



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

Fostering Services

## **Kingston upon Hull City Council Fostering Service**

Social Services

Gleneagles Centre

East Carr Road

Kingston upon Hull

East Yorkshire

HU8 9LB

1st October 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?**

YES

**Name of Authority**

Kingston upon Hull City Council Fostering Service

**Address**

Social Services, Gleneagles Centre, East Carr Road,  
Kingston upon Hull, East Yorkshire, HU8 9LB

**Local Authority Manager**

Ms Heather Clare

**Tel No:**

01482 798653

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Kingston upon Hull, East Yorkshire, HU8 9LB

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01482 712438

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**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**

13/10/03

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>	1st October to 12 November 2004		<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>	09:30 am		
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Janet Lamb	073864
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>	Jacqui Campbell	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>	None	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>4</b>	None	
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.		None	
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>		None	
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>		Ms Heather Clare	

**Introduction to Report and Inspection**

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**Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State**

**Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection**

**Statutory Requirements from this Inspection**

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**Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings**

**(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)**

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- 2. Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service**
- 3. Management of the fostering service**
- 4. Securing and promoting welfare**
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- 6. Records**
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- 8. Financial requirements**
- 9. Fostering panels**
- 10. Short-term breaks**
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**D.1. Provider's comments**

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## INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Independent and local authority fostering services which fall within the jurisdiction of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) are subject to inspection, to establish if the service is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the Children Act 1989 as amended.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Kingston upon Hull City Council Fostering Service. The inspection findings relate to the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services published by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000, for independent and local authority fostering services respectively.

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

The report will show the following:

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

This report is a public document.

## INSPECTION VISITS

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

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

The Kingston upon Hull City Council, Social Services Department has a dedicated fostering service. Figures available for September 2004 indicate that 178 foster care households were providing foster care support for 449 children, approximately 68.9% of the looked after children population.

The main offices of the fostering service, Gleneagles Centre and Aneurin Bevan Lodge are located in the east and west of the city of Hull, respectively. However, a range of venues are utilised to facilitate local support groups, panel meetings and training for foster carers. There are future plans in operation to relocate the service in a more central position of the city. It is recommended that this undertaking, if successful, include the whole of the fostering service schemes.

The stated purpose of the service is to provide care for children and young people who are looked after by the local authority and whose needs are best met in a family environment. In order to achieve this stated purpose, staff of the fostering service are involved in the recruitment, training and assessment of prospective foster carers and provide post approval support, training and development. They are also involved in the placement decision process of endeavouring to ensure that each child or young person placed in foster care is matched with a carer capable of meeting his/her assessed needs.

Foster care is provided via a number of distinct fostering schemes, including sibling group carers, family network carers, adolescent and long-term scheme carers, short break carers, respite carers and mainstream carers. The fostering service also has a service level agreement with Barnardo's who provide a specialist service offering short breaks and long term care to children and young people with disabilities.

An Adoption and Fostering Manager, with overall responsibility for adoption and fostering, manages the fostering service. She is assisted by three Fostering Managers, who are responsible for supervising two Senior Fostering Social Workers and fifteen Fostering Social Workers. There is a team of sixteen workers covering NVQ Assessing, marketing, holiday coordinating, monitoring of information, administration, clerk/word processing and complex needs coordinating. Other staff include two panel chairs, advisors for health, education, computers and clinical psychology, and sessional workers.

## **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 is the third inspection of the Hull City Council Social Services Fostering Services under the Care Standards Act 2000. It was carried out by Janet Lamb, assisted by Regulation Manager Jacqui Campbell, over a period of 8 weeks and taking approximately 94.5 hours, and resulting in 15 inspector days, in total, including the production of this report.

The inspection took the form of interviewing employees of the service, foster carers and children and young people in foster care, inspecting documents, files and policies and procedures, and case tracking randomly chosen carers and their foster children. The Inspection team also attended a panel meeting and interviewed the panel chair. Survey comment cards/questionnaires were issued to 209 young people in care and 178 fostering households. Results from these questionnaires have been collated into a report and can be obtained upon request from the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI).

### **Statement of purpose**

Standard 1 was assessed in this section and the service performed well, having reviewed its statement of purpose and children's guide. Both documents now meet the requirements of the standard and regulations, and children and young people reported positively on having received a copy of the new guide, which was taken to fostering households at the time of supervisions from fostering social workers.

