



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

Warrington Borough Council Fostering Service

Bewsey Old School

Lockton Lane

Bewsey

Warrington

Cheshire

WA5 0BF

9th March 2005

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

Local Authority Fostering Service?

YES

Name of Authority

Warrington Borough Council Fostering Service

Address

Bewsey Old School, Lockton Lane, Bewsey, Warrington,
Cheshire, WA5 0BF

Local Authority Manager

Ms. Lisa Jamieson

Tel No:

01925 444400

Address

Bewsey Old School, Lockton Lane, Bewsey, Warrington,
Cheshire, WA5 0BF

Fax No:

Email Address

Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)

NO

Name of Agency

Tel No

Address

Fax No

Email Address

Registered Number of IFA

Name of Registered Provider

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Date of first registration

Date of latest registration certificate

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

8/03/04

Date of Inspection Visit		9th March 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Jeff Banham	162529
Name of Inspector	2	Sharon Lloyd	78178
Name of Inspector	3	None	
Name of Inspector	4	None	
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) 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	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		None	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Lisa Jamieson; Fran Smith	

Introduction to Report and Inspection

Inspection visits

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Part A: Summary of Inspection Findings

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection

Statutory Requirements from this Inspection

Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection

Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings

(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

- 1. Statement of purpose**
- 2. Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service**
- 3. Management of the fostering service**
- 4. Securing and promoting welfare**
- 5. Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers**
- 6. Records**
- 7. Fitness of premises**
- 8. Financial requirements**
- 9. Fostering panels**
- 10. Short-term breaks**
- 11. Family and friend carers**

Part C: Lay Assessor's Summary (where applicable)

Part D: Provider's Response

D.1. Provider's comments

D.2. Action Plan

D.3. Provider's agreement

INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

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

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Warrington Borough 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.

Warrington Borough Council provided a fostering service to local children and families in accordance with the relevant regulations, standards and guidance.

At the time of the inspection a range of placements was provided for 73 girls and 79 boys who were unable to live at home with their families. The key aim of the service was to identify placements and carers in all areas of Warrington, and actively to recruit people from all backgrounds in order to reflect the cultural and demographic makeup of the Borough. The main types of foster care placement were long term and permanent, short term and emergency, respite (weekends/holidays) and short break placements for children with disabilities.

The Fostering and Adoption Team was based in Social Services main office at Bewsey Old School. It consisted of two managers- each took responsibility for an area of service- social workers specialising in adoption, supervising social workers, community support workers, a recruitment and development officer and administrative staff.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

Inspector's Summary

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

Statement of purpose

The Department produced comprehensive information in a range of publications to provide information about the services it provided. This information was monitored regularly through scrutiny by groups of staff involved in the service and as part of the Borough's policy of "readers' panels." The inspection identified some minor issues about the accuracy of the information contained in the Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide

Managing the service

The Department had recognised the need to increase the management resources of the Fostering and Adoption Team, and an additional team Manager post had been created last year. Both managers were well qualified and experienced, and both were undertaking Level 4 NVQ in management.

It was recognised that the work in introducing and improving monitoring systems, that had started with the introduction of the additional management post, needed to continue. Whilst outcomes for children were achieved to a high standard managers identified a need to improve processes for supporting the responsibilities of social workers in evidencing their work and identifying shortfalls in practice. When issues were raised during the inspection the managers responded promptly and effectively to introduce change.

Securing and promoting welfare

Care practices ensured that a high degree of commitment was given to ensure successful outcomes for children. In particular significant emphasis was given to promoting health and educational needs, promoting moves into independence and consultation with children and young people. The Department's "corporate approach" to the whole of the childcare service resulted in a commitment to providing an integrated approach to ensure the different branches of the service worked together. The rigorous use of management data enabled managers at all levels to check on performance throughout the service.

Managing foster carers

Foster carers were positive about the work of the team in assisting and supporting them. There was a general view that support had improved in the recent past, and, although areas where improvements could be made were also identified, foster carers admitted that they were aware of the issues facing the Department in terms of staff workload and turnover. The Fostering Team was felt to offer a very effective service and was able in some ways to provide assistance that could not be immediately forthcoming from others parts of the service. Some areas of potential improvement were explored during the inspection, and the managers received these positively.

Records

In general the records of the fostering service were satisfactory. The problem of providing accurate and timely information for carers persisted to some extent. The Department recognised the issue and continued to develop practice through training, briefing and monitoring to improve the availability of information to foster carers.

