of the systems for reporting all allegations to the Responsible individual. The Registered manager explained that systems are in place to collate and evaluate information on the circumstances, number and outcome of all allegations of neglect or abuse of a child in foster care. Staff interviews and records identified that there are instances where placing authorities are failing to respond fully to allegations made by children against carers. This has resulted in inconclusive investigations. (This issue is subject to a recommendation)

The agency has a corporate policy on bullying this policy should be developed further to ensure that carers are aware of the particular vulnerability of looked after children and their susceptibility to bullying. The procedures should ensure that carers recognize, record and address any instance of bullying. (This issue is subject to a recommendation)

A review of the completed carers questionnaires identified that carers felt that they were provided with full information by the organisation about the foster child and her/his family to enable the carer to protect the foster child, their own children, other children for whom they have responsibility and themselves. A review of records identified that in some instances supervising social workers were giving verbal advice to carers regarding children's behaviors, but then failing to confirm any follow up to establish if the strategies had been successful. Records also identified that supervising social workers were identifying problems that carers were experiencing but had not recorded what action should be taken and by whom. At the time of the inspection information indicated that a child had been placed with carers without a formal risk assessment of potentially dangerous behaviors. The Registered Person explained that organization is developing a system of risk assessments. This matter was made subject to an immediate requirement at the time of the inspection. The organization has responded positively and subsequent information has confirmed that this issue has been resolved.

<b>Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>%</b>
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**Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

The organizations referral form requires information to be completed in relation to the contact arrangements for each child. A review of the records identified that placing authorities completing the Looked After Children formats include details of contact arrangements. Interviews with staff and carers confirmed that during the assessment process and training of carers, the fostering service stresses the importance of foster carers helping a child to maintain appropriate contacts and covers the skills required to encourage and facilitate such contacts.

Interviews with carers confirmed that they were aware of the individual arrangements for the children placed with them. Where carers had responsibility for facilitating, supervising or transporting children to and from contact visits there was no evidence of risk assessment by the agency or placing authority. The Registered manager explained that the agency is in the process of developing a more comprehensive system for identifying and assessing risk factors. Interviews confirmed that help and support is provided to the carer in dealing with any difficult contact issues that may arise. A review of records identified that the role of the foster carer in supporting, facilitating or supervising contact arrangements, is not always clearly detailed. Interviews with carers confirmed that financial support is provided to the carer for transport or other costs involved in ensuring contacts take place at the desired frequency and in the most suitable place. Interviews with carers identified that carers are required by the organisation to keep a diary of all significant events. This include outcomes of contact arrangements and their perceived impact on the child; this information is then shared with the supervising social worker and the placing authority.

**Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.5)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

The organisation provides training to carers on communicating with children. The fostering service ensures that all foster carers understand the importance of listening to the views of the children in their care. The organisation has recently identified a specific member of staff to develop consultation groups with children to ascertain their views on the service. The Registered manager explained that it is the hope that representatives from the children's groups will then be identified to feed information to the Senior Management Team. The carers and children are also sent a newsletter that keeps them informed of events. A discussion with Chief Executive confirmed that the organisation is in the process of developing a web site that will facilitate carers and children in accessing information and offer the opportunity for carers and children to E-mail their view and opinions.

The Registered manager explained that consideration has been given to ascertaining views of children with communication difficulties regarding their care and treatment. Currently the agency attempts to work with all professionals involved in the child's life in gaining a general view and responding to any concerns that are raised. The Registered Person explained that she is aware that disability awareness training needs to be developed further. Two members of staff, a support worker and an area manager within the agency have completed training in sign language.

The organisation has a complaints leaflet that is provided to the children the leaflet is only

available in one format and is not accessible to younger children due to the language and complexity of the information. The completed childrens questionnaires confirmed that children new how to make a complaint to the organisation. The questionnaires also highlighted that some of the children did not know how to contact the National Care Standards Commission, the information supplied to the inspectors demonstrated that this issue has now been addressed and revised information has been distributed to all children.