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

Standards 2 and 3 were assessed in this section and the service performed well. The management and staff team within the service are suitably experienced, trained and skilled to undertake the roles their positions require. Appropriate recruiting and vetting procedures are followed and checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) are undertaken.

### **Management of the fostering service**

Standards 4 and 5 were assessed in this section and the service performed well. Management roles and tasks are clearly set out in policies and procedures, and communications systems follow the clear lines of responsibility within the staffing structure of the service. All staff are aware of who is in charge in the absence of the Adoption and Fostering Manager. Financial procedures are clear and reviewed appropriately. Information to foster carers covers responsibility to declare conflicts of interest, charges, etc.

### **Securing and promoting welfare**

Standards 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 were assessed in this section and the service performed well with the exception of provision of training to foster carers, covering child protection, health and hygiene and first aid. This is an area, which has been greatly explored and developed over recent months, to determine foster carers' training needs in general and devise a programme for equipping them with the skills they require to do the job. All other areas in this section, recruiting carers, matching carers and foster children,



promoting contact, seeking consultation (questionnaires showed there is evidence for improvement in this area), promoting development of health and educational achievement (these scored highly on the questionnaires), and preparing for adulthood, are satisfactorily met.

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

Standards 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 were assessed in this section and the service performed well, with the exception of standard 23 and training of carers. This is discussed above, but it should be mentioned that all training within the standards was found to be still in need of some input. Work has been enthusiastically undertaken to determine and devise foster carer and staff training needs, and the vision has been set, which now needs to be implemented in full. Standard 18 has a recommendation that young people be given information, in an appropriate form, about health and safety issues while in foster care. All other standards, which include sufficient recruitment of foster carers and staff, managerial structures and practices, employment practices, support and accountability, and supervision are well met.

### **Records**

Standards 24 and 25 were assessed in this section and the service performed well with the exception of a continuing recommendation that fireproof storage be considered for the storing of foster carer files. The maintenance of files meets the requirements of standards and regulations.

### **Fitness of premises for use as fostering service**

Standard 26 was assessed in this section and the service performed well. The Gleneagles Centre is used for other social service services as well as for adoption and fostering, and is accessible to the public. There are no facilities for people with a disability, but there is ramp access to the ground floor to the side of the building and ground floor toileting facilities. The office systems are somewhat warren like and don't aid with communication, but there are now information technology stations and equipment available to all staff. Some of these have been stolen in the last few months and replaced, but not completely.

### **Financial requirements**

Standards 27 and 28 were not assessed in this section, as they are not applicable to local authority fostering services. Standard 29 was assessed and the service performed well. There are clear procedures and information available to staff and foster carers on the payment of allowances and expenses.

### **Fostering panels**

Standard 30 was assessed in this section and the service performed well, with the exception of a recommendation that it develop its policies and procedures on the panel function, to include a procedure on what to do in the event of the panel members not being in agreement, guidance on the requirements for suitability of panel members at recruitment stage, and formal clarification of the role of the panel chair. All other aspects of the standard are well met and practice undertaken by the panels is encouraging, understanding and supporting of the carers who come forward, making the experience as little an ordeal as possible. The panel also serves the short-break and family and friends arms of the service.

### **Short-term breaks**

Standard 31 was assessed in this section and the service performed well. The short breaks

scheme operates separately to the mainstream service, and in different premises. There are separate, but very complementary systems for recruiting, vetting, training, supporting and supervising these carers. The short breaks service concentrates on providing parents or other carers with a respite from caring for difficult children and young people in need of extra support. Carers are usually recruited only to undertake short-term placements of foster children or children still in their own homes requiring extra care because of illness of parents or their inability to cope with particular needs. This recruitment is as robust as for mainstream carers and involves full assessment and panel recommendation for approval. The short break service has its own staffing structure and lines of accountability, with an 'Out of Hours' Manager. The service is growing and is being successfully used.

### **Family and friends as carers**

Standard 32 was assessed in this section and the service performed well. The family and friends carers support team operates separately to the mainstream fostering service, and in the same premises as the short break scheme. It too has its own recruiting, vetting, training, supporting and supervising arrangements. It concentrates on providing support to carers who have become carers simply because they have taken in a child or young person in need of care and extra support, who is known to them as a family member or a friend. These carers would not normally undertake fostering duties and would not be expected to foster anyone other than the child/children, young person/young people they have initially agreed to foster. There is a much less intense approach to ensuring the fostering arrangements are in line with the mainstream requirements for foster carers. Carers are still assessed and approved through the panel process, but are considered only in light of the particular identified child or young person. There is a Team Leader for the service responsible for a team of staff. The service is growing and is being successfully used.