The move to have foster carers' first annual review undertaken by an independent reviewing officer was positive. The recommendation to create a dedicated independent reviewing officer post for foster care was part of the inspection findings.

Premises

The premises occupied by the Fostering Team were satisfactory and secure. The inspection took place as the Team was moving, along with other parts of Children's Services, to new premises in Warrington.

Fostering Panels

The Panel operated effectively and efficiently. Membership was appropriate, and training and development ensured that individuals were skilled and enthusiastic about the role the Panel in developing the fostering service. It was recognised that more could be done to involve carers in attending Panel, and members were keen to explore the role of the Panel in monitoring the views of carers through systematic exit interviews.

Short term breaks

The Fostering Service provided a range of short break and respite care, and was aware of the need to improve the numbers of carers recruited to the service.

Family and friends.

In common with most Social Services Departments Warrington had recognised that "kinship care" provided a substantial resource for children in need and that systems for identifying and supporting families in children needed to develop. The particular issues of this type of care meant that workers and families needed to be aware of the responsibilities of the Department and the needs of families for support. The Fostering Team had identified a specific member of staff to work with kinship carers, and had provided a range of support, training and information opportunities to promote the service.

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:

N/A

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

YES

COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)

(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)

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

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector	Jeff Banham	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	Sharon Lloyd	Signature	_____
Regulation Manager	Katie Tempest	Signature	_____
Date	_____		

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The appropriate Officer of the Local Authority or the Registered Person (as applicable) is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how requirements 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	3(1)	FS1	The manager must ensure that the Statement of Purpose provides accurate information and is consistent with the activities of the fostering service.	April 30 th 2005
2	20 Schedule 1	FS3	The manager must ensure that all staff are subject to the checks and references required by this Schedule, and that all the information required by the Schedule is available on file.	April 30 th 2005
3	34(3) Schedule 6	FS8	The manager must ensure that the authority enters in a written agreement with the foster parent relating to every child placed, covering the matters specified in Schedule 6. and that all documents are accurate and up to date. Where a child's needs have changed a dated addendum must provide additional information.	April 30 th 2005
4	42(1) Schedule 7	FS9	The manager must establish a record of any complaints, and allegations or suspicions of abuse and their outcome in respect of children placed with foster carers.	April 30 th 2005
5	17(3)(b)	FS12	The manager must ensure that consent from people with parental responsibility is obtained for the medical treatment of children accommodated in foster care under Section 20 of the Children Act.	April 30 th 2005

6	28(5)(b)	FS22	The manager should ensure that Foster care Agreements contain all the information given in Schedule 5 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.	April 30 th 2005
7	17(3)	FS24	The manager must ensure that all records given to foster carers on children placed are accurate and complete.	April 30 th 2005
8	23(2)(b)	FS24	The manager must ensure that all children's case records held by foster carers are stored securely.	April 30 th 2005

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	FS9	The manager could develop systems, practice and training in order to ensure foster carers receive adequate information on children placed with them.
2	FS10	The manager could ensure that foster carers are given copies of any court order relating to the contact arrangements for a child placed with them.
3	FS12	The manager could ensure that the administration of medication by foster carers is accurately recorded in all cases.
4	FS18	The manager could review the support systems available to foster carers, in particular the use of foster carers to provide out of hours support.
5	FS21	The manager could consider the use of an independent review officer for all foster carer reviews and exit interviews.
6	FS22	The manager should ensure that records of supervisory visits to foster carers are kept on file.
7	FS23	The manager should review the programme of foster carer training to ensure it provides carers with the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of children placed with them.
8	FS25	The manager should establish an effective system for auditing and monitoring the quality of information on foster carer files.

9	FS30	The manager could establish a system of exit interviews for foster carers, to be reported to Panel, to conform to the services described in the Statement of Purpose.
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* Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix e.g FS10 refers to Standard 10.

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS**

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

Number of Inspector days spent	10
Survey of placing authorities	NO
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)	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	NO
• Contact with supervising social workers	YES
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	YES
Interview with panel chair	YES
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	NO
Date of Inspection	8/03/05
Time of Inspection	09.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	60

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?

2

The latest edition of the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose was produced in September 2004 and a copy was provided for the inspection. It had been modified following a recommendation made at the last inspection concerning the need to publish information about the complaints with which the service had dealt.

The Statement of Purpose provided detailed information about aspects of the Fostering service in accordance with the requirements of this standard.

