

inspection report

Fostering Services

Camden Fostering Service - Children and Families

79 Camden Road

London

NW1 9ES

7th February 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

Camden Fostering Service - Children and Families

Address

79 Camden Road, London, NW1 9ES

Local Authority Manager

Nuala Harrington

Tel No:

020 7497 291`1

Address

115 Wellesley Road, London, NW5 4PA

Fax No:

Email Address

Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)

Name of Agency

Address

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Tel No

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 ?

Date of last inspection

16/2/04

Date of Inspection Visit		7th February 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Ms Jill Marriott	083058
Name of Inspector	2		
Name of Inspector	3		
Name of Inspector	4		
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.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Nuala Harrington – Manager of the fostering Service.	

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(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

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

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Camden Fostering Service - Children and Families. 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.
<p>Camden Fostering Service is a local authority service providing a range of care for children who are looked after. The fostering service is committed to providing quality placements for children and young people who are not able to remain with their birth families. There is a range of placements available including short-term foster care placements, permanent placements, kinship care and respite care.</p> <p>Initially when a child is in need of a placement the social worker will look for a kinship placement within the wider family network. Where this is not possible a placement with an approved Camden Foster Carer will be considered.</p> <p>It is the aim of the Local Authority to ensure all children are matched with appropriate carers who can meet their identified needs including cultural needs, ethnicity and religious needs. The fostering service aims to work in partnership with children, carers, families and other professionals to ensure that all children and young people looked after have a care plan, which is reviewed regularly and clearly sets out the future plans for the child.</p>

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

Inspector's Summary

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

The inspection of Camden fostering service took place over a three-week period starting on the 7/2/05. It found that all of the standards have been met or partially met. Two standards exceeded the requirements. The overall service provided is good.

Evidence showed that the service has made developmental progress in most areas since the last inspection.

The Statement of Purpose for has been reviewed and a children's guide has been produce since the last inspection. All foster carers have a copy of the carers handbook, which includes all relevant information related to safe care

The inspector would like to thank all carers, children, social workers and managers for their involvement in the inspection process.

The following methods were used to inspect Camden Fostering Service.

1. Planning the day and interview with managers. 7/2/05
2. Tracking service records. 7/2/05
3. Interview with carers. 22/2/05, 23/2/05, 24/2/05.
4. Interviews with children and young people 23/2/05, 24/2/05.
5. Observation of Foster Panel 22/2/05.
6. Tracking personnel files 7/2/05
7. Tracking files 24/2/05, 28/2/05.
8. Attended Social Work team meeting 9/2/05
9. Attended Foster Carers Group 21/2/05
10. Meeting with care leavers. 1/3/05

Statement of Purpose. Standard 1.

Standard 1 is met.

The Camden Fostering Service has a statement of purpose, which clearly sets out the aims and objectives of the service. There is a children's guide to the service, which has been developed and meets the required standard.

Fitness to Carry on or Manage a fostering Service.

Standards 2-3.

Both standards were fully met

The Camden Fostering Service is managed effectively. There are effective policies and procedures, which ensure appropriate supervision of staff and carers.

Management of the Fostering Service.

Standards 4-5

Both standards were fully met.

The overall management of the service is good. Evidence was seen during the inspection, of good communication and clear roles for the managers and staff. The service has adequate financial procedures in place, which are monitored regularly. Regulation 43 notifications are provided to the appropriate agencies and complaints are recorded with actions and outcomes and dealt with within the given timescales.

Securing and Promoting Welfare.

Standards 6-14

Of the 9 standards 8 were met 2 exceeded the requirements and 1 standard remains partially met.

The service provides carers who offer good quality care for children placed. Child protection policies and procedures are available to staff and carers and the carers handbook contains all relevant information regarding the fostering process and safe care.

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

Standards 15-23

1 of the 9 standards was partially met 8 standards were fully met.

The support to staff and carers has improved. Training for carers was appropriately recorded on files. Carer's reviews are up to date. The requirement made during this inspection relates to supervising social workers visits to carers.