The Inspector and Regulation Manager should like to thank everyone involved for their contribution to the compilation of this inspection report. The requirements and recommendations outstanding from the last inspection are listed below, followed by the requirements and recommendations identified at this inspection.

## 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:

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:

The CSCI is issuing a notice to Hull City Council Social Services Fostering Service, under section 47(5) of the Care Standards Act 2000. This is in the form of the inspection report, and the council is required to undertake action to remedy the stated requirements, which are not substantial, listed below under 'Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection.' These are pertaining to regulations 17 and 21 and have specified timescales.

## Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NO

### COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)

**(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)**

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

Condition	Compliance	
None		
<b>Comments</b>		
None		

Condition	Compliance	
None		
<b>Comments</b>		
None		

Condition	Compliance	
None		
<b>Comments</b>		
None		

<b>Lead Inspector</b>	Janet Lamb	<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Second Inspector</b>	Jacqui Campbell	<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Locality Manager</b>	Jacqui Campbell	<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>			

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The appropriate Officer of the Local Authority or the Registered Person (as applicable) is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how requirements are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

### STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Identified below are areas addressed in the main body of the report which indicate non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children Act 1989, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002, or the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. The Authority or Registered Person(s) is/are required to comply within the given time scales in order to comply with the Regulatory Requirements for fostering services.

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement	
1	17 and 21	FS9	Provision must be made for Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training to be provided for foster carers and fostering staff.	31/03/05
2	17	FS12	Training plans must reflect that training, as identified within standard 12.5, is provided to each carer approved by the fostering service.	30/06/05
3	17	FS23	Evidence of a comprehensive carers' training programme that incorporates all the elements of training as identified within the national minimum standards must be provided and implemented in practice.	28/02/05 for the programme and 30/06/05 for the implementation.
4	17	FS23	Evidence of a comprehensive carers' training programme that incorporates all the elements of training as identified within the national minimum standards must be provided and implemented in practice.	30/06/05

### GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	FS18	A clear and comprehensive health and safety policy should be made available to children who are fostered and greater clarification is required regarding the process by which carers are familiarised with their responsibilities under this policy/procedure.
2	FS25	Given the sensitivity and requirements for retention of information stored, consideration should be given to the provision of improved fireproof storage for records.
3	FS30	Service specific policies and procedures regarding the functions and decision-making responsibilities of the panel should be developed. These should include the procedure for decision making when all panel members are not in agreement. Written guidelines should be provided which determine matters pertaining to the suitability of panel members and which clarify the role of the panel chair.

\* 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	15
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	NO
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	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	01/10/04
Time of Inspection	09.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	94.5

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

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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



## Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

**Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**3**

The statement of purpose was reviewed in March 2004 and was deemed to be satisfactory by the Inspector when sent to her in June 2004. There is also a children's guide, which was reviewed in March 2004 and deemed to be satisfactory by the Inspector when sent to her in June 2004. The children's guide is colourful and appropriate to a wide-ranging age of children and young people who are fostered within the authority. It is not appropriate for very young children and would not be presented to them, but the authority is considering an alternative information document for younger children who have a basic reading ability. The statement of purpose has been approved by elected members of the council and has been sent to all foster carers within the service. Parents are not automatically sent a copy of the document, but they are informed of its existence and given one upon request. Copies have been distributed to all childcare teams within the council, and would be sent to any other authority childcare team placing children through the Hull City Fostering Service.

## Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

### Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.4)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The fostering service is operated by the local authority, which has clear lines of delegation with regard to the management of financial and business issues. The Adoption and Fostering Manager manages the service as a whole, with three Fostering Managers also in post, to deputise in her absence. Those people involved with the management of the fostering service have significant experience in the field of fostering and/or childcare work and are able to provide evidence of their relevant management qualifications. The staff team has a wide range of skills and knowledge available and whilst there has been some movement of staff members over the past few months, proactive action has been taken to ensure that the developmental needs of the service have been reviewed and steps taken to ensure satisfactory recruitment to any vacant posts. Discussion with staff revealed that there had been significant continuity difficulties experienced due to vacancies, but that a more settle period had now emerged.

### 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 Adoption and Fostering Manager has initiated the taking up of Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for all staff working in the service. Almost all staff have received the results of these, but 18 prospective sessional workers still have not. All staff are subject to the council's recruitment and selection procedures; references are taken and followed up by telephone queries, and employment histories are checked out if necessary. Records required in schedule 1 are maintained in personnel files at the council's headquarters. A sample check was undertaken and files revealed satisfactory recruitment and selection procedures are being followed, with evidence seen within files.