Section 34 of the document dealt with *“Knowing why carers cease to foster.”* This stated, *“An exit interview is offered to foster carers who cease to foster with the Team manager of the Fostering Service Team.”* The inspection identified that exit interviews had not been offered on a systematic basis, although it was the intention of the service to provide them. The subject of exit interviews is dealt with later in this report. The manager should ensure that the statement of purpose provides an accurate reflection of that which is provided.

A discrepancy was noted concerning the length of time taken for foster carers to complete their core training. The Statement of Purpose said this was three years; the Foster Care Agreement said it was two years.

Section 42 of the document referred to the *“National Care Standards Commission”*; this should be changed to the *“Commission for Social Care Inspection.”*

The Fostering Service had produced *“Living with a foster family – a guide for children and young people”*. This was an attractive document that used text and coloured pictures and images to provide information to children. It also contained a reference to the NCSC, and should be amended to give the local contact details of the CSCI.

See requirement 1

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 last inspection identified that the management responsibilities of the then team manager were too great. As a result the Department had appointed an additional team manager. The two managers had different lead responsibilities, one for adoption and permanence, and the other for fostering services. Team members said that this arrangement was positive and provided effective support to the team. Both managers covered for each other when required, and both supervised an identified group of staff. The team also had a group leader, and senior practitioners to offer guidance and expertise.

Both team managers had started the NVQ level 4 training in management

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?

2

The inspector examined a number of the personnel files of staff in the team. The manager had earlier reported that three members of staff, all long serving members of the team, did not have a CRB check, and it was agreed that this had been an oversight.

The examination of files also revealed that not everyone had confirmation of identity, or of their professional qualification, or a photograph.

One file indicated that the team member had gaps in employment that were not explained in writing, and had only one written reference. Discussion with the manager revealed that Borough policy was to accept one written reference for staff already employed in the Department. Whilst this was acceptable for references, any gaps in employment for all staff, whether new or existing, must be explained in writing.

See requirement 2

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

All staff had clear roles and responsibilities and there were well - established lines of communication between managers, staff and carers. Staff reported that the managers were available for advice and guidance and that lines of accountability were clear. It was felt that sometimes information had to be passed to both managers at different times, but this need for repetition was not felt to a serious disadvantage.

Carers felt that communication between themselves and social workers could be good, was in general better than it had been, but still could improve. This issue is dealt with below.

The appointment of an additional administrator allowed the development of systems to monitor performance data and outcomes for children.

The Department had a Performance Information Team. This supplied management data on a regular and frequent basis to enable managers to monitor all aspects of the activities of the team.

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

1

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

0

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

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

0

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

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

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

1

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

0

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**

Both team managers had clear job descriptions and identified roles and responsibilities. Each took a lead role for one aspect of the service. The Group Leader carried a small caseload and was involved in supervising community social workers. She also deputised in the absence of the manager.

There were clear lines of accountability to the Department's senior management team, and regular monitoring at that level of the activities of the fostering service.

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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From the sample of foster carer files examined as part of the inspection it was evident that thorough checks and assessments had taken place at the time of recruitment. Health and safety audits were part of the approval process, and these were updated at the annual reviews.

Foster carers received training in health and safety issues as part of their core training. Foster carer homes that were visited as part of the inspection were warm, adequately furnished and decorated, and maintained to a good standard. Children placed in these homes had their own bedrooms. There was evidence in foster carers homes that a safe, healthy and nurturing environment was provided. In one home a dietician had provided advice to carers where the need had been identified. Support from a play development worker was also provided in line with the child's identified needs.

The Department had a policy of producing risk assessments for children who had been abused or had abused another child.

The motor insurance of carers who had cars was checked at assessment and at the subsequent review.

The foster carers who were visited confirmed that they had been informed that the Commission was undertaking an inspection; co-operation with the inspection process was part of the foster care agreement.

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 was evidence in records that individual needs in terms of gender, religion, ethnicity, language, culture and disability were addressed.

The records of the assessment process indicated that these matters were routinely raised with carers prior to approval. The fostering service used The Fostering Network handbook "Skills to Foster" that explored diversity and discrimination and advised on good practice. Children with special needs were valued and their well-being was promoted.

The Department had a number of policies in place concerned with the promotion of equality. These included the "Equal Opportunities" policy and the recruitment strategy.

Foster carers received training in "diversity", and the Borough's "Diversity and Equalities" officer had attended team meetings.