**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
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When reviewing records relating to the placement of a child with a disability there was no evidence that, the carer was provided with a full description of the health needs of the child or clear procedures governing consent for the child to receive medical treatment before the placement began. The records relating to the placement of the child also failed to identify that a health care professional had been consulted or provided the required training to the carer. This matter was made subject to an immediate requirement at the time of the inspection. The organization has responded positively and subsequent information has confirmed that this issue has been resolved. When reviewing the records of a further child with a diagnosed disability it was established that community health services had not been consulted to offer advice and guidance to the carer for some considerable time after the placement had started.

Staff confirmed that during the assessment process the service makes clear to the carer their role in terms of helping to promote the health of any child in their care. Interviews with carers confirmed that they are required to supply information about the child's health needs for the planning and review process.

**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
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The organisation gives high priority to helping their foster carers to meet a child's education needs. To facilitate this the agency has employed an education consultant who has considerable experience in working within educational settings. Carers are also encouraged to attend training to raise their awareness of systems and processes that relate to the education of young people. Interviews with staff and carers confirmed that carer's are expected to attend, parent's evenings, open days, discussions with teachers, in conjunction with the birth parent where appropriate and in line with the care plan.

Carers interviewed as part of this inspection confirmed their expectation of regular attendance at school, and that they support the child's full participation through provision of necessary uniform and equipment, support for completion of homework, and financial and other support for attending school trips and after school activities. Where children are not in

school the organization makes every attempt to ensure that the child returns at the earliest opportunity. The foster placement agreement does not identify where financial responsibility lies for all school costs, including school uniform, school trips and school equipment. (This issue is subject to a recommendation)

**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

The Foster carers Standards and Practice Guidelines has written guidance of what is expected of foster carers in terms of preparing children and young people for independent or semi-independent living.

This area was not fully reviewed as part of this inspection, due to the ages of the children identified for case tracking. It is envisaged that children in the older age group would be identified for case tracking in the next inspection, when this area will be explored further.

## 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?

4

Records identified that there are clear recruitment and selection procedures for appointing staff which follow good practice in safeguarding children and young people. The organization has a Human Resources department that can be consulted over issues relating to recruitment. All staff interviewed as part of the inspection process confirmed that they were interviewed as part of the selection process and provided references. Records confirmed that checks and references that have been obtained and their outcomes. Police checks are renewed every three years. Staff reviewed as part of this inspection have an appropriate qualification in working with children.

Total number of staff of the agency:

0

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

0

### Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The information provided through out the inspection process confirmed that there is a clear management structure with clear lines of accountability. The organisation has recently reviewed the local management structure and it is envisaged that this will further improve the support to staff and carers.

Interviews with staff confirmed that they have access to on-going training and appropriate professional and skills development. Training made available to carers is comprehensive and carers confirmed that they receive information relating to training events. With the growth of the organization, which now covers a considerable geographical area, the organisation is looking to develop training events in different areas. The Registered Person should continue to monitor this aspect of the service to ensure that carers in the rural areas have equal access to training opportunities.

Interviews with staff identified that there is adequate administrative back up, again with the development of the service the pressure on the administrative services has increased, this has been recognized and staffing levels have been increased. Information supplied during the inspection identified that enquiries from prospective carers and any new request for services are dealt with efficiently.

As part of the inspection process employees, sessional workers and consultants were interviewed all confirmed that they were provided with written contracts, job descriptions and conditions of service.

**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

During the course of the inspection the staffing complement, in terms of numbers, grades, experience and qualifications, was seen to be adequate to meet the needs of the fostering service and line with the statement of purpose. Staff interviews confirmed that staff were happy with their working conditions.

The agency has a recruitment policy and strategy aimed at recruiting a wide range of carers to meet the needs of the children and young people for whom it aims to provide a service. The agency has a clear assessment process for carers and information is collected from a variety of sources including witness statements from personal/employment references, discussions with the applicants and their family, observation of applicants with their family and a preparation course. The files of four foster carers were inspected and these contained full assessment information. The competency based form F assessments were well written and of a high standard and there was evidence of other family member's views being sought.

