



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

Voluntary Adoption Agency

Adoption Matters

14 Liverpool Road

Chester

Cheshire

CH2 1AE

24th May 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

VOLUNTARY ADOPTION AGENCY INFORMATION

Name of Voluntary Adoption Agency

Adoption Matters

Address

14 Liverpool Road, Chester, Cheshire, CH2 1AE

Tel No

01244 390938

Fax No

Email Address

info@adoptionmatters.org

Certificate Number of Voluntary Adoption Agency

F080000241

Name of Registered Provider:

Chester Diocesan Adoption Services

Name of Manager:

Is this service the principal office or a branch?

Is this a small principal office or branch?

Seven or less full-time equivalent social work staff, excluding manager.

Principal Office

yes

Branch

Date of registration:

30th April 2003

Date of most recent certificate:

30th April 2003

Registration Conditions Apply?

NO

Date of last inspection:

2001

Date of Inspection Visit		24th May 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Jayne Ivory	098916
Name of Inspector	2	Patricia McKay	
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.		None available for this inspection	
Name of Specialist e.g. Interpreter/Signer (if applicable)		Not required	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of the inspection		Norman Goodwin	

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Voluntary Adoption Agencies 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 Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000, the Adoption Act 1976 as amended, the Adoption Agencies Regulations 1983 as amended, and the Voluntary Adoption Agencies and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Adoption Matters. The inspection findings relate to the National Minimum Standards for Voluntary Adoption Agencies published by the Secretary of State under section 23 of the Care Standards Act 2000.

The Adoption Agencies Regulations 1983 and the Voluntary Adoption Agencies and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003 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 Voluntary Adoption Agencies regarding registration, the imposition and variation of registration conditions and any enforcement action.

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
- Required actions on the part of the provider
- Recommended good practice
- Summary of the findings
- Report of the Lay Assessor (where relevant)
- Provider's response and proposed action plan to address findings

This report is a public document.

INSPECTION VISITS

Inspections will be undertaken in line with the regulatory framework with additional visits as required. This is in accordance with the provisions of the Care Standards Act 2000. The inspection methods used in the production of this report are set out in Part B. Pre-inspection information, and the manager's written self-evaluation of the service, have also been taken into account. The report represents the inspector's findings from the evidence found at the specified inspection dates.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

Adoption Matters, formerly known as Chester Diocesan Adoption Services is a well-established voluntary adoption agency with its main base in Chester and a sub office in Hale. The SSI last inspected the agency in 2001.

The agency offers a comprehensive range of adoption services. Adoption Matters had been affected by Cheshire County Council's and Halton's decision to withdraw from their Service Level Agreement with the agency for the provision of adoption placements for relinquished children.

The agency provides adoptive families on an inter-agency fee basis with authorities anywhere in the country.

Adoption Matters has a service level agreement with Cheshire County Council to provide independent support for Birth Parents. This area of work was identified as a clear strength of the service during the last inspection. The inspection in May and June 2004 confirmed that the agency's work with Birth Parents and Birth Families continues to be excellent.

Adoption Matters continues to maintain links with the Manx Churches Adoption and Welfare Society (MCAWS). Assessments completed by this agency are still processed through the Adoption Matters Adoption Panel.

The agency employs ten full time equivalent social workers, and two social work team managers, one full time and one part time. The Chief Executive is the professional head of the agency and nominated responsible individual. The Office Manager leads the agency's administrative team.

In the year May 2003 to May 2004 the agency had approved 54 adopters and had facilitated 46 placements.

The inspection found that Adoption Matters provides an excellent service to adopters and to Birth Parents and Birth Families.

Approved and Prospective Adopters made some of the following comments in their questionnaires about the service:

- "Our Adoption Matters Social Worker has "bent over backwards" to support and help us through the adoption process."
- "I found my social worker to be most helpful, friendly and professional"
- "We were recommended to use Adoption Matters, and are completely satisfied by all their professional advice and support."

Placing Social Workers were also extremely positive about the agency. They made the following comments:

- “Good communication”
- “Staff are all knowledgeable about child development, attachment and issues of identity.”
- “The Form F was written with a thorough knowledge of the prospective adopters. The assessment was done with warmth. I felt I was reading about a real couple.”

Birth Family Members made the following comments in their questionnaires;

- “...The support my social worker gave me was 100%”
- “My social worker was so supportive and continues to be.”