One of the team managers was a member of BAAF's Black Minority Ethnic Perspectives

Advisory Committee, and her attendance was supported and financed by the Department. The manager told the inspector that interpreters had been used to assist children who were asylum seekers, and children who had hearing impairments.

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Foster carers were approved by Panel for specific numbers and ages of children, and information was available for the types of needs that they could meet. Records of approval status and Panel discussions were held on file. Children were then matched through matching meetings to particular carers.

The demands on the service meant that foster carers sometimes took children outside of their initial approval. Records of these variations, known as “Extensions to Approval”, were also held on file. One placement that had originally been defined as short term had extended into and became long term. Monitoring of the records of the placement through supervision meetings identified that the placement had not been formally re-matched. When the matter was identified appropriate matching procedures then took place.

Written foster placement agreements were not always in place. The LAC document “*Placement Plan Part 1*” constituted the agreement. Although present in most cases there were examples of signed agreements not being held on the foster carer’s file; of a placement being made without a foster placement agreement; of an agreement being transferred from one carer to another when a child moved to the other carer, and of a foster placement agreement not being revised when the status of a placement changed.

The inspector was concerned that accurate information was not included in at least one Form E.

Although a decision to seek an adoptive family had been made at a child’s first review, the Form E was not completed until 12 months later. There were some shortfall in the Form E including –

- Reference to a different child was made part way through the form. The child’s placing social worker was not aware of this;
- Some important information relating to the child’s health had been omitted even though it was available when the form was compiled.
- The foster carers said that they had not been asked to contribute to the “child’s profile” and that the family finding officer who had written the report had last visited the child six months before writing the report.

See requirement 3

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)		
The fostering service protects each child or young person from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>Warrington Borough Council had child protection policies and procedures in place, and these covered children placed with foster carers. Staff and carers received training in child protection procedures and practice; carers told the inspector that they found this training particularly valuable.</p> <p>Training in “safe care” took place within the context of the “safer care” policy. A policy on risk as risk assessments for abused children was in place, and the social workers of children already in placement were consulted before the placement of additional children.</p> <p>Information was provided in a number of sources concerning the prohibition of any forms of corporal punishment, and sanctions that humiliate, intimidate or frighten children. Carers were given guidelines and training in managing difficult behaviour and “Control with Care in Children’s Services.”</p> <p>Anti-bullying policies were in place, and information and support was provided to carers through training and supervisory visits.</p> <p>The fostering service did not have its own system for recording and identifying allegations against carers. Allegations that proceeded to strategy meetings were held by the Independent Review Team.</p> <p>See requirement 4</p> <p>Foster carers reported through direct discussion and completed questionnaires that the provision of full information on children at the time of placement could be problematic. Although it was reported that the situation had improved, examples of inadequate information were identified.</p> <p>The manager said the Department was aware of the issue, and continued to develop practice to ensure the occasions where it happened were minimised.</p> <p>The manager could ensure that the Department defined what constituted an “emergency” and a “planned” placement and provide carers with written guidance as to the information they should receive and when; that carers should be given a checklist to complete to enable the information to be monitored; that an undertaking not to take children without information is included in the Foster Care Agreement, and that more training is provided on the LAC system and the content and purpose of the documentation.</p> <p>See recommendation 1</p>		
Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:	X	%

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)		
The fostering service makes sure that each child or young person in foster care is encouraged to maintain and develop family contacts and friendships as set out in her/his care plan and/or foster placement agreement.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The importance of the promotion of contact where it was in the best interests of a child was endorsed through written information and training.</p> <p>Contact arrangements were identified in care plans and confirmed at the statutory review. Records of foster carer supervision confirmed that the matter was discussed on a regular basis, and any issues relevant to the matter were identified and dealt with.</p> <p>Children and carers confirmed that contact took place in accordance with the requirements set out in the care plan. One set of foster carers regularly travelled to South Wales and stayed overnight in order to facilitate the contact of a young person with this mother.</p> <p>Restrictions of contact were identified in the LAC documentation. However some carers</p>		

confirmed that they did not have documentary evidence, such as a copy of a court order, that a restriction of contact between a child and significant other was in place.

See recommendation 2

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?

4

Children were encouraged to participate in all aspects of their care and planning for their care through a variety of ways. They were encouraged to attend statutory reviews; minutes of the meetings evidenced children's attendance.

The Borough had recognised the importance of developing practice in relation to the promotion of effective involvement of children. A Participation Office had been appointed at Borough and at Departmental level, the latter part funded by the Children's Fund. He discussed with the inspector the plans for developing the training and awareness of staff. A forum for young people to discuss issues relevant to their care had been started.