Records

Standards 24-25

1 standard was fully met. One standard was partially met.

Not all carers and children's file were complete. General and administration records were kept up to date information was available to the inspector. The files seen had completed Looked after Children's forms recorded. All files were kept securely in locked filing cabinets.

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

Standard 26

Standard met.

The fostering service appears to be isolated in this accommodation from all other children's services. The premises do not have any disability access and all meetings with carers take place off site. The fostering service could not consider recruiting any members of staff with a mobility problem as there are no lifts and the accommodation is on the first and second floor of the building. The toilets used by the fostering service are in need of complete refurbishment.

Financial Requirements

Standards 27-29

Standards were fully met.

The finances are monitored regularly and remain within the spending limits for the service.

Fostering Panel

Standard 30

Standard met.

The policies, procedures of the foster panel are in need of review. The panel will consider how it will encourage carers to attend panel for their approval and review of approval meetings.

Short term Breaks.**Standard 31.****Standard met**

The short-term breaks scheme is managed appropriately by the fostering service.

Family and Friends as Carers.**Standard 32****Standard partially met.**

Camden has an effective kinship care scheme. From the files seen it was evident that not all kinship carers are receiving appropriate support from the fostering service. From discussion with the manager it was evident that this area of fostering is being reviewed and clearer policies developed to ensure support is available to carers and children placed.

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Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)

The following statutory Reports or Notifications are to be made under the Care Standards Act as a result of the findings of this inspection:

Report to the Secretary of State under section 47(3) of the Care Standards Act 2000 that the Commission considers the Local Authority's fostering service satisfies the regulatory requirements:

NO

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:

Following a change in legislation this section of the report is no longer applicable.

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NO

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	
			Please see requirements of this inspection	

Action is being taken by the Commission for Social Care Inspection to monitor compliance with the above requirements.

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

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

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector	<u>Jill Marriott</u>	Signature	<u></u>
Second Inspector	<u></u>	Signature	<u></u>
Regulation Manager	<u>Hannah Hanley</u>	Signature	<u></u>
Date	<u>19th April 2005</u>		

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	27(2)(a) schedule 3(5) 35(1)	FS6	The Registered Person must ensure that safety checks include all areas of carer's homes. Where problems are identified the record should state the action taken to rectify the problem. Where space is an issue an assessment must be made of the children's needs and how the carer will be supported to meet their needs in inadequate housing. This requirement is a repeated.	30/4/05
2	17(1)	FS22	The Registered Person must ensure that all carers are visited regularly. Unannounced visits must take place at least once each year. This requirement is a repeated.	30/6/05
3	35(1)(3)(b)	FS24	The Registered Person must ensure that all children's and foster carers file recordings are up to date and contain all relevant information. This requirement is a repeated.	30/6/05
4	23(1)	FS26	The Registered Person must consider the appropriateness of the Gospel Oak Office for the Fostering Team. The premises are not disability accessible. The Registered Person must ensure that the toilets used by the fostering team are refurbished.	30/9/05

5	34(3) schedule 6(2)	FS29	The Registered Person must ensure that all foster carers are aware of their entitlement to allowances and the financial information is recorded on the files.	30/6/05
6	24(1)	FS30	The Registered Person must ensure the panels policies and procedures are reviewed. The Registered Person must ensure that the foster panel agenda includes information regarding foster carers reviews not heard at panel. The Registered Person must ensure that the panel has a quality assurance monitoring system.	30/9/05
7	38(1)(a)	FS32	The Registered Person must ensure that there is a policy and procedure relating to Kinship Care, which is available to all carers, caring for children of friends and relatives.	30/9/05

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	17	It is recommended that staff in the administration team, are invited to attend training and information sessions regarding relevant and new legislation.
2	31	The inspector recommends that the fostering service inform family link carers of whether or not a review of payments and allowances for the care they offer is taking place in line with the review of regular foster carers payments.

* 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	5
Survey of placing authorities	NA
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	NO
• 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	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	YES
Date of Inspection	7/2/05
Time of Inspection	10.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	40.00

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

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Camden Fostering Service has a statement of purpose. The statement of purpose has been reviewed and is available to all members of staff and carers.