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

INSPECTOR'S SUMMARY

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

This was the first time that Adoption Matters Voluntary Adoption Agency had been inspected against Voluntary Adoption Agency Regulations 2003 and National Minimum Standards. The inspection confirmed that Adoption Matters offers an excellent service to children. The agency also offers an excellent service to prospective adopters and adopters, and birth parents and birth family members. At the time of the inspection Adoption Matters had an excellent recruitment strategy, which could be regarded as an example of national good practice.

The inspection also found that the service would benefit from investing resources into the following areas; developing a more transparent workload management scheme for staff, ensuring that all staff have annual appraisals and updating adoption panel procedures and practice to meet National Minimum Standards.

The inspection found that the service met all statutory requirements.

Statement of Purpose 1

One standard was assessed. All aspects of this standard were assessed as met.

Securing and Promoting Children's Welfare 2

One standard was assessed. This standard was assessed as being met.

The inspectors recognise the agency's investment in the recruitment of adopters and their constant evaluation of effective strategies to recruit sufficient adopters to meet the needs of children waiting both locally and nationally.

Prospective and Approved Adopters

Standard 3-6

All four standards were assessed as part of this inspection. Out of the four standards, two were assessed as met and two were assessed as exceeding National Minimum Standards.

The agency welcomes all applicants without prejudice. A number of approved and prospective adopters confirmed in case tracking interviews and through returned questionnaires that the agency provides clear written information about the preparation, assessment and approval process.

The inspectors were extremely impressed by the systems in place to ensure that adopters who could offer placements to children waiting were given priority. Adopters confirmed that they had benefited from a formal, thorough and comprehensive assessment, preparation and approval process. The inspectors saw a great deal of evidence throughout the inspection of the efforts of the social work staff and management to ensure that adopters were considered in terms of their capacity to look after children in a safe and responsible way. The quality of the Form F assessments was high. The agency as a whole gave the impression of being extremely child focused. The adoption agency does have a clear strategy for working with adopters. Adopters confirmed that the social worker had worked in partnership with them to prepare them for a child coming to live with them. The adoption agency had explained to adoptive parents the importance of keeping safe any information provided by birth families. The agency had also effectively promoted and sensitively supported ongoing direct contact between adopted children and their birth families.

Birth Parents and Birth Families Standards 7-9

All three standards were assessed as part of this inspection. One standard was assessed as nearly met; the other two standards were assessed as exceeding National Minimum Standards.

The agency provides independent support for birth parents on behalf of Cheshire County Council.

The quality of the work with birth parents was of an extremely high standard. Questionnaires and interviews confirmed that birth parents' views are sought and recorded.

The birth families that contributed to the inspection advised that they were treated with respect and sensitivity and could not praise the social workers delivering the service highly enough.

The inspectors commend the agency for the quality of the service and would advise that they advertise this work more widely to ensure that other individuals and services can access this good practice.

Adoption Panels and Agency Decisions Standards 10-13

All four standards were assessed as part of this inspection. Out of the four standards, two were assessed as met, two standards were assessed as being nearly met.

The agency has clear written policies and procedures about the role and function of the adoption panel. The policies and procedures had been amended in line with National Minimum Standards and Adoption Agency Regulations in May 2004.

The inspector considers that Adoption Matters should amend current policy and practice to allow adopters to attend the full adoption panel in accordance with National Minimum Standards.

The inspector recommends that the agency should ensure that each panel member has a formal induction to the panel, which is completed within 10 weeks of becoming a panel member.

Further to this the inspector recommends that panel members should have the opportunity to access appropriate training and skills development, including training in racial identity, self-esteem and attachment.

The inspection found that the adoption panel was efficiently organised and convened and that the agency decision was made without delay.

Fitness to Provide or Manage an Adoption Agency

Standards 14-15

Both standards were assessed as part of this inspection. Both standards were assessed as met.

The inspectors found that the managers of Adoption Matters exercise effective leadership of the staff and operation so the agency is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible child- care.

Personnel files demonstrated that the people carrying on the agency were suitable to run a voluntary business concerned with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Provision and Management of the Adoption Agency

Standards 16-18

All three standards were assessed as part of this inspection. The inspection found that one of the standards was met, and two were nearly met.

The adoption agency was managed effectively and efficiently at the time of the inspection. The managers ensured that the service was run in accordance with the Statement of Purpose.

The inspection found that the Board of Trustees monitored and controlled the activities of the adoption agency with great skill, and ensured that they were well informed about the quality performance of the agency.