Records of reviews described the circumstances in which young people were offered an independent visitor or an independent advocate.

The Recruitment and Development Officer was developing a consultation document to be sent out annually to all parents who have a child placed in foster care.

The manager told the inspector that an interpreter had been provided for children who were asylum seekers. A twelve-month contract with Warrington Advocacy Service had also been negotiated in order to work with children with disabilities who were in transition to accessing adult services.

Information on the complaints procedure and useful contact telephone numbers was provided for children in the children's guide.

The Department had a contract with the National Youth Advocacy Service to provide independent advice and support to children and young people.

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

The health needs of young people were identified in the initial assessments and the LAC documentation. The responsibilities of promoting and meeting the health care were outlined in the care plan, and subject to regular review, Children had an annual medical.

The Department had recognised the issues around the promotion of health care for older children and they were encouraged to have an annual health assessment by the nurse with specific responsibility for the health of looked after children.

The Department had links with the Drug Action Team. Training in drug awareness and sexual health was provided for foster carers.

The specific needs of children and young people were met by foster carers who were directly involved in the inspection. Some of the actions included involvement of consultants and paediatricians, specialist health care for children with disabilities, the involvement of psychiatrists and the CAMHS team.

A young person's health record had been developed by the LAC nurse and the fostering team for each child, and was given to foster carers.

Foster carers dispensed medication where required and were asked to record any medication administered. The detail of recording was not always accurate, and the service should ensure that carers are sufficiently aware of the policies on dispensing and recording the administration of medication.

See recommendation 3

There was no evidence on some foster carers' or children's files inspected that written consent had been obtained from those with parental responsibility for the medical treatment of children accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act in foster care.

See requirement 5**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

The foster carers handbook said, "*Children looked after by the local authority have not always attained their educational potential.*" The handbook went on to state the importance that the influence and support that the foster carer could provide and the expectations of carers in promoting the education of children for whom they care. Foster carers were aware of the practical responsibilities they had in working with schools and assisting children. Assessments and care plans detailed particular educational needs and the responsibilities of various individuals and agencies.

The statutory review monitored progress in achieving educational targets.

A senior office was employed within the Education Department and worked with foster carers, young people and schools. She was also a member of the Fostering Panel and could identify support that foster carers might need.

All looked after children had access to a computer and carers were provided with training in

computer work so they were able to support children.
 Incentives and targets were in place for young people undertaking GCSEs, and each child had a personal education plan

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

The Department had a "Leaving Care Team" with the specific responsibility of assisting young people in moving towards independence. A social worker from the team became involved with the young person at the age of fifteen, and in conjunction with a range of professionals and the young person would develop the "Pathway" plan. The progress of the plan was monitored through the statutory review process.
 Young people had the option to have independence trials in a flat, and were supported during their time in the flat.
 Foster carers received training in "Moving On" and were encouraged to be central to the young person's move to adult living.

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

Staff were recruited in line with the procedures of Warrington Borough Council. Staff files contained copies of job descriptions, contracts of employment and interview notes. Checks were carried out and references taken up in line with the Borough's procedures and the requirements of regulations. Issues to do with the checks and references were identified above at Standard 3.

All staff were qualified in accordance with the needs of their post. They were trained in all aspects of the fostering service. Supervising social workers undertaking assessments of foster carers received training in the competency-based framework, or were supervised if undertaking assessments before undertaking training.

Staff were able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the responsibilities of their posts and of the values and policies underpinning the work of the fostering service.

See requirement 2

Total number of staff of the agency:

21

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

2

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

Since the last inspection the management structure of the team has been increased, in line with the expansion of the numbers of staff employed. There were clear lines of accountability and delegation. The managers and the Group Leader carried out monitoring of workloads and tasks.

The Development and Recruitment Officer provided information and support in ensuring the monitoring of the appropriate allocation of work.

Administrative support to the team had been increased since the last inspection.

Staff reported that relationships between the fostering team and placing social workers were good, and were continually improving. When a child's social worker was unable to undertake tasks for the child the supervising social worker would assist.

Staff were given copies of all policies and procedures in the staff handbook.

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**

The fostering team has increased in size since the last inspection. The manager reported that the staffing complement was now almost complete, and vacancies through staff not in post or through sickness had declined. It was believed that the team was able to offer a more stable support service to foster carers and looked after children. Staff policies were aimed at encouraging the retention of staff. Staff with whom the inspector spoke said they were happy with the support provided by the Department.