## Management of the Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

### Standard 4 (4.1 – 4.5)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There have been no significant or necessary changes to this standard since the last inspection, and therefore information remains the same. For local authority fostering services, it is not a regulatory requirement to make notifications of events, as identified within schedule 8 of the Fostering Services Regulations, but this is identified as an area of good practice and the fostering service management team has now devised a process by which the required notifications are being made to the CSCI. There is a range of information available and meetings held with regard to monitoring and controlling the activities of the fostering service. Clear roles for managers and staff are available and issues of communication and accountability are well established. Information with regard to conflicts of interest is now maintained within the fostering service and files relating to these people are held separately. Financial procedures are centrally determined with clear lines of accountability and delegation for the management and review of financial matters. Systems are in place to seek the views of foster carers and placing social workers with regard to monitoring the quality of foster care provided by the service. This process has been extended to ensure the views of children and young people in foster care are also sought via the annual reviews of foster carers. For local authority fostering services, it is not a regulatory requirement to ensure that the matters set out in Schedule 7 are monitored at appropriate intervals, but discussion with management and evidence seen indicates that many of the monitoring requirements are already a consistent feature of practice.

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

0

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

0

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

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

2

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.

X

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

1

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

X

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

0

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

0

**Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)****The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

There are job descriptions for the Adoption and Fostering Manager and the Fostering Managers. The level of delegation and responsibility between the strategic and operational managers is generally well defined. The Fostering Managers share responsibilities and deputise in the absence of the Adoption and Fostering Manager. All personnel are suitably qualified and 'fit' to undertake the role.

## 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
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Accommodation provided by foster carers is assessed during the pre-approval process and subsequently monitored through regular supervision between foster carers and their fostering social worker and through the process of annual reviews. As part of the pre-approval assessment a comprehensive health and safety check of the carer's home and immediate environment is undertaken, and where possible rooms for fostered children are single, or double for siblings only. Evidence of this is seen on foster carers' files and includes checks regarding the provision of safe and appropriate transport by potential carers. Information regarding health and safety matters is also included in pre-approval training for carers and within the handbook provided to carers, post approval. Foster carers are informed through the handbook that they may be interviewed as part of the service 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?	3
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There have been improvements to the foster carers training opportunities in general since the last inspection. Pre-approval training is provided to carers and discussions with staff indicate a positive and pro-active approach to ensuring that training with regard to valuing diversity and promoting equality is linked to local issues as well as exploring more general themes. This is also being considered as part of the continuing training for carers. Ensuring that foster carers give each child in their care equal access to opportunities to develop and pursue interest/hobbies/talents is monitored via childcare reviews and supervision visits to foster carers. There is now information in the carer's handbook outlining the service expectations regarding developing of children's interests etc. The Local Authority has a service level agreement with Barnardo's with regard to the provision of fostering services for children with a disability and services are improving with regard to aids and adaptations.

**Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)**

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

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

3

The lack of foster care placements is a nationally recognised resource issue. As such, it is acknowledged that due to the limited number of vacant placements available, it is often difficult to ensure matching to a carer who can meet the child's individual needs. The fostering service now requires fostering social workers to undertake a week of duty on a roster basis to enable continuity in matching children with carers, especially when an emergency placement is required. The service is working more conscientiously to ensure good matching takes place, but the Inspector observed difficulties still being experienced. It is acknowledged that until more carers are recruited and there are greater vacancies amongst these, there will continue to be matching problems. Relevant professionals and family members are being consulted more carefully, and foster placement agreements now contain more detailed matching information on a specific matching form, including race, ethnicity, religion and culture. The managers of the service are aware of the need to implement special arrangements and training where matching isn't in line with need, or mixed race or mixed community placements take place. There are new foster placement agreements in place, which meet the requirements of schedule 6.

**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?**

1

Matters pertaining to safe caring are covered within pre-approval training for foster carers, but no evidence of recent child protection training by carers or staff is available. The new Training Tower approach ensuring carers receive appropriate child protection and therapeutic crisis intervention (TCI) training, amongst other courses, is still being worked through. Inroads have been made and some carers reported in questionnaires, that they had done TCI. Safe-caring guidelines, reviewed in April 2004, as required in standard 9.2 are now available. Information in the carer's handbook states no corporal punishment may be used. The Adoption and Fostering Manager maintains and evaluates a record of the number and outcomes of any allegations of neglect or abuse of a child in foster care, in a central file. There are policies available to carers on anti-bullying and a child going missing from the foster placement, within the carer's handbook. Records are maintained by the service. There were 209 children's questionnaires sent out to children and young people over the age of 8 years as requested by the fostering service. 50 of these were returned, and the figure below is 96% of the 50 returned. Bullying is low amongst the fostering service young people being fostered.