Camden has a guide for Looked after Children, the child's guide includes up to date information written in simple English for children and young people. Where necessary the guide will be made available in a range of languages.

The fostering service also provided a useful children's pack, which includes a range of general relevant information about fostering.

The above documents were seen by the inspector during the inspection visit.

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 permanent manager of the fostering team is qualified to DipSW level and has thirteen years experience of working with children four of which are at management level. Staff files seen by the inspector showed evidence of regular supervision. The inspector also saw minutes of regular team meetings. Financial information was seen as accurate and up to date.

The manager does not hold a management qualification. It is envisaged that management training will be available this year to meet the requirement of the National Minimum Standard.

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

Evidence was seen during the inspection and in the pre inspection information of the references and Criminal Records Bureau disclosures for the manager and the staff team. Staff are not able to take up post with the local authority until all the above information has been received and references have been cleared with the referees.

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

The manager and all members of the staff team have a job description and a contract of service.

There was evidence of regular supervision over the past year on staff records. Evidence of auditing was seen on carers and children's files. The inspector was told that all files are audited on a three monthly basis. Evidence was seen of regular budget monitoring. Information was available of placement costs and allowances for all fostering services provided.

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.

2

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.

2

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

The manager's job description sets out the duties and responsibilities of the post. It is evident from the statement of purpose and from Job descriptions that lines of accountability are well defined. The manager has an open door policy and the fostering team are aware they can see her at any time.

Members of staff told the inspector that they are aware of the arrangements in place regarding service responsibility when the manager is 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

Camden has a safe care policy. The inspector spoke with newly recruited and long-term carers. All appeared competent and skilled in the work they do. Carers have undergone an assessment and have participated in an induction programme prior to approval. Applications are considered by the fostering panel who forward their recommendations to the agency decision maker for approval. Carers are not approved without references and Criminal Records Bureau disclosures.

It was evident from the files that regular safety checks are carried out in the carer's homes. However one home had been checked recently and deemed safe. During the inspectors visit it was noted that

- lack of space in the flat is an issue
- the banister rail on the staircase was dangerous and in need of repair.

The Registered Person must ensure that safety checks include all areas of carer's homes.

Where problems are identified the record should state the action taken to rectify the problem.

Where space is an issue an assessment must be made of the children's needs and how the carer will be supported to meet their needs in inadequate housing.

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

There was evidence of carers being recruited from a range of ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. The inspector met with a number of carers both in their homes and at a support group. It is evident that where possible children are placed with same race carer's. Where this is not possible the placement is planned with consideration given to all of the child's needs. Information of the matching process was recorded on files seen.

A group of young people who spoke with the inspector told how they were supported to follow their own cultural and religious beliefs throughout their fostering placements.

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Children who spoke to the inspector said that generally they had been happy with their carers who were generally from the same background.
Evidence was seen to show that where possible children are placed with same race carers. If a child has to be placed in a transracial placement support and information is made available to carers and to the child to ensure the needs of the child are identified and met throughout the placement. Information is recorded on the placement agreements.

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?**

3

The London wide child protection procedures are used by Camden. The policies and procedures and the safe care policies are included in the carer's handbook.
All carers have safe care and child protection training as part of their induction. Refresher courses are also available. Carers who spoke with the inspector were aware of the policies regarding corporal punishment.
All children placed with carers are discussed regularly in the supervising social workers supervision.
Children are able to discuss issues with their social worker and have information and telephone numbers to assist them to secure support if needed. All young people are encouraged to comment in writing on the care they receive at Looked After Children reviews and at the foster carers annual review. The service has a system in place to monitor and evaluate allegations of abuse made to the fostering service.
All carers have to have up to date CRB disclosures, which are reviewed ever three years.

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

100

%

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

Where appropriate contact is maintained and supported by the foster carer.

Contact is agreed at the child's placement planning meeting and reviewed at Looked After Children reviews.

Carers who spoke with the inspector said they were supported by their supervising social worker to ensure children and young people maintain contact with their families.