Adoption Matters has access to a range of excellent medical and legal advice. The inspection found that although there are written protocols for the medical and legal advisors an additional protocol should be developed concerning the involvement of other specialist advisers in the agency. This is something that the service should address as part of the action plan.

Employment and Management of Staff

Standards 19-23

Five standards were assessed as part of this inspection. Out of the five standards, one was met, one exceeded National Minimum Standards and three were nearly met.

The inspectors consider that the skills and knowledge of workers within the agency exceeded National Minimum Standards. In addition to this the staff when interviewed advised that they were supported with their ongoing professional development. The inspection found that staff are managed and monitored by people who have the appropriate skills and qualifications. There are clear levels of responsibility and well-understood schemes of delegation within the organisation.

Adoption Matters has excellent structures and systems to ensure that assessments and approvals of prospective adopters are managed and implemented effectively from initial enquiry to post approval support.

The inspectors consider that although the managers of the agency have the necessary skills and experience to determine, prioritise and monitor workloads, there did not seem to be a well-understood workload management system that was implemented and understood by all staff.

The inspectors consider that the agency should introduce of a simple workload management system which complements the existing systems that the agency has in place to monitor timescales against National Adoption Standards.

The inspection found that the agency offered relevant good quality training opportunities for staff working in the agency. Each member of staff has an individual staff training record that details training completed. Outcomes from training are monitored and linked to staff training needs and service improvements.

Given the other work pressures in the team, not all staff had had their annual appraisal or an

updated Personal Development Plan (PDP). The agency should ensure that all staff have their appraisals, or joint reviews and PDP's updated to meet National Minimum Standards.

Complaints

Standard 24

One standard was assessed as part of this inspection. This standard was assessed as being met.

The service has a clear complaints policy and procedure, which was implemented in practice by all staff members.

Staff confirmed that they received training in how to deal with complaints and compliments to the service.

Adopters and prospective adopters also confirmed in case tracking and through returned questionnaires that they knew how and who to complain to about any aspect of the service.

Records

Standard 25-28

Four standards were assessed as part of this inspection. Two standards were assessed as nearly met, and two standards were assessed as met.

The agency has written policy and procedural instructions to cover arrangements for maintaining the confidentiality of adoption information and the adoption case records and their indexes.

The inspectors found evidence on some case files of supervisors' comments. The inspectors noted that case records had also been signed and dated by Team Managers. However the agency should develop a system to ensure that the decisions by supervisors are recorded on case files and are legible, clearly expressed, signed and dated as part of the action plan. There is a case recording policy and procedure and a procedure for storing confidential records that is compliant with National Minimum Standards and Adoption Agency Regulations.

The inspectors found some of the records for approved and prospective adopters difficult to access and recommend that the agency should review the structure, content and format of the files to include a simple file structure or index and a chronology of significant events at the front of each file.

The agency has excellent personnel files, which meet National Minimum Standards and are compliant with Adoption Agency Regulations.

The inspectors recommend that the service should develop individual Adoption Panel members' files to include all the headings laid out in Standard 28.2 of National Minimum Standards.

Fitness of Premises

Standard 29

One standard was assessed as part of this inspection. This standard was assessed as exceeding National Minimum Standards.

The inspection found that the premises were secure and fit for purpose. There are identifiable office premises for staff members in the main office in Chester.

The agency has recently purchased the Adoption Matters office building, and although the space is limited in the building they have developed home working to combat this.

The agency has adequate insurance for buildings and contents. The Information Technology system and server has separate insurance. Adoption Matters has developed a range of disaster recovery plans to protect paper and computer stored records. The investment and thought concerning the preservation of the agency's important information exceeds National

Minimum Standards and is commendable.

Financial Arrangements

Standard 30-31

Both standards were assessed as part of this inspection. Standard 30 and 31 were assessed as met.

The inspectors found that Adoption Matters was a financially viable organisation with sufficient resources to fulfil all of the agency's obligations

The Board of Trustees requires the Chief Executive to submit a forward-looking review covering a three-year period at the mid-point of each financial year. The review includes policy proposals with staffing, costing and funding implications.

The inspectors found that the agency has clearly written principles and standards concerning financial processes and as such meets National Minimum Standards.

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NA

If No please list below the findings of this inspection on any Requirements that have not been actioned

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Identified below are areas not addressed from the last inspection report which indicate a non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000, the Adoption Agencies Regulations 1983 and the Voluntary Adoption Agencies and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003.