The recruitment of foster carers was detailed in the Recruitment Strategy. The Team had a specialist Development and Recruitment Officer and she described the various activities undertaken to promote the recruitment and retention of foster carers. These included continuous advertising in the local press and on a regular service bus owned by the Borough; foster carer's support groups, forums, coffee mornings and a variety of local activities with and for foster carers and people interested in finding out more about the service. The team had recently undertaken a joint recruitment campaign with two adjoining councils.

It was recognised by all staff that the Department did not have enough foster carers, particularly in relation to the provision of "home from home" support and for teenagers. This was an issue facing most local authorities, and the team was actively engaged in the continuous review of its recruitment and retention strategies.

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)

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

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

The fostering service was a part of Warrington Borough Council and all its employment practices were in line with the Borough's procedures.

Carers received supervision in line with agreed policy or need arising from a particular placement. Visits to carers were recorded on contact sheets, and it was not always easy to determine the number and dates that visits had taken place, or the visits that had taken place unannounced. This was discussed during the inspection, and the manager agreed that a different format for recording visits would be introduced. It was recognised that this would aid the monitoring of the practice of the supervising social workers.

Foster carers had access to support from a "buddying" system and out of hours support from the Emergency Duty team. The issue of further systematic implementation of the "buddying" system was raised, as one experienced foster carers said they had not been asked to provide support.

The manager could consider the nature of support to less experienced carers. It was recognised that support needs would vary from carer to carer. In addition the manager could consider the development of out of hours support from a team of experienced foster carers.

See recommendation 4

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)		
There is a good quality training programme to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The Social Services Department produced a Training Calendar, outlining all the training courses on offer, for each year. The current Calendar covered 2004/5.</p> <p>Staff had the opportunity to access a wide range of courses from TOPSS- standard induction to professional and post-qualifying training to management training.</p> <p>Staff confirmed that they received induction and training that was effective and relevant to their roles. One member of staff said that she had not yet had any induction, but speculated that that may have been because she was already employed in the Department before coming into the Fostering Team. Staff supervision identified training needs and appraised the value of course that had been undertaken.</p>		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)		
All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Staff were supervised in accordance with the policies of Warrington Borough Council. Each member of the team had a "supervision file", a number of which were seen by the inspector. These contained an induction pack, a copy of the supervision policy and the supervision contract.</p> <p>Records of supervision sessions recorded the dates of supervision and the issues discussed. Supervision sessions took place on a monthly basis, although occasional had to be rescheduled for various reasons.</p> <p>The two team managers supervised the members of the team between them, with the group leader deputising if required.</p>		

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6)**The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

Standard 18 above raised some issues in relation to working with and supporting carers. Overall the relationship between the supervising social workers and fostering social workers was felt to be good and improving. The “corporate” approach of the management of the whole service gave less opportunity for isolation of any part of the service, and minimised the creation of separation between the different teams.

Foster carers felt that at times support from placing social workers was not always forthcoming when they wanted or needed it. They recognised however that issues to do with workload, turnover of staff and vacancies would impact upon them. Support from the supervising social workers was felt to be very good, and at times compensated for lack of contact with placing social workers.

Foster carers said that they, or other carers known to them, could feel vulnerable and lack confidence to ask for support or challenge practice. This could emerge when asked to take a child without proper information. It was also felt that foster carers in their early years might need more intensive support than later when they became more experienced.

Foster carers felt that the development of an out-of-hours support team of experienced foster carers could be useful and may be worth trying.

The creation of an independent reviewing service for all foster carer reviews and exit interviews could enable the carers to voice issues important to them, and enable a more objective evaluation and development of the service to be undertaken.

See recommendation 5**Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)****The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

Foster care agreements were in place and these were well written and had been signed and dated by those party to the agreement. However there were a few shortfalls in meeting the requirements of Schedule 5. These included-

Promotion of health- there is reference to the arrangements for record keeping procedures relating to the administration of medication (as outlined in the service policy) and to the need to establish consents for medical treatments

The procedure for placing a new child with foster carers does not make any reference to the written information that the foster carer could expect to accompany a child.

Reference is made to the NCSC and this should be CSCI.

There is no information about what matters are to be included in any foster placement agreement.

See requirement 6

Visits to carers were made regularly and recorded on file. Records of supervision sessions were also kept. Carers’ files should record the dates of supervisory visits, including those carried out unannounced.