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

96

%

**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

Information contained within the Looked After Children paperwork and the proposed foster placement agreement highlights the importance of promoting contact between children and young people in foster care and their families. It also states the child or young person's view on the form contact is to take. Foster carers visited as part of the inspection were generally positive regarding their role of working in partnership with parents. Where difficulties do arise, foster carers report that support from fostering social workers is available. Financial support is also available. Contact is covered during the pre-approval training.

**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

Young people and where appropriate, their families/significant others, are consulted via the statutory review process. The fostering service has also developed a consultation format for gathering the views of young people during the annual review of foster carers process. Participation events for looked after young people have been organised. Evidence seen indicates that these events have been successful in consulting with young people on a range of issues and that service delivery has been improved to take account of issues raised during the consultation process. An example of this is the appointment of an advocacy worker for children and young people with disabilities. There is a clear and simple complaint procedure for children and young people within the children's guide.

**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

Information regarding children and young people's health care needs is listed in the LAC documentation passed directly to foster carers from fostering social workers, and social workers, or fostering social workers often give verbal information. Carers are aware of the need for consent for children to receive medical treatment and social workers obtain this prior to the placements being made. Carers receive written information of health needs along with the placement agreement. Training required in standard 12.5 is included in the Training Tower process, and although this training is being worked through, not all foster carers have undertaken it yet. This will take some time, and must be evidenced in foster carers' training records. Details of foster carers roles regarding health promotion is written in the carers' handbook. The fostering service consults health professionals as necessary, and has access to specialist health advisors in relation to recommending carers through the

panel system. Planning and reviewing systems include the presenting by carers of health needs, in review meetings.

**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**

There have been no changes to the systems for meeting educational needs of children and young people since the last inspection. Within the fostering service, a high priority is given to meeting the educational needs of each young person in foster care. Clear guidelines and expectations of the foster carer's role have been provided to each fostering household, along with more general advice and information regarding educational provision. The role of educational coordinators is seen as being very positive in respect of the support available to young people, foster carers and fostering social workers and with regard to ensuring that Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are completed. A quality assurance role with regard to the provision of PEPs is also undertaken via the education coordinator service. Training with regard to the provision and role of PEPs is available. Systems are in place to collate educational attainment and numbers excluded. The fostering service makes clear its expectations regarding the structured occupation of young people who are not at school. Matters pertaining to school costs are identified within the foster placement agreement.

**Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**3**

There have been no changes in the systems to promote the development of skills, competence and knowledge necessary for adult life, since the last inspection. The fostering service works in partnership with the Young People's Support Service (YPSS) to provide information and support for carers and young people in line with the requirements of the Children (Leaving Care) Act. This includes the provision of pathway plans for young people. Carers are provided with information and training to enable them to teach independent living skills to young people preparing to live independently.



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

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There are clear and detailed recruitment and selection procedures in use, as required by the authority. Staff making appointments are trained in recruitment and selection under equal opportunities requirements. All staff working in and for the fostering service are interviewed, are required to supply referees, are assessed for suitability, and must undertake a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. There are 15 qualified fostering social workers, one unqualified and one assistant fostering social worker. All of these now have CRB checks and all but one completes assessments of prospective carers. There are also a number of people employed on the fostering panels, as sessional workers, health, education and leisure co-ordinators and advisors. Eighteen of these people involved with the fostering service are still awaiting CRB check results. There are also staff employed in the Short Breaks Fostering Scheme; an Out of Hours Manager and three Family Placement Officers, and staff employed in the Family and Friends Carers Support Team; Family and Friends Team Leader and seven Assessment and Support Workers (though two positions are vacant). Information regarding specialist workers'/advisors' qualifications is now held meeting 15.7.