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

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)

Providers and managers of Voluntary Adoption 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>Jayne Ivory</u>	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	<u>Pat Mckay</u>	Signature	_____
Adoption Manager	_____	Signature	_____
Date	_____		

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The Registered provider and manager are requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how requirements are to be addressed. This action plan is shown in Part D of this report.

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 Adoption Act 1976, the Adoption Agencies Regulations 1983, the Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003 or the National Minimum Standards for Voluntary Adoption Agencies. The Registered Persons are required to comply within the given time scales in order to comply with the Regulatory Requirements for Voluntary Adoption Agencies.

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement

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 Registered Persons.

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action

1	VA9	The agency should advertise and promote their practice with birth parents and birth families more widely.
2	VA10	The agency should amend current policy and practice to allow adopters to attend the full adoption panel in accordance with National Minimum Standards.
3	VA11	The agency should ensure that each panel member has a formal induction to the panel, which is completed within 10 weeks of becoming a panel member.
4	VA11	The agency should provide panel members should with the opportunity to access appropriate training and skills development, including training in racial identity, self -esteem and attachment.
5	VA18	The agency should develop written protocols, which are implemented for the involvement of specialist advisers in the agency.
6	VA20	The agency should introduce of a simple workload management system
7	VA23	The agency should ensure that all staff have their appraisals, or joint reviews and Personal Development Plans reviewed and updated.
8	VA25	The agency should develop a system to ensure that the decisions by supervisors are recorded on case files and are legible, clearly expressed, signed and dated as part of the action plan.
9	VA27	The agency should review the structure, content and format of the files to include a simple file structure or index and a chronology of significant events at the front of each file.
10	VA28	The service should develop individual Adoption Panel members' files to include all the headings laid out in Standard 28.2 of National Minimum Standards.

* Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix e.g. VA10 refers to Standard 10.

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS**

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

Placing authority survey	YES
Placing social worker survey	YES
Prospective adopter survey	YES
Approved adopter survey	YES
Birth parent / birth family member survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	
• Directors of Social Services	YES
• Specialist advisor (s)	YES
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	NO
• Interview with adopters and prospective adopters	YES
• Interview with birth parents	YES
• Interview with birth family members	YES
• Contact with supervising social workers	YES
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	YES
Interview with panel chair	YES
Observation of adoption panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records (personnel, adopter, child, complaints & allegations)	YES
Additional Inspection Questions	
Certificate of registration was displayed at the time of the inspection	YES
Certificate of registration accurately reflected the situation in the service at the time of inspection	YES
Total No. of staff employed (excluding managers)	27
Date of Inspection	24/05/04
Time of Inspection	09.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	110
Number of inspector days	9

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 on this occasion.

"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 written statement of the aims and objectives of the adoption agency and the adoption agency ensures that it meets those aims and objectives.

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.3(partial) and 1.5 – 1.7)

There is a clear written statement of the aims and objectives of the adoption agency, which describes accurately what facilities and services they provide.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Adoption Matters has a good Statement of Purpose that meets National Minimum Standards and Adoption Agency Regulations.

The agency's Statement of Purpose has been reviewed recently and has been amended after consultation with staff in the agency.

The Board of Trustees at their meeting in June 2004 had ratified the Statement of Purpose.

The agency is not required to have a guide for children, but had purchased and circulated the BAAF guide for adopted children.

The Chief Executive advised the inspectors that the agency was considering whether to develop their own Children's Guide. The inspectors recommend that this may be helpful to children and families who receive a post –adoption service from the agency.

**Has the Statement of Purpose been reviewed annually?
(Record N/A if the information is not available)**

YES

Has the Statement been formally approved by the trustees or management committee?

YES

Is there a children's guide to adoption?

NA

Does the children's guide contain all of the information required by Standard 1.4?

NA

Securing and promoting children's welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The needs and wishes, welfare and safety of the child are at the centre of the adoption process.

Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.3)

The adoption agency has written plans for the implementation and evaluation of effective strategies to recruit sufficient adopters to meet the needs of the range of children waiting for adoption locally.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

Adoption Matters was one of the first voluntary adoption agencies to develop a website about their service. The website is an excellent source of information about the services that the agency provides and about current developments and trends in adoption on a local and national level.

Adoption Matters had a recruitment campaign in 2003, which was commended by BAAF as an example of good practice.

