



Champions for  
Social Care  
Improvement

# inspection report

Fostering Services

## **Redcar & Cleveland Fostering**

Grosmont Resource Centre

20 Grosmont Close

Redcar

TS10 4PJ

26th 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?**

YES

**Name of Authority**

Redcar & Cleveland Fostering

**Address**

Grosmont Resource Centre, 20 Grosmont Close, Redcar,  
TS10 4PJ

**Local Authority Manager**

Ms Christine Ann Priestman

**Tel No:**

01642 495910

**Address**

Grosmont Resource Centre, 20 Grosmont Close, Redcar,  
TS10 4PJ

**Fax No:**

01642 491630

**Email Address**

---

**Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)**

NO

**Name of Agency**

**Tel No**

**Address**

**Fax No**

**Email Address**

**Registered Number of IFA**

**Name of Registered Provider**

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

**Date of first registration**

**Date of latest registration certificate**

**Registration Conditions Apply ?**

NO

**Date of last inspection**

30/01/03

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		26th January 2004	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		09:30 am	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Stephen Pearson	073898
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>	Stephen Smith	073899
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.		N/A	
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>		N/A	
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>		Christine Priestman	

**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 Redcar & Cleveland Fostering. 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.

Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council's Fostering Service is based at Grosmont Resource Centre, Redcar. The fostering team comprises of 12 staff, headed by a Manager and there are; Supervising Social Workers; a Support Worker and Health Advisor and Administrative Support. The service on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2003 had 64 foster carers, including 22 single carers and 42 couples who were approved by Redcar and Cleveland Council. Foster carers had undergone training and assessment before being approved as carers by panel. Foster carers receive on-going training, supervision and support from the Fostering Team.

The Fostering Service provides short -term centred placements, long term placements and sharing the caring placements.

## 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.)

Foster carers expressed high levels of satisfaction with the support from the service and young people also expressed high levels of satisfaction regarding the care they received from their carers.

Foster carers often expressed dissatisfaction, however, regarding the inadequate amount of information that was given to them at the start of a child's placement. Sometimes, information was not being presented until day 14 of the placement and this was felt to be too late. The inspectors became aware of such practices and the major finding of the inspection was that such information necessary for the effective care of the young people must be presented much sooner in the placement.

A clear commitment to training was seen in the inspection and carers expressed satisfaction with the programme arranged. Some of the foster carers were training at NVQ level 3 and expressed how this had benefited them in every day practices.

The panel was well organised and experienced. At a panel meeting observed in the inspection, a commitment to fair and considered decision making was apparent. The service was being managed in a structured and organised manner. The manager displayed clear motivation and a business-like approach.



## **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:

YES

Notice to the Local Authority under section 47(5) of the Care Standards Act 2000 of failure(s) to satisfy regulatory requirements in their fostering service which are not substantial, and specifying the action the Commission considers the Authority should take to remedy the failure(s), informing the Secretary of State of that Notice:

NO

Report to the Secretary of State under section 47(4)(a) of the Care Standards Act of a failure by a Local Authority fostering service to satisfy regulatory requirements which is not considered substantial:

NO

Report to the Secretary of State under section 47(1) of the Care Standards Act 2000 of substantial failure to satisfy regulatory requirements by a Local Authority fostering service:

NO

**The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:**

## Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

YES

**If No please list below**

### STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

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

**COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)****(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)**

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

Condition	Compliance	
<b>Comments</b>		

Condition	Compliance	
<b>Comments</b>		

Condition	Compliance	
<b>Comments</b>		

Condition	Compliance	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Lead Inspector</b>	<b>Stephen Pearson</b>	<b>Signature</b>	_____
<b>Second Inspector</b>	<b>Stephen Smith</b>	<b>Signature</b>	_____
<b>Area Manager</b>	<b>Christine Wharton</b>	<b>Signature</b>	_____
<b>Date</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> April 2004</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 and recommendations are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

### STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement	
1	20	FS15	The application form for prospective members of staff must record the reason a person has left any work with children or vulnerable adults.	1/6/04
2	11	FS24	Essential information regarding any child placed in foster care must be in place at the commencement of the placement.	1/4/04
3	34	FS24	The placement plan (part one) must be in place at the start of any placement.	1/4/04
4	34	FS24	A foster placement agreement, covering all issues in schedule 6, must be in place before the start of a placement.	1/6/04
5	11	FS24	Information regarding a child's problematic behaviours must be made available as close to commencement of the placement as possible. (A systematic risk assessment covering behaviour, and completed with all relevant parties, would be useful here).	1/6/04
6	31	FS25	The foster carer register must describe the sex and date of birth of each carer and the date of each foster carer review.	1/6/04