**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

Information supplied during the inspection indicated that the fostering service is a fair and competent employer. There is out of hours management and support services available for foster carers, interviews with carers confirmed that this was an effective service.

<b>Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)</b>		
There is a good quality training programme to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	3
Interviews with staff and the Registered Person confirmed that there is a clear plan for the training and development of all staff involved in fostering work through induction, post-qualifying and in-service training.		

<b>Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)</b>		
All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	3
All staff are issued with terms and conditions of employment, a job description and access to the policies and procedures of the organisation. The Registered Manager supervises Area Managers, who in turn supervise Supervising Social Workers. Written records are maintained. Team meetings are completed on a regular basis. During the course of the inspection a Team Meeting was observed, the meeting was seen to be well structured and conducted in a professional manner. All Staff members had an opportunity to contribute to the process and the decisions being made.		

<b>Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6)</b>		
The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	3
A review of records identified that carer's annual reviews were not always completed on time. The Registered Person explained that there are structures and systems in place to ensure assessments, approvals and reviews of carers are managed and implemented effectively, and that she impresses on staff the importance of this. All carers that were interviewed as part of this inspection confirmed that the support that they receive is of a good standard. Due to the changes in staff structures some carers have had a change of supervising social worker, they confirmed that they had been well informed of the changes.		

**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.**

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>2</b>
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At the time of the inspection each approved foster carer had an allocated worker and access to professional support. Carers confirmed that they had received a copy of the Fostering Handbook, which covers policies, procedures, guidance, legal information and insurance details.

The Registered Person must ensure that the Foster Care Agreement for carers is in line with Schedule 5 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2001. (This issue is subject to a requirement)

Supervising social workers meet regularly with foster carers. The organisation has developed a case note format to be completed at each visit, this information is then held on the carers file. The carer is not provided with a copy of this information and therefore does not have a record to refer back to. The organization should consider how to ensure that where instruction is given to carers they have a way of referring back to the information. (This issue is subject to a recommendation)

Carers' files include records of supervisory meetings. There are unannounced visits, at least one each year.

Interviews with carers confirmed that they received payments on time, and that the payments system was well organized. Information about the procedures for dealing with complaints and representations is made available to carers, children and placing authorities. Placing authority questionnaires highlighted that some Social Workers were not aware of the agencies complaints procedure. It would seem that the information is supplied to commissioning departments who fail to pass on the information.

Carers receive information about the procedures to deal with investigations into allegations against carers in the Fostering Handbook and during Foster carer training.

**Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)**  
**The fostering service ensures that foster carers are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care and meet the needs of each child/young person placed in their care.**

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
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All new carers attend Pre-approval training that includes the opportunity to meet with existing carers. During the course of interviews existing carers who were involved in training for new carers confirmed this. They also confirmed that they were paid an allowance and any expenses. The preparation training provided for new carers is a program that is recognized nationally and fits within a framework of equal opportunities, anti-discriminatory practice. The Registered Person explained that the expectation of the organisation is that where two adults in one household are approved as joint carers, both successfully complete all training. Records confirmed that this was the case. Records identified that carers Annual Review includes an appraisal of training and development needs, this information is included in the review report. Observation at the Fostering Panel identified that the organisation places importance on carers attending regular training. Carers questionnaires confirmed that they were happy with the training being provided.

## Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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A review of carers' files identified that they are well organised. The Link Work Standards and Practice Guidelines incorporates a written policy on case recording which establishes the purpose, format, contents of files, and clarifies what information is kept on the foster carer's files and on the child's files.

Interviews with carers confirmed that supervising social workers ensure that the carer knows why the child is in foster care and understands the basis for the current placement, its intended duration and purpose, and the details of the child's legal status. The organizations referral form asks for this information.