The agency ensures that adopters are welcomed without prejudice and informs them at every available opportunity about the types of children who are waiting for adoption.

The inspectors recognise the agency's investment in the recruitment of adopters and their constant evaluation of effective strategies to recruit sufficient adopters to meet the needs of children waiting both locally and nationally.

The inspectors consider that Adoption Matters can be considered as an example of good practice in this area.

In the last 12 months, how many children were matched with families which reflected their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language?

46

What percentage of children matched with the agency's adopters does this represent?

98

%

How many sibling groups were matched in the last 12 months?

12

How many allegations of abuse or neglect were made, in the last 12 months, about adopters approved by the agency?

X

Prospective and approved adopters

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- **The adoption agency recruits and supports sufficient adopters from diverse backgrounds, who can offer children a stable and permanent home to achieve a successful and lasting placement.**

Standard 3. (3.1 – 3.6)

Plans for recruitment will specify that people who are interested in becoming adoptive parents will be welcomed without prejudice, will be given clear written information about the preparation, assessment and approval procedure and that they will be treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	
<p>The agency welcomes all applicants without prejudice. A number of approved and prospective adopters confirmed in case tracking interviews and through returned questionnaires that the agency provides clear written information about the preparation, assessment and approval process.</p> <p>The inspectors were extremely impressed by the systems in place to ensure that adopters who could offer placements to children waiting were given priority.</p> <p>The agency had an initial referral meeting to consider the extent of the offer a family could make for a child or children needing adoption. This system was well integrated into practice and ensured that social work resources were managed effectively. The system ensured that the service could prioritise applications for adopters who could offer placements for harder to place children at an early stage, shortly after an application had been made.</p> <p>Adopters confirmed that they were informed about the need for status checks and were well prepared and supported throughout the preparation and assessment process.</p> <p>The agency does refer people making initial enquiries to other agencies if they consider they would be unable to prioritise their application.</p> <p>The agency ensured that adopters had the opportunity to talk to other adopters in the preparation process.</p>	4	

Standard 4. (4.1 – 4.9)**Prospective adopters are involved in a formal, thorough and comprehensive assessment, preparation and approval process.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

Adopters confirmed that they had benefited from a formal, thorough and comprehensive assessment, preparation and approval process.

The preparation training takes place over five days and was considered to be extremely comprehensive by the majority of adopters. Some adopters informed the inspector that they would like the opportunity to attend further training events in order to understand some of the issues raised by the preparation training in further depth.

The effectiveness of training is evaluated after every session and is reviewed according to the feedback given.

The inspectors saw a great deal of evidence throughout the inspection of the efforts of the social work staff and management to ensure that adopters were considered in terms of their capacity to look after children in a safe and responsible way. The quality of the Form F assessments was high. The agency as a whole gave the impression of being extremely child focused.

This impression was supported by evidence from adopters in case tracking interviews and from the high number of returned questionnaires, all of which praised the skill of the staff in supporting prospective adopters to become parents.

Prospective adopters advised that the agency kept them informed and updated throughout.

Standard 5 (5.1 – 5.4)

Approved adopters are given clear written information about the matching, introduction and placement process, as well as any support to facilitate this they may need. This will include the role of the Adoption Register for England and Wales.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The agency strives to ensure that adopters are provided with accurate, up to date and full written information about the child in preparation for a match and placement.

One adopter said that in their opinion the agency had “bent over backwards to help them through their match and placement” despite some of the challenges of the child not having an allocated social worker from the placing authority.

The adoption agency does have a system in place to ensure that adoptive parents would inform the agency if the child died in childhood.

The inspectors saw a lot of evidence of family books being prepared to inform a child about their prospective placement.

Does the VAA have written procedures for the use of the Adoption Register?

YES

Standard 6 (6.1 – 6.7)

Adoptive parents are helped and supported to provide stable and permanent homes for the children placed with them.

Key findings and evidence**Standard met?**

4

The adoption agency does have a clear strategy for working with adopters. Adopters confirmed that the social worker had worked in partnership with them to prepare them for a child coming to live with them.

The adoption agency had explained to adoptive parents the importance of keeping safe any information provided by birth families. The agency had also effectively promoted and sensitively supported ongoing direct contact between adopted children and their birth families.

The agency had clear systems in place to support fragile placements and to learn from a disruption of an adoption placement.

The agency's disruption rates were considerably lower than the national average.