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

Where appropriate birth families are invited to Looked After Children reviews. Children are encouraged to attend reviews. The service has done a lot of work with young people to look at ways of making it easier for them to put their views forward. The service has appointed a group of young people who have assisted to develop forms and age appropriate questionnaires for young people to use for reviews and to enable them to ask questions of social workers and appropriate adults.

The children's forms and questionnaires are colourful and creative they contain a range of useful information. The forms and questionnaires are a credit to the young people and staff who have developed them. Young people who spoke to the inspector reported seeing a social worker at least monthly.

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?**

3

The children's records show evidence of their health needs being met. Every effort is made to ensure children are registered with a doctor as soon as possible after placement. Carers are aware of their responsibility for ensuring all appointments with health specialists are arranged and kept.

All children's have regular yearly medicals. Health needs are monitored six monthly as part of the Looked After Childrens reviewing process.

Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.8)

The fostering service gives a high priority to meeting the educational needs of each child or young person in foster care and ensures that she/he is encouraged to attain her/his full potential.

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

Foster carers are made aware of the importance of education from the beginning of their induction into caring.

The role of the carer is made clear with regard to education at each child's placement meeting. Camden social services provide young people in foster care with computers to assist with their education.

It was evident from files seen and discussion with carers and children that carers attend open evening at the schools and Personal Education Planning meetings.

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?****4**

Training is available for carers to prepare young people for adulthood. Once children reach their 16th birthday the Leaving Care Team become involved in the Looked after Children reviews. Carers support young people to gain independence skills appropriate to their age and ability.

The inspector spoke with young people who had recently left care. They all said they were aware of the plans for their future prior to leaving care. They feel the support they have received from the leaving care team has been extremely beneficial. They have a range of information and advice sessions available to them regarding housing, further education and work opportunities. Young people attend the drop in centre and are able to access the support of the leaving care social workers as necessary.

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

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There are clear recruitment and selection procedures for the appointment of staff. All members of staff have Criminal Record Bureau disclosures and references, which are checked with the referee. All members of staff including locums have appropriate social work qualifications. All staff are recruited under the same procedures and receive the same support and supervision. Personnel files were seen by the inspector. Files are kept in appropriately locked cabinets.

Total number of staff of the agency:

10

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

0

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Evidence was seen on files of regular supervision including case supervision for staff over the past year.

Carers and children's files seen by the inspector have been audited recently and discrepancies noted on the files.

Camden fostering service has appropriate training programmes for staff and carers. The staff-training programme is informed by the needs identified through the appraisal system. Staff and carers spoken to during the inspection told the inspector that they received appropriate support and have access to social workers by phone over a 24-hour period.

Evidence was seen of the development of a form to fill in with carer's at each home visit. The forms appear useful and included details of the young people seen during visits. From the information available it appears that the service is effectively organised and is well supported by an efficient administration team.

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 current staffing structure is adequate to meet the needs of the fostering service. The staff group is ethnically mixed. The team consists of six full-time permanent members of staff, four posts covered by locum workers.

As in all Social Service Departments Camden is finding it difficult to recruit permanently to vacant posts. It is evident from information seen that Locum workers do stay in post for considerable lengths of time. It is also evident that Camden continues to advertise vacant posts for permanent recruitment.

All members of social work staff receive support and regular supervision and attend training and information sessions regarding relevant and new legislation. It would be useful for administration staff to also attend the information session to ensure they are also aware of changes in legislation.

It was evident from the records and files that the fostering team continues to use adequate referral and assessment procedures to ensure good quality carers are recruited to meet the needs of the children.

It is recommended that staff in the administration team, are invited to attend training and information sessions regarding relevant and new legislation.

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**

Camden is a large local authority governed by legislation. The fostering service has a performance monitoring system to ensure services provided are effective and efficient. Staff and carer's files seen during the inspection showed evidence of regular supervision. The inspector was shown a whistle blowing procedure and health and safety policies. The service has adequate professional indemnity insurance for staff and carer's. Carers told the inspector that they have access to 24-hour telephone support at all times.