See recommendation 6

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

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

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

The Foster Carer's handbook outlined the training programme available for all foster carers. Before approval carers attended the "Choosing to Care" course; "Home from Home" carers had a specialist preparation course. All new carers had an additional two sessions induction training covering policy and procedures, LAC forms, confidentiality, record keeping and rights and responsibilities.

Within the first two years of approval the expectation was that carers would have had training in a range of courses designed to support their caring for children and young people. All carers had an individual training programme drawn up in consultation with their supervising social worker. Records of supervision sessions recorded the discussions about training and the identification of training needs. Carers' files contained records of courses attended, and certificates where applicable.

The need for any specialist training was discussed with the supervising social worker. One carer's file recorded a discussion about the need for IT training for one carer. This was subsequently accessed through the Borough's training programme, to which carers had access.

It was felt by one social worker that more training should be provided involving placing social workers, and not just be presented by social workers from the fostering team. The manager told the inspector that this had been pursued in the past, but had not been effective.

One foster carer said she was not sure whether training was mandatory, or if she could choose the courses which she should attend.

One member of staff felt that foster care training should be more in depth, and needed to focus on key areas such as attachment and child development, managing difficult behaviour, and promoting educational achievement. Carers also reported that they felt that they needed more guidance, information and training on recording on children in their care.

See recommendation 7

Foster carers told the inspector that the training available was generally useful and enjoyable.

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
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The primary responsibility for the child's care record was held by the placing social worker. Documents were made available to enable the foster carer to have all appropriate information on each child placed in good time, and for copies of documents to be held on the foster carers' file.

Carers reported through direct discussion and in inspection questionnaires that there continued to be a problem with information being presented at the proper time. The fostering team manager said this issue had been recognised and that continuous efforts were made to ensure that information provided was full and timely.

Foster carers could be given more information on the LAC system through initial training, and could be asked to record the documents presented by social workers at the time of placement. This would enable performance monitoring to take place.

There also appeared to be an issue with the minutes of statutory reviews. One foster care said that a review had taken place in November 2004 and at the time of the inspection she still had not received the minutes. She said this time delay was not unusual. Some copies of review minutes did not contain all the pages of the review form.

No foster carer spoken to was using the Assessment and Action record as part of the LAC system. Minutes of reviews rarely picked the issue up, and the relevant sections were left blank. Foster carers believed the use of the AAR was Departmental policy, but that it was not enforced.

Carers felt vulnerable about recording. They said they had not had training or guidance, but were doing it as they felt it important. The discrepancy between the quality and quantity of information held for children in foster care and those in residential care was highlighted.

Daily records maintained by carers could contain regular summaries, and evidence the child's participation in and contribution to what was recorded about them.

Detailed scrutiny of LAC documents revealed a number of inaccuracies and information left unrecorded.

See requirement 7

One kinship carer showed the records he had stored on top of a wardrobe in a plastic carrier bag. All carers should have or be provided with lockable storage.

See requirement 8

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
<p>The key issue for the keeping of records was the effectiveness of monitoring. Files that were examined could contain different information from each other. For example some files contained a full placement history, others did not accurately record all the placements made. Some files contained end-of placement reports, others did not.</p> <p>LAC documentation could be out of date or missing altogether. One set of documents for a child placed with a carer was made out in the name of the previous carer. Information on LAC documents could be missing or wrong; on document had a child's legal status recorded as "Section 34 Contact Order".</p> <p>The managers recognised that as the team had expanded the time available for monitoring of records had become limited. Since the recruitment of the additional team manager improvements had started to be made, but work remained to be done.</p> <p>It may be helpful for an audit checklist to be placed at the front of each file, listing the documentation that should be available. A record could then be made of the date of the audit, and the person responsible. Social workers could audit their own files, with managers sampling at supervision.</p> <p>See recommendation 8</p>			
Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			X
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			X
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			X
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			X
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			X
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £		X	Maximum £
			X

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

At the time of the inspection the Fostering Team occupied two offices in the Social Services Headquarters in Warrington. Although neither of the team managers had their own office there were rooms available for booking for events such as meetings, supervision and individual case discussions if required.

The administrative support was located in the offices as part of the team.

Access to the building was through the main reception area, where security and signing-in systems were in place.

Files were stored in lockable cabinets, and all computers were password controlled.

The manager said the Department recognised that more computers were required, and that they would be provided as resources allowed.

The Team was on the point of moving to new premises with other social work teams and services; documents and equipment were being placed into boxes for removal over the time of the inspection, and the disruption inevitably had an impact on the work of the team.