Number of adopter applications started in the last 12 months

30

Number of adopters approved in the last 12 months

30

Number of children matched with the agency's adopters in the last 12 months

46

Number of adopters approved but not matched

22

Number of adopters referred to the Adoption Register

48

How many placements disrupted, between placement and adoption, in the last 12 months?

2

Birth Parents and Birth Families

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- **Birth parents are entitled to services that recognise the lifelong implications of adoption. They will be treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process.**

Standard 7 (7.1 – 7.3 and 7.5)

The service to birth parents recognises the lifelong implications of adoption.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
<p>The agency provides independent support for birth parents on behalf of Cheshire County Council.</p> <p>The quality of the work with birth parents was of an extremely high standard. Questionnaires and interviews confirmed that birth parents' views are sought and recorded.</p> <p>The birth families that contributed to the inspection advised that they were treated with respect and sensitivity and could not praise the social workers delivering the service highly enough.</p> <p>The inspectors commend the agency for the quality of the service and would advise that they advertise this work more widely to ensure that other individuals and services can access this good practice.</p>		

Standard 8 (8.1 – 8.2)

Birth parents and birth families are enabled to contribute to the maintenance of their child's heritage.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
<p>The staff in the agency go to great lengths to ensure that clear and appropriate information is gathered from the birth parents and birth families before a child is adopted.</p> <p>This can involve going to visit the placing authority to gain more information and supporting adopters and birth families at a face to face meeting.</p> <p>The agency has successfully placed a number of older children, and sibling groups and their ability to support adopters to maintain the child's heritage was evidenced throughout the inspection.</p> <p>The agency ensures that adopters are aware of the importance of the child's heritage of which the life storybook plays an important part.</p>		

Standard 9 (9.1)

The adoption agency has a clear strategy for working with and supporting birth parents and birth families (including siblings) both before and after adoption. This includes providing information about local and national support groups and services and helping birth parents to fulfil agreed plans for contact.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The adoption agency does have a clear strategy for working with and supporting birth parents and birth families both before and after adoption. The strategy includes the scope and limitations of the service.

The agency also provides information about local and national support groups and services to birth families.

The inspectors recommend that the agency should advertise and promote their practice with birth parents and birth families more widely.

For example the web site could be developed to include more information about this aspect of their work.

Adoption Panels and Agency decisions

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Each adoption agency has an adoption panel which is organised efficiently and is effective in making quality and appropriate recommendations about children suitable for adoption, the suitability of prospective adopters and the matching of children and approved adopters.
- The adoption agency's decisions are made to promote and safeguard the welfare of children.

Standard 10 (10.1 – 10.3)

Adoption panels have clear written policies and procedures about the handling of their functions and ensure that they are implemented.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>The agency has clear written policies and procedures about the role and function of the adoption panel. The policies and procedures had been amended in line with National Minimum Standards and Adoption Agency Regulations in May 2004.</p> <p>The agency has a system of inviting prospective adopters to attend a pre-panel interview with three members of the adoption panel. The three panel members then write up comments about the applicants and share these with the full panel, which takes place the next day.</p> <p>Staff and panel members consider that this way of organising the panel process has worked well for the agency.</p> <p>The inspector considers that Adoption Matters should amend current policy and practice to allow adopters to attend the full adoption panel in accordance with National Minimum Standards.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>2</p>

Standard 11 (11.1 – 11.4)

The adoption agency shall ensure that each adoption panel is properly constituted, that panel members have suitable qualities and experience to be a panel member and have regular training to allow them to keep up to date with changes in legislation, guidance and practice. Where the adoption agency is involved in inter-country adoption, each member of the panel understands the implications of being adopted from overseas and seeks advice, when necessary, on the laws and eligibility criteria for the overseas country.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

The adoption panel is properly constituted and is made up of panel members who have a great deal of personal and professional knowledge about adoption. The recently appointed medical advisor had had the opportunity to observe panel before starting.

The inspector recommends that the agency should ensure that each panel member has a formal induction to the panel, which is completed within 10 weeks of becoming a panel member.

Further to this the inspector recommends that panel members should have the opportunity to access appropriate training and skills development, including training in racial identity, self-esteem and attachment.

Does the adoption panel membership meet all of the statutory requirements?

YES

Standard 12 (12.1 – 12.3)

Adoption panels are efficiently organised and conducted and are convened regularly to avoid delays in the consideration of prospective adopters and matching children and adopters.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The inspection found that all aspects of this standard were met. Panel members receive the business agenda for the next panel two weeks in advance of the meeting.