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**

Training for staff and carer's is adequate and appropriate. Staff training is identified in supervision and through yearly appraisals. All carers training is organised at appropriate times and a crèche is made available as necessary. Staff and carers also attend seminars to inform them of new and relevant legislation. Carers told the inspector that they receive information regarding training regularly.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)

All staff are properly accountable and supported.

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

Members of the team told the inspector that they all attended regular supervision and team meetings. It was evident from discussion and from records seen that staff are aware of their job descriptions and clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. The service has implemented a staff appraisal system. The supervision and appraisal system is used to identify the training needs of individual staff members. There is clear guidance available of supervising social workers responsibilities and accountability within the service.

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**

The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carer's. The service provides regular support groups and contact by phone on a 24-hour basis. Camden is working towards all carers being visited monthly. It is evident from files and discussion with carers and staff that the situation regarding visits is improving. Carers reported that they were able to contact duty officers and out of hours workers by phone. From files seen and from discussion with staff and carers it is clear that carers are generally well support.

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**

From discussion with staff and carers and from tracking files it was evident that the fostering service is generally well managed and has built up a good reviewing and monitoring systems. Camden offers pre approval training and assessment for all prospective carer's. There is evidence from the support group that training fits in with the framework of equal opportunities and anti discriminatory practice.

Camden fostering service has improved the location and times of the support groups to ensure everyone has the opportunity to attend. It is evident from files and from discussion with staff that information regarding new legislation is shared with carers on a one-to-one basis and at support groups. Evidence of training is recorded on files.

It was apparent from discussion, that visits by supervising social workers are generally monthly.

In one case the file showed that a permanent carer and child had not been seen from May 2004 until November 2004. One kinship placement appeared to be visited approximately two monthly a visit had been recorded on file early in November 2004 and another in late January 2005. There was little evidence on files seen to suggest any home visits were made unannounced.

The Registered Person must ensure that all carers are visited regularly. Unannounced visits must take place at least once each year. .

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**

Assessment and induction training is provided to carers during the approval process. An on going training programme is also available for all carers. Carers are required to attend safe care, child protection and first aid training.

Carers told the inspector that arrange of relevant training was available including NVQ level 3 childcare courses. Training information was seen on files by the inspector.

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

Four carers and children's files were seen during the inspection, The files in general included relevant information. However not all files showed evidence of unannounced visits. It was not always clear that the child had been seen by the supervising social worker. One file had no recorded contact from May 2004 to November 2004. These file records identified during the inspection have been discussed with the fostering team manager. Files seen did have audit sheets, which identified areas of concern. The manager confirmed that the files were being reviewed constantly and the monitoring system was assisting social workers to improve file recording.

The Registered Person must ensure that all children's and foster carers file recordings and reports are up to date and contain all relevant information.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The inspector viewed a sample of records kept by the service. Employment records were seen and the content was satisfactory. The service has an appropriate written policy on recording information. Foster carers are offered training and advice on what they need to record on behalf of the children. Files written by carers are reviewed by supervising social workers during routine visits. There is a policy regarding access to information, which is available to children and carer's.

The number of foster carers who have left Camden in the last year (37) appears high but this represents 34 kinship carers who were recruited to care for children of family and friends in crisis only.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			139
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			57
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			84
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			33
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			37
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	161.14	Maximum £	293.58

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The premises have the appropriate equipment and space for the fostering service. The IT system is appropriate and is password protected. The service is provided on the second and third floor of a building with no lift and no disability access. It would not be possible to employ anyone with a mobility problem or to see any carers who have a disability in this office. All activities and events for carers are held off site. The staff toilets are in need of complete refurbishment.

The building has adequate insurance cover under the local authority policy.

The Registered Person must consider the appropriateness of the Gospel Oak Office for the Fostering Team. The premises have no disability access. The Registered Person must ensure that the toilets used by the fostering team are refurbished.

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?