Total number of staff of the agency:

46

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

X

### 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

There is a clear and written management structure headed by the Adoption and fostering Manager, aided by three Managers. Staff are managed and monitored by Managers with qualifications and skills to do so. Clear structures and systems are in place with regard to assessments, approvals and reviews. Supervision of staff provides opportunity for determining, prioritising and monitoring workloads. There are clear procedures, implemented in practice with regard to the use of agency placements. An agreement format has been developed to ensure that all aspects of agency placements, as required by regulation 40, are adhered to. A further positive area of development is the recruitment of a marketing assistant who works directly under the fostering Managers with regard to maintaining a consistent and expedient approach to all enquiries from and initial visits to prospective carers. Staff have copies of information detailed within standard 16.16 and all

staff are provided with written contracts, job descriptions and conditions of service. At the last inspection there was concern regarding the inconsistent practice with regard to ensuring that all permanent appointments are subject to the satisfactory completion of a period of probation. This has been fully reviewed by the service and Managers are now aware, following a receipt of a letter from the authority, of the authority's position regarding new and transferred staff with regard to probationary periods. The service has, since the last inspection, been provided with information technology (IT) equipment for use by all fostering social workers. There is now a Monitoring and Information Officer to assist all staff with IT issues and there is a Computer Advisor to whom they all have access. A recent spate of break-ins into the service building has resulted in equipment being stolen, and staff have been forced into sharing computers for the meantime. The service is planning to develop its IT functions in the new year and this will see training for staff and fostering social workers taking place. Most staff views on this are positive.

**Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.7)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**3**

There have been no changes to the numbers of qualified staff in the service or the recruiting of carers to meet children's needs since the last inspection. The service has a large staff team, which encompasses a wide range of skills and experience. Evidence of the recruitment strategy seen indicates that positive and proactive action is undertaken to target recruitment to the areas of most need. Information provided during the inspection indicates that the staffing complement is adequate to meet the current needs of the fostering service. The service has been reviewing the roles of unqualified staff especially in relation to assessment of carers, and is currently meeting the standard. Evidence of contingency planning to manage staffing shortfalls is available and implemented in practice. The format for the assessment of foster carers follows that recommended by the British Adoption And Fostering (BAAF) agency.

**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?**

**2**

The fostering service has clear policies and procedures with regard to employment practices. Positive and comprehensive systems are in place for the supervision of foster carers. Very positive feedback was received from carers in respect of the support and supervision they receive from the fostering social workers. Foster carers can access out of hours support via the departmental emergency duty team and pockets of support exist within the fostering service itself. A whistle blowing policy has been developed and circulated to all carers. A clear and comprehensive health and safety policy is available to staff and carers but no evidence of this being available to children, in an appropriate format, was provided.

<b>Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)</b>		
<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>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>Staff induction, post qualifying and in-house training programmes have been developed and are being slowly implemented over time. There is a training and development officer who has responsibility to plan, develop and implement staff training for all of the staff working in children's services. Staff appraisal system has been resurrected and efforts are being made to include everyone in the process. Training and development records for staff are being updated. There have been some incidents of joint training between carers and staff and plans for future events are in place.</p>		

<b>Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)</b>		
<b>All staff are properly accountable and supported.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>All staff have clear written details of their duties and responsibilities and are accountable within the organisation. Departmental policy determines that monthly supervision must be undertaken. Evidence seen indicates that supervision is planned in advance, on a monthly basis and that a record of the content of supervision is maintained. The focus of supervision, as evidenced by recording undertaken, is the review of direct work with carers, and efforts are being made to ensure supervision records include workload monitoring, performance, support and monitoring. Twice yearly achievement and development reviews/appraisals are undertaken with staff and they have the opportunity to attend regular staff and team meetings, which are recorded.</p>		

<b>Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6)</b>		
<b>The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>There is a clear strategy for working with foster carers and most of the information outlined within Standard 21.2 is documented and provided to carers. Efforts to circulate information to carers have been improved. The fostering service has worked hard to ensure that a wide range of support services is available to its foster carers, helping to prevent loss of carers to independent fostering services. One feature of the support services available to carers is the provision of psychological support. This support is provided on a consultancy basis and assists foster carers to understand and manage children with challenging behaviour and/or complex needs. Evidence provided to the inspection team indicates that this has been a valued source of support to both carers and fostering social workers. Stress management courses have also been provided for foster carers and fostering social workers. Both the fostering social workers and the foster carers understand the role of the fostering social worker. Fostering social workers reported that communication between themselves and the children's social workers can be variable in terms of quality and quantity, but re-organisation of the fostering team and the development of closer links between fostering social workers and childcare teams has resulted in improving the system for communication between these two key parties. There has been improvement in the annual reviewing of foster carers at panel and all carers are now being reviewed in line with this standard.</p>		

**Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)**

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

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

The new foster care agreement now meets the requirements identified by regulation 28(5)(b). Each foster carer has a named fostering support worker and the role of unqualified fostering staff is being reviewed in line with standard 22.3. Each carer is now given a handbook, which covers policies and procedures as well as information regarding legal information and insurance details, and is in line with requirements of the standard. Meetings between foster carers and supervising fostering social workers are regular and often according to the level of support needed and therefore some carers are seen less frequently. Fostering social workers are required to undertake recorded supervision on a minimum of a monthly basis. Evidence indicates that this target of monthly supervision has lapsed on occasions, although ongoing improvements to the frequency of visits are noted. Practical support systems listed in standard 22.7 are also available and being reviewed or improved as necessary. Records of complaints and representations and allegations of abuse are separately maintained within the fostering service. Greater clarification is required with regard to how such information is evaluated to inform the future provision of services. The fostering service also provides two independent support workers who are available to support carers during an investigation.

**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?****1**

There is still much to be achieved in this area, although carers have completed some training courses, their experiences have been inconsistent. This is to be expected to some extent with carers being unavailable or unwilling to attend planned events. Discussion with the fostering managers indicated that future recruiting of carers should involve a more detailed contract and role expectation before approval takes place. Carers should be expected to adhere to a more formal fostering contract regarding training. Pre-approval training involves experienced carers relating experiences and knowledge to prospective carers. Induction training is detailed and comprehensive. All training is provided within the frameworks of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice. Times and venues for training, when planned, don't always suit all carers requirements, and thought should be given to rotating venues, times and days to ensure all carers have an equal chance of attending. Efforts also need to be made to ensure both carers, where approved in a household, receive the training required. More needs to be done to ensure annual reviews of carers include an appraisal of training and development needs documented in the review report. Effectiveness of training is being looked at by the training and development officer who should soon be in a position to inform future training approaches and courses. It is important to point out that a great deal of work is being undertaken in this area and in conjunction with the new payment for skills developments soon to be implemented. The service will soon be in a position to meet this standard, and recognition ought to go to the staff for looking at innovative ways of devising, setting up and delivering training to equip foster carers with the skills they need. NVQ's and alternatives are being explored. Once agreements have been reached regarding training changes, carers' training records need to be kept up-to-date.

## 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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Children's records are not held within the fostering service. They are held and maintained within the local authority childcare teams. A written policy with regard to case recording is available. There were no children's case files inspected during this inspection, but at the last inspection were considered to be maintained to a high standard. With regard to agency placements, 'over-arching' service level agreement has been developed to ensure all aspects, as required by regulation 40, are included. Inspectors received variable information with regard to the quality and quantity of information provided to carers prior to or upon a child's placement. Secure file boxes and guidance regarding the safe storage of information are provided to carers. With regard to standard 24.5 carers have now received instruction on the importance of encouraging a child to reflect on his/her history and to keep appropriate memorabilia, and training on life story work and communicating with children is now included in the carers' training programme.

### 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
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Administrative records, as outlined within standard 25.2, are appropriately maintained. Policy guidance regarding the access to and retention of files/information is available and understood by those working within the fostering service. Efforts have been made to encourage carers to access their files and to make additions, comments or record personal statements, including any dissent. Of concern to the inspector at last year's inspection, was the fact that whilst records are maintained within lockable cabinets, the cabinets are not fire proof. The storage systems remain the same as last year and therefore the recommendation to consider alternative storage still stands. Records concerning the requirements of schedule 2 are now being held. There is a procedure on storing and managing confidential information, known to staff, panel members and advisors. Records of checks made and references taken and their outcomes are held. In addition to records maintained on complaints and allegations, information pertaining to these matters is recorded on staff and carers' files. Evidence is available to indicate that a system for monitoring the quality and adequacy of records and that remedial action is taken when necessary, is in place.

<b>Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:</b>			449
<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>			27
<b>Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £</b>	83.93	<b>Maximum £</b>	144.90

## 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 fostering service has its own identifiable office premises, within a larger office provision, which is accessible to staff and visitors during office hours. The building itself is difficult to navigate for those not familiar with the surroundings. However, for the most part, staff reported that this presented no particular issues with regard to day-day working practices. Room for meetings is at a premium and requires careful planning and booking arrangements. A large meeting room is available on the first floor of the building. Information technology (IT) and communication systems have been improved since last year and considered to be appropriately secured, though there has been a spate of break-ins resulting in loss of several computers. There are plans to improve IT systems further in the near future.