Adoption Matters Panel meets once every month.

The panel has some flexibility in allowing information to be presented up to a week before panel meets in exceptional circumstances.

The panel administrator ensures that each item on the agenda is given an allotted time.

Dates for panel meetings are set a year in advance. The draft minutes of the meeting are forwarded to the chairperson by email. Panel minutes are completed within seven days.

Agreed panel minutes go out to all panel members with the agenda and business for the next panel. The inspector observed that panel always consider the previous meetings minutes as the first item on the agenda.

The agency have a panel minute book which records the item and the recommendation and which is then signed by the chairperson.

Standard 13 (13.1 – 13.3)

The adoption agency's decision is made without delay after taking into account the recommendation of the adoption panel and promotes and safeguards the welfare of the child.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The chairperson of the panel and the agency decision maker meet straight after panel, or shortly afterwards to go through panel's recommendations. The agency decision is recorded in the panel minute book and a letter is sent to the adopters confirming their approval status. The inspection found that the agency decision was made without delay and that the agency decision maker was mindful of ensuring that they had all the necessary information to enable the Chief Executive to promote and safeguard the welfare of the child. The agency decision maker is in regular attendance at the adoption panel.

Fitness to provide or manage an adoption agency

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The adoption agency 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 14 (14.1 – 14.6)

The people involved in carrying on and managing the adoption agency:

- possess the necessary knowledge and experience of child care and adoption law and practice and
- have management skills and financial expertise to manage the work efficiently and effectively and
- ensure that it is run on a sound financial basis and in a professional manner.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The managers of the agency are experienced and skilled in child- care and adoption law and practice.

The Chief Executive provides strategic and operational management support to the staff in the agency. The Chief Executive is studying for his NVQ Level 5. He is the line manager for the two team managers who also have management qualifications.

The managers exercise effective leadership of the staff and operation so the agency is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible child- care.

All the managers have a clear job description, which sets out their duties, responsibilities and appropriate levels of delegation.

Does the manager have Management NVQ4 or equivalent?

YES

Does the manager have at least 2 years experience of working in a childcare setting in last 5 years?

YES

Standard 15 (15.1 – 15.4)

Any person carrying on or managing the adoption agency are suitable people to run a voluntary organisation or business concerned with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

Personnel files demonstrated that the people carrying on the agency were suitable to run a voluntary business concerned with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Telephone enquires are made to follow up written references.

All the managers had a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau disclosure, and the agency had set up a system to ensure that Criminal Records Bureau Checks are renewed every three years in accordance with Adoption Agency Regulations and National Minimum Standards.

The inspector examining the personnel files advised that she had never seen such comprehensive and well set out records.

This standard also relates to standard 19 and 28.

Provision and management of the adoption agency

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The adoption agency is organised and managed efficiently, delivering a good quality service and avoiding confusion and conflicts of role.

Standard 16 (16.1 – 16.7)

The adoption agency is managed effectively and efficiently.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The adoption agency was managed effectively and efficiently at the time of the inspection. The managers ensured that the service was run in accordance with the Statement of Purpose.

Roles were clearly defined and communication within the service was good. All staff within Adoption Matters understood whom they are accountable to. Discussion with staff confirmed this. The Team Managers deputise for one another and co-ordinate leave arrangements accordingly. The Chief Executive provides additional support and guidance for the team managers and social work staff.

There is regular supervision of staff at all levels of the service.

Anti-discriminatory practice is addressed and monitored in several ways, including in the Statement of Purpose, supervision and training.

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

X

Death of a child placed for adoption by the agency.

X

Referral to Secretary of State of a person working for the agency. (s2(1) of Protection of Children Act 1999)

X

Serious illness or accident of a child.

X

Serious complaint about an approved prospective adopter (no child placed).

X

Serious complaint about an approved prospective adopter (child placed by agency).

X

Serious complaint about an approved prospective adopter (child placed by another agency).

X

Instigation of child protection enquiry involving a child placed by the agency.

X

Standard 17 (17.1 – 17.3)

There are clear written procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the adoption agency and ensuring quality performance.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

The Bishop of Chester is the President of Adoption Matters and he appoints the Chair of the Board of Management for a three-year period.

At the time of the inspection the current Chairperson was reaching the end of her period in office and the agency were beginning the process of recruiting to the post. The Chief Executive and current Chairperson were advised that a formal job description, application form and interview might assist the agency to appoint a Chairperson with sufficient knowledge and experience.