### 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	FS4	Despite no legal requirement to do so, it is recommended that a structured arrangement for reporting of incidents to the National Care Standards Commission (in line with schedule 8 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002) be implemented.
2	FS5	It is recommended that the local authority consider a system of regular monitoring those issues described in regulation 42 and schedule 7.
3	FS6	It is recommended that the health and safety assessment checklist should describe actions required as a result of the assessment and describe when those actions have been carried out.
4	FS6	It is recommended that the health and safety assessment of a carers' home is carried out each time a child commences a placement there.
5	FS8	The foster placement agreement should describe details of matching which has taken place in deciding the suitability of a placement.
6	FS13	The foster placement agreement should describe where financial responsibility lies for school costs including uniforms, trips and equipment.
7	FS12	Training should be provided regarding hygiene issues and hygiene promotion.
8	FS15	A photograph of each member of staff should be held in their personal file.
9	FS16	The duties of the team clerk are such that re-consideration of the job description and grading is recommended.
10	FS30	When the panel makes a recommendation after approval, a system should be developed to ensure actions to address this are clearly documented and reported back to 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	8
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	NO
• 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	NO
Interview with panel chair	YES
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	26/01/04
Time of Inspection	10:30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	64

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

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

## Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

3

A statement of purpose was in place and this clearly met the requirements of the National Minimum Standard. It was unclear when the elected members of the local authority had formally approved the document although a pledge was written that they would do so. A young person's guide to the statement of purpose and an information booklet for young people had been produced. These were colourful and well written.



## 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
<p>The manager explained she was studying for the Masters in Business Administration and that this included the expected achievement of the Certificate in Management (equivalent to NVQ level 4 in Management) by August 2004.</p> <p>Feedback from staff and carers was that the agency was managed in an effective and professional manner.</p>		

### 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
<p>No new staff external to the registered provider had been recruited to the agency since the previous inspection. The manager explained that the personnel section of the registered provider would routinely contact referees to verify if a reference was genuine and to expand on any queries.</p>		

## 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 was no structured arrangement for reporting of incidents to National Care Standards Commission in line with schedule 8 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. There is, however, no legal requirement to do so. Nevertheless it is recommended that the service should report such incidents to the Commission in line with the schedule. Interviews with members of staff indicated they were clear of their own lines of accountability as were the foster carers.

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

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

1

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

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

0

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

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

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

0

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

0

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

0

### Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)

The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The local authority was not routinely monitoring the service in line with Regulation 42 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 although, being a local authority, this was not mandatory. However, it is recommended that the Local Authority consider a system of regularly monitoring those issues described in Regulation 42 and Schedule 7.

The manager was clearly aware of her own responsibilities and to whom she was accountable.

Clear arrangements were in place for when the manager was absent.

## Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The fostering service promotes and safeguards the child/young person's physical, mental and emotional welfare.

### Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

The fostering service makes available foster carers who provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

A health and safety assessment was being carried out as part of the assessment of prospective foster carers. However, this did not describe actions required as a result of the assessment and did not describe when those actions had been carried out.

Evidence indicated that when a new placement commenced, the health and safety assessment would not be formally repeated.

Training was being provided regarding safe caring and health and safety issues.

### 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

Interviews with foster carers and staff of the agency indicated a broad awareness of equal opportunities.

A cultural celebration day was planned for May 2004 as part of foster carer diversity and ethnicity training and similar training had taken place previously.

Adequate examples of appropriate support were described in relation to young people who had learning difficulties.

<b>Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)</b>		
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>	2
Interviews with placing social workers showed that there was more choice available to them regarding foster carers for babies and younger children than teenagers. However, they believed the service was doing all it could in order to recruit as many carers as possible for all ages of children.		
Examination of the foster placement agreement indicated that this did not describe details of matching which had taken place in deciding the suitability of the placement. Plans were in place to increase the range of carers available for emergency admissions.		

<b>Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)</b>		
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>	3
Training had taken place regarding child protection.		
Satisfactory arrangements were also in place regarding safe caring guidelines. An A to Z guide had been issued to all foster carers. This covered all the necessary information a foster carer might need to know regarding the service's policies and procedures. A current, experienced foster carer had had significant input into this document. The service is to be commended for such a well written and comprehensive document.		
The foster carer agreement clearly described that corporal punishment was not acceptable.		
<b>Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:</b>	100	%

<b>Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)</b>		
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.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	3
Placement plans and essential information records described the arrangements for contact. Discussions with young people indicated they were encouraged and enabled to visit family and friends. They said they were adequately consulted regarding these issues and were not unduly pressured to visit people if they chose not to do so.		
Training regarding working with birth parents was a mandatory subject and over half of the foster carers had received training in this subject in the previous 12 months.		