3

The fostering budget was seen as appropriate by the inspector at the time of inspection. The social services finance section holds the main responsibility for the budget. The budget is reviewed on a quarterly basis. Problems with budgets are picked up and strategies are developed to cover overspends. The Local Authority ensures the service is financially viable at all times.

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?

3

The finances of the fostering service are part of a wider financial plan held outside of the fostering service. The fostering budget was seen during the inspection and an appropriate financial monitoring system is in place.

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?****2**

The inspector was given information regarding foster care allowances. Carers who spoke to the inspector at the carers group said they are aware of the allowances and expenses available to support the young people in their care. Allowances are generally paid on time. Carers are aware that they can discuss with their link workers and negotiate any areas where the payment did not meet the need of the young person. A review of allowances has just taken place. The new payment scales have been discussed at the carers group meeting attended by the inspector. Foster Care finances are reviewed yearly.

Kinship carers who spoke to the inspector did not feel as sure of their entitlement. Kinship files seen did not show entitlement to financial assistance or a break down of allowances. It was not clear whether this was an error or whether kinship carers were not entitled to allowances. This area of finance needs to be made clearer to the families supporting children of relatives or friends.

The Responsible Individual must ensure that all foster carers are aware of their entitlement to allowances and the financial information is recorded on the files.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The fostering panel meets monthly. The panel has an independent chair who has the relevant skills experience and qualifications. The panel has an experienced vice chair who has working in the area of foster care for many years.

All panel business is recorded appropriately on the minutes, which are revisited and checked at the beginning of each panel meeting. All panel recommendations regarding complaints, issues and approvals are sent to the service decision maker for final approval. The inspector had access to panel meeting minutes.

It was evident from discussion with the panel and with foster carers that carers are not encouraged to attend their approval and yearly review. The panel is informed of the outcome of each review, which doesn't go to panel by the panel advisor, this is an informal process and not an agenda item for the panel.

The panel's policies, procedures and terms of reference must be reviewed. The review must include

- a generally up date of all the policies and procedures, which haven't been reviewed recently.
- details of the procedure used to make recommendations to the agency decision maker when the panel cannot agree on a decision.
- details of the procedures used to encourage foster carers to attend panels where they are being approved or at yearly reviews where appropriate.
- the introduction of a yearly quality assurance monitoring system to review the work of the panel, to identify problems and ensure there is consistency of approach in assessments across the fostering service.

The Registered Person must ensure the panels policies and procedures are reviewed. The Registered Person must ensure that the foster panel agenda includes information regarding foster carers reviews not heard at panel.

The Registered Person must ensure that the panel has a quality assurance monitoring system.

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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Camden currently has 10 Family Link Carers (short-breaks). It was evident from files seen that carers are recruited through the same process as all Camden carers. Records showed that children are carefully linked and are gradually introduced to the placement. The short break plan for each child is discussed with the carer, the link worker and the child's social worker. Family link carers told the inspector that the rate of payment for family link carers has not been reviewed. It would be useful for these carers to be told if the department is reviewing the payments and allowances for family link carers.

The children's families are aware that they continue to be the main carers for the child.

The inspector recommends that the fostering service inform family link carers of whether or not a review of payments and allowances for the care they offer is taking place in line with the review of regular foster carers payments.

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

The inspector spoke with kinship carers during the inspection.

Not all carers felt that they were well supported.

It was evident from discussion with kinship carers and from records seen that on occasion carers were looking after children with less than the statutory support required. One file did not have a placement plan or clear information regarding financing of the placement. There were a number of professionals involved but no information regarding placement reviews are on record. Only one home visit from the fostering team has been recorded on file since 5/11/04.

One household health and safety check had been carried out as satisfactory despite the fact that the banister rail on the staircase was broken. Information regarding records seen on this file has been shared with the relevant professionals by the inspector.

The Registered Person must ensure that there is a policy and procedure relating to Kinship Care, which is available to all carers, caring for children of friends and relatives. (Also see standards 6.)

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor

Signature

Date

PART D**PROVIDER'S RESPONSE****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 7th February 2005 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

NO

Comments were received from the provider

NO

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

NO

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 12th 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

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

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

Or

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

--

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

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

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