It was felt by staff that the move to new premises might reduce their contact with and accessibility to some social work team, but increase it with others.

The Borough Council had all insurances in place.

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
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This standard is not applicable to local authority fostering services.

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
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This standard is not applicable to local authority fostering services.

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

The allowances paid to foster carers were published in the Foster Carers Payments Guide. A revised guide is published each year. The guide had been designed in consultation with carers and provided information about the rates payable for various tasks and explained the principles and processes behind the payment system. Guidance was provided on taxation and National Insurance. Carers confirmed that they received payment promptly and accurately, and that any over- or under-payments were dealt with efficiently.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The inspector received Panel papers, attended a meeting of the Panel and spoke with the Chair and Vice-chair.

The Panel had clear written policies and procedures about the handling of its functions. Minutes confirmed that Panel meetings were quorate and had a membership representing the areas of expertise to enable the Panel to operate effectively. Minutes were taken of each individual case discussion, and copies of the minutes were held on foster carers' and children's files where appropriate.

All necessary checks and references had been carried out.

Both the Chair and the Vice chair told the inspector that the Panel took its task very seriously and that discussions were thorough and in depth. Training days had enabled the Panel to review its procedures and processes, and it was felt that dissent was healthy, and when it occurred was dealt with in a positive and professional manner.

It was felt that the amount of documentation provided for each case could be considerable, and members felt that the possibility of producing summary reports in some matters could be explored.

The Panel believed it took its quality control functions seriously, and received regular reports on issues affecting the Fostering Service. An annual report of the work of the Panel was produced.

It was felt that the Department, in conjunction with the Department, could look at ways of improving the rates of attendance of foster carers at the Panel. It was recognised that although this may change the nature of the Panel, and have an impact on the agenda, the direct contact with carers would be useful and helpful to both the Panel and the carers. Carers to whom the inspector spoke said they were told they could attend, but it was not encouraged or implicit in the requirements of the process of approval, matching, review or termination. The venue and general manner of operation was felt by some carers to be potentially intimidating to people not used to the sort of formal processes that the Panel represented.

The Panel received reports of the annual reviews of carers. Earlier in this report reference was made to the development of the independent reviewing procedure for all annual reviews; at the time of the inspection this was confined to the first annual review. If this were to be extended the Panel could receive composite reports of the outcome of reviews on a regular basis.

It was also felt that the "exit interview" process for foster carers leaving the service should

become more systematic, and that the Panel should receive reports of the interviews in order to gain more information about issues affecting carers.

See recommendation 9

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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<p>The Department provided a range of placements to children living with their own families. These were either placements under the “Home from Home “ Scheme for children and young people with disabilities from birth to nineteen years of age designed to enable the child’s family to continue to be the primary carers, or they were “short break” carers offering respite care to families under stress.</p> <p>The Department recognised it needed more of these placements to enable it to offer a wider range of placements.</p> <p>One social worker said that care needed to be taken to ensure that carers who provided short-term care and who were registered to take emergency placements did not disrupt planned placements by taking children in an emergency.</p> <p>The inspector was also told that occasionally placements were made of which social workers of children in placement were unaware. The manager said that a protocol was in place to ensure that social workers were consulted about any proposed placements likely to affect children for whom they were responsible.</p>	
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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?	2
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The manager told the inspector that the Department recognised the importance of “kinship carers” and was developing policies and practices to ensure the assessment and support of family and friends offering care was in line with the requirements of legislation and good practice. The manager said that a number of training and information days had been organised to give staff information about kinship care. She also said that events had been organised for kinship carers to meet and raise issues, and that a worker specialising in kinship care was on the team.

It was recognised that more needed to be done in an area that most fostering teams find complex, and about which more is being learned all the time. “Kinship Care” was, for example, not mentioned in either the Statement of Purpose or the Foster Carer’s handbook.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____
Date _____

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 9 March 2005 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	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Comments were received from the provider	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Provider comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report	<input type="checkbox"/> 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	<input type="checkbox"/> YES

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 21 April 2005, which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

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

Action plan was required	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Action plan was received at the point of publication	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Provider has declined to provide an action plan	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Other: <enter details here>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Public reports

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

D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I John Dunkerley of Warrington Borough Council Fostering Service, confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on 9 March 2005 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 John Dunkerley of Warrington Borough Council Fostering Service, 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 9 March 2005 for the following reasons:

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

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

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