**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.**

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
----------------------------------	----------------------	----------

Discussions with young people indicated they felt they were adequately consulted. The service was holding looked after children groups every few months. Young people were always invited to their placement and care plan review meetings.

Young people said if they had a concern they would raise it with their foster carer or social worker. It was clear that most issues were being dealt with immediately and informally, which was appropriate.

**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.**

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>2</b>
----------------------------------	----------------------	----------

The health needs were described in the placement plans.

A health advisor was in post who gave support and advice regarding health needs of young people in foster care.

The inspection showed that an insufficient level of training had been provided regarding hygiene issues and hygiene promotion.

**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.**

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>2</b>
----------------------------------	----------------------	----------

Discussions with foster carers indicated that they felt the service gave significant emphasis to promotion of education and adequate arrangements were in place for promotion of educational achievement including provision of computers for young people looked after.

A young person interviewed said they felt the foster carers gave a lot of support to them regarding school and they attended progress meetings.

Examination of foster placement agreements on file indicated that these did not describe where financial responsibility lies for school costs including uniforms, trips and equipment.

**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**

Training in preparation for adulthood was mandatory and over half the foster carers had attended this training in 2003.

Interviews with foster carers demonstrated that they were trying to enable children and young people to acquire skills and knowledge, at an appropriate age, which would help them in adult life. Such skills might include budgeting money, food preparation, sex and relationship education.

The case notes of a young person who was approaching adulthood were examined. They had a clear pathway plan in place and had a personal advisor who, they said, was helpful.

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

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Clear recruitment and selection policies and procedures were in place. Staff records were examined and although photographs of each member of staff had been taken, a copy was not held in their file.

The application form for new members of staff did not ask for the applicant to record the reason they had left any work with children or vulnerable adults.

Similarly, the application form did not ask for the applicant to describe the reason for any gaps in their employment history.

**Total number of staff of the agency:**

12

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

1

### Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

A clear staffing structure was in place and this was clearly described in the statement of purpose.

It was clear from an interview with the team clerk that her role was wide-ranging and significantly responsible, especially in relation to co-ordination of panel meetings. The job description did not adequately reflect these duties.

Staff were receiving supervision regularly and the staff interviewed felt they were able to approach their manager at other times outside of supervision in order to discuss issues as they arose.

Staff said that they each had a copy of a job description and contract of employment.

<b>Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.7)</b> <b>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.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>Foster carers clearly expressed high levels of satisfaction with the support they received from their supervising social worker based in the agency. Some concerns were expressed by foster carers of the perceived high work load of the supervising social worker and that recruitment of more staff may mean the carers received more time from their link person.</p> <p>Efforts were clearly being made to recruit foster carers with a wide range of backgrounds to meet the needs of young people with a diverse range of needs. A carer had recently been approved to offer care to teenagers and one experienced foster carer provided support to other foster carers out of office hours, which other carers said they found very helpful.</p> <p>A clear, structured and appropriate selection and assessment procedure was in place regarding selection of foster carers.</p>		

<b>Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)</b> <b>The fostering service is a fair and competent employer, with sound employment practices and good support for its staff and carers.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>Clear arrangements were in place regarding supervision, annual appraisal and support.</p> <p>A current and experienced foster carer was providing out of hours support to foster carers and a second person was being recruited for this purpose.</p> <p>A health and safety policy was in place, as was a whistleblowing policy.</p>		

<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>A well structured training plan was in place including induction training through to post qualifying training.</p> <p>The fostering service staff often presented the training to carers, which carers said they appreciated as it helped to build and maintain a positive working relationship between them.</p> <p>Training courses were being evaluated at the completion of each event.</p> <p>Foster carers said they received regular updates regarding changes in policy and changes or additions to their A to Z guide came through regularly also.</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>Staff said they had job descriptions and were clear of their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Discussions with supervising social workers and placing social workers indicated that each were aware of their own role in relation to the care of any young person for who they were responsible.</p> <p>Annual appraisals and supervision were taking place regularly.</p> <p>Members of staff also confirmed that staff meetings were taking place regularly.</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>A clear strategy was in place regarding the various aspects of working with carers as described in this National Minimum Standard. Foster carers were praiseworthy of the support which the supervising social workers gave to them. "They're always there for me" and " they listen and give sound advice" were typical of the comments expressed.</p> <p>Generally, the opinions expressed by placing social workers and supervising social workers regarding communication were positive. However, one placing social worker expressed dissatisfaction that s/he had not been consulted about a second young person being placed with foster carers with whom s/he already had a child placed.</p>		