When completing the inspection a training session for carers was observed. The subject was Life Story Work, the trainer encouraged carers to help children to reflect on and understand her/his history, and to keep memorabilia. Guidance is given to carers regarding the storage of information.



**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.**

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>A review of the organisations records identified that separate records are kept for staff, carers, and children. A record is kept of complaints, and allegations. Confidential records were seen to be stored securely at all times. There is a permanent, record for each child and foster carer, this can, be seen by the child or foster carers. Through observation and interviews with panel members it was confirmed that there is a procedure on managing information that is provided to them and specialist advisers.</p>		

<b>Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:</b>	X
<b>Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:</b>	X
<b>Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:</b>	X
<b>Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:</b>	X
<b>Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:</b>	X
<b>Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £</b>	X
<b>Maximum £</b>	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?**

2

Since the last inspection the organization has moved premises. The premises offer office accommodation that provide an equipped base from which staff work. Administrative systems, were seen to be efficient. The organization has developed it's IT systems since the last inspection. Some staff members considered that further development could improve systems for information sharing and processing.

Whilst accessing the building it was observed that there is an appropriate security system, that ensures that visitors to the building are monitored. Disabled Access to some parts of the building is limited, the Registered person explained that this matter should be resolved when a lift is installed, the installation is due to take place September 2004. The Registered Person must review premises in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

The Registered person confirmed that the premises and its contents are adequately insured.

## 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?

4

The organization has developed comprehensive systems for reviewing and evaluating financial viability. There is a management and staffing structure in place that reports on a monthly basis to the Trustees. Procedures exist to report situations of financial crisis. The organization operates in accordance with Income Tax (PAYE), National Insurance and VAT.

### 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?

4

Information supplied confirmed that the organisations accounts are maintained and properly audited by a registered accountant. The registered person confirmed that she receives monthly information on the financial state of the organisation. Purchases exceeding £300 are discussed and agreed with Senior Management. The Registered Person explained that support is always available from head office with regard to any financial matters; she confirmed that the information received was helpful and concise. The organisation publishes its charges for each of its services and has a clear policy for the charging of fees and expenses for any additional services it is asked to provide. This information is available on request to purchasers and others with a legitimate interest.

**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?**

4

The agency has a written policy detailing the fostering allowances payable and this is contained in the Handbook given to all foster carers before a child is placed with them. All carers interviewed through out this inspection confirmed that they receive payments on time and that the allowances being provided are adequate.

## Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The Fostering Panel has written procedures which cover decision-making. The chair of the Panel and another member of the Panel were interviewed during this inspection. They both stated that the Panel works well together and that there is a good range of contributions. The Panel has a qualified medical advisor who provides written comments on carer's medicals, but is not available to attend. The panel does not have a health representative; the Registered person should consider this matter. (This issue is subject to a recommendation)

The Panel meetings are held monthly and written minutes are maintained and circulated to all members prior to the next meeting. The inspectors observed a Panel Meeting - all members gave their views very clearly, the panel appeared to function well and in accordance with Regulations 24,25 & 26 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. All carers have the opportunity to attend panel, to express their views and to listen to the views of panel, at the time of the inspection, carers had opted not to attend, although panel members confirmed that this was not the norm.

## 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?	0
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This service is not provided.

## 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?	0
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Not applicable.

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

Not applicable.

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

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_



**D.1 Registered Person's or Responsible Local Authority Manager's comments/confirmation relating to the content and accuracy of the report for the above inspection.**

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 19<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

**Action taken by the NCSC 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.

**D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by the 28-day date of the covering letter, 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

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 NCSC inspection reports are public documents. Reports on children's homes are only obtainable on personal application to NCSC 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 Mrs Kathleen Hilary Blythe of The Adolescent and Children's Trust confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that I agree with the statutory requirements made and will seek to comply with these.**

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Designation** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Or**

**D.3.2 I Mrs Kathleen Hilary Blythe of The Adolescent and Children's Trust 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:**

Provider's comments and Action Plan are available at the Area Office where these have been submitted.

**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.