## 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?

9

The standard does not apply to Hull City Council Social Services Fostering.

### 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?

9

The standard does not apply to Hull City Council Social Services Fostering.

### 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

Questionnaires received from foster carers predominantly reported satisfaction with regard to appropriate, full and prompt receipt of payments. Where difficulties have arisen, the role of the fostering social worker, in resolving these, has been positively reported. Allowances and fees are reviewed annually. Carers now understand the payment for skills scheme better, but some feel it is not a route they would particularly like to take. None of the carers interviewed had particularly troublesome problems with payments of any kind.



## 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

The Hull City Council Fostering Service operates two fostering panels, one of which was directly observed during the course of this inspection. An interview was also undertaken with the panel chair. It is recommended that the policies and procedures regarding the functions and decision-making responsibilities of the panel be developed and in line with NMS 30.2, this information should include written procedures to cover decision-making when all panel members are not in agreement. CRB checks are undertaken for all panel members and current practice determines that, prior to panel membership being agreed, all potential panel members meet with the panel chair. This area of good practice would benefit from being underpinned by written guidance which outlines both the requirements regarding suitability of panel members as well as formally clarifying the role of the panel chair. Medical expertise is available to the fostering panel. Panel membership has been reviewed and amendments made in line with the requirements of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002. Education and health representatives are included in panel membership as independent members. The inclusion of elected members has been resolved, but despite two being identified to fulfil the role, none has actually attended the meetings, other than to introduce themselves. Fostering panels are required to provide a quality assurance function in relation to the assessment process. Information provided and direct observations indicate that this is an area of proactive practice. Business meetings between the panel chairs, vice chairs and the management of the fostering service are also undertaken and provide a positive forum for ensuring consistency of approach, for feedback regarding practice issues and for monitoring the range and type of foster carers available to the authority in comparison with the needs of children. Monitoring information is updated on a monthly basis with regard to matters pertaining to approvals/deregistration of foster carers and outstanding needs with regard to referrals for placements. Foster panels were also observed to receive and proactively manage information regarding the annual review of foster carers.

## Short-Term Breaks

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.2)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Since last year's inspection the short breaks fostering scheme has grown and developed its own identity, remit and function. The 'out of hours' manager of the short breaks fostering scheme, has produced a manual of policies and procedures in-line with requirements of the service and standard, which meet the needs of children and young people. There is a dedicated staff team of three family placement officers and the 'out of hours' manager, who work from a separate location to the mainstream fostering service. Recruitment checks are undertaken in the same way as for mainstream staff. The short breaks scheme has its own remit to provide short-term and occasionally respite care, to parents who cannot cope with the problems experienced by their children. The service works in close relationship with the outreach services offered by Aneurin Bevan Lodge Children's Home, where its offices are located, as well as the mainstream fostering. Short breaks also use the services of the panels set up for mainstream fostering. Short breaks carers are given clear guidelines on the continuing roles and responsibilities of parents, especially in relation to promotion of health and education issues. Short breaks carers are recruited and recommended for approval in the same way as mainstream carers. The service works well in isolation and does not often call upon the support of the mainstream fostering.

## Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

### Key Findings and Evidence

### Standard met?

3

Since the last inspection the family and friends' carers support team has been established and has developed a service of its own. Although the same systems are used to assess and recommend for approval family and friends carers there is more consideration given to approving them because of the relationships, which may already exist. Usually carers are only approved to care for particular children or young people as identified by existing relationships. The service has its own offices at Aneurin Bevan Lodge and the team of staff consists of a family and friends team leader and seven assessment and support workers (two of which are currently vacant). Recruitment checks are undertaken in the same way as for mainstream fostering staff. The service works with a more relaxed approach to implementing many of the fostering services standards, because of the relationships in operation between carers and children and young people. Efforts are being made to ensure the service moves closer to that of mainstream fostering in respect of policies, procedures, guidelines and some training opportunities. The service works well in isolation and provides a safety net for children and young people who may not require mainstream foster care.

**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 for a period of eight weeks commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

We are working on the best way to include provider responses in the published report. In the meantime responses received are available on request.

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

Comments were received from the provider

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

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

**Note:**

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

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

Action plan was required

Action plan was received at the point of publication

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

### **D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT**

**D.3.1 I, Mr Jon Plant of KUHCC Fostering Service, confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above dates and that I agree with the statutory requirements made and will seek to comply with these.**

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

#### **Public reports**

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

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