<b>Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)</b>		
<b>The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>Foster care agreements were in place for those foster carers who were considered for inspection purposes. Each foster carer had a named and appropriately qualified supervising social worker providing supervision and support.</p> <p>Appropriate arrangements were in place regarding out of hours support.</p> <p>Supervising social workers explained that they all made at least one unannounced visit to their foster carer per year.</p> <p>Appropriate records were in place regarding complaints and clear information was available to foster carers regarding procedures to deal with allegations of abuse.</p>		

**Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**3**

Training was taking place during the assessment period for prospective foster carers and continued as induction training after their approval.

Where two foster carers in one household had been approved as joint carers, they were both expected to undergo similar training and records showed this to be the case.

An ongoing plan of training was in place and the staff of the fostering service delivered much of this.

Training was evaluated each time it was delivered.

Annual reviews of foster carers identified future training needs.

## 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?
---------------------------	---------------

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

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

A visit to a foster carer indicated that they did not become aware of essential information regarding the young person's needs until three days after the placement began. This created significant problems for the carer during the intervening weekend.

The placement plan (which must be in place at the start of the placement) was not provided until four days after the placement began.

The level of information recorded in initial placement plans was not always sufficient (for example the feeding routine of a baby was not described) and some sections of the form were not completed.

Feedback from other carers showed they were often unable to promptly obtain information about a child's problematic behaviours prior to placement. A systematic risk assessment regarding such information was not being carried out.

### 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?
---------------------------	---------------

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

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

A foster carer register was in place although this did not describe the sex and date of birth of each carer, or the date of each foster carer review.

Separate records were being kept regarding staff, carers, children, complaints and allegations. The Manager said that records are audited as part of supervision and evidence was seen of these audits.

<b>Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:</b>			84
<b>Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:</b>			304
<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>			9
<b>Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:</b>			14
<b>Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £</b>	77.45	<b>Maximum £</b>	500.00

## 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

Appropriate premises were being used by the fostering service. These ensured secure storage of records and adequate administrative and IT systems were in place. Some people interviewed complained about parking arrangements, access arrangements to the building and difficulty of movement inside the building due to the number of locked doors.

## 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

This National Minimum Standard is not applicable as the provider is a local authority.

### 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

This National Minimum Standard is not applicable as the provider is a local authority.

**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

A clear policy was in place regarding fostering allowances. Foster carers expressed satisfaction with the payment arrangements.

## 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

Discussions with members of the panel and examination of attendance records indicated a high level of commitment from members of the panel. One of the members of the panel had been in foster care and brought useful experience to the meetings.

The chair said she had missed only one panel meeting in 4 years. Holidays were arranged around panel meetings and the chair met with the manager monthly to keep up to date of developments.

A panel meeting was observed. Members were observed to be given an equal opportunity to express their opinions. Decisions were made on a summary basis and formal voting was not carried out. The chair explained that training with panel members makes it clear that if a member disagrees with a probable decision, this opinion must be expressed. Regular training together helped the chair to build a positive working relationship with the panel members.

The medical advisor was also interviewed and she expressed satisfaction with the panel arrangements.

Sometimes, recommendations were being made at panel meetings after a carer had been approved. It was not always clear when actions taken as a result of those recommendations had been carried out or reported back to panel as having been completed.



## 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?
---------------------------	---------------

The Fostering Service had foster carers available for short-term breaks for children and for longer-term carers. Policies and procedures were in place to meet the particular needs of children receiving short-term breaks.	3
--	---

## 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
--	---

Details of family members as carers for young people were being discussed at panel meetings.

A part time post was planned to support such placements.

The service saw family carers as an important source of care for young people.

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

No Lay Assessor was available for this inspection.

**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 26<sup>th</sup> January 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

**Providers comments and an action plan are available at the Area Office, where these have been submitted.**

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

YES

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

NO

**Note:**

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

**D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 5<sup>th</sup> April 2004, which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.**

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

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

NO

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

NO

Other: <enter details here>

NO

**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 \_\_\_\_\_ of Redcar and Cleveland Fostering confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that I agree with the statutory requirements made and will seek to comply with these.**

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

**Or**

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

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

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