The Bishop's Council appoints a majority of the Board's members, the remainder can be appointed by invitation of the members of the Board and by election of the membership. A member of the Bishop's staff acts vicariously for the Bishop as a non-voting member of the Board, thereby ensuring that the Bishop and his senior colleagues can be kept in close touch with the management of Adoption Matters.

Members of the Board act as Directors of the Limited Company and as Trustees of the Registered Charity as well as the Management Committee. The Chief Executive attends the Meeting of the Board of Trustees and is responsible for providing them with regular reports on the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency. The current Chairperson demonstrated considerable knowledge of the organisation and its processes and had been keen to develop stronger links with the social work staff.

The inspection found that the Board of Trustees monitored and controlled the activities of the adoption agency with great skill, and ensured that they were well informed about the quality performance of the agency.

How frequently does the executive side of the council receive written reports on the work of the VAA?

Monthly?

Quarterly?

YES

Less than Quarterly?

Standard 18 (18.1 – 18.5)

The adoption agency has access to specialist advisers and services appropriate to its needs.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Adoption Matters has access to a range of excellent medical and legal advice. The newly appointed medical advisor attends the Cheshire Medical Advisors Group and will attend regional and national groups when they have the opportunity to become more established. The medical advisor comes into the agency to offer advice to staff in between panel meetings. All staff interviewed confirmed that the support given was of a high standard. The agency also benefits from excellent legal advice. The legal advisor is a member of BAAF National Legal Advisors Group and is an expert in family law and adoption issues. Staff confirmed that she offers excellent and accessible responses to any issues brought to her attention. Adoption Matters also has access to other excellent specialist advice from a child and family psychiatrist. The inspection found that there were written protocols for the medical and legal advisors, but that the agency needed to develop a protocol for the involvement of other specialist advisers in the agency.

Employment and management of staff

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The people who work in the adoption agency 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 waiting to be adopted or who have been adopted. The number of staff and their range of qualifications and experience are sufficient to achieve the purposes and functions of the adoption agency.

Standard 19 (19.1 – 19.14)

Anyone working in or for the adoption agency are suitable to work with children and young people and to safeguard and promote their welfare.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

As has already been stated the personnel files demonstrated that the people carrying on the agency were suitable to work with children and young people.

Telephone enquires are made to follow up written references.

All staff members had a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau disclosure, and the agency had set up a system to ensure that Criminal Records Bureau Checks were renewed every three years in accordance with Adoption Agency Regulations and National Minimum Standards.

The inspector examining the personnel files advised that she had never seen such comprehensive and well set out records.

Staff working in the agency were extremely well qualified, with extensive skills and evident knowledge of adoption work.

The inspectors consider that the skills and knowledge of workers within the agency exceeded National Minimum Standards. In addition to this the staff when interviewed advised that they were supported with their ongoing professional development.

The inspectors were impressed by the agency's commitment to ongoing professional development.

Do all of the agency's social workers have DipSW or equivalent?

YES

What % of the agency's social workers have a PQ award?

68

%

Standard 20 (20.1 – 20.12)

Staff are organised and managed in a way which delivers an efficient and effective service.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The inspection found that staff are managed and monitored by people who have the appropriate skills and qualifications. There are clear levels of responsibility and well-understood schemes of delegation within the organisation.

Adoption Matters has excellent structures and systems to ensure that assessments and approvals of prospective adopters are managed and implemented effectively from initial enquiry to post approval support.

The inspectors were informed that staff felt they were provided with good professional supervision, regular team meetings and opportunities to seek consultation with peers and other professional advisers and a regular and frequent basis.

Some staff were unable to speak with any confidence about a workload management system. The inspectors consider that, although the managers of the agency have the necessary skills and experience to determine, prioritise and monitor workloads, there did not seem to be a well-understood workload management system that was implemented and understood by all staff.

The inspectors consider that the agency should introduce a simple workload management system which complements the existing systems that the agency has in place to monitor timescales against National Adoption Standards.

The inspectors found that the agency is well supported by administrative staff and that there is sufficient office equipment and infrastructure to enable staff to carry out their duties effectively.

The inspectors were provided with evidence that all staff have job descriptions and condition of service, which comply with the GSCC.

Staff confirmed in interviews that they had seen and been consulted about the Statement of Purpose and other essential policies and procedures, including health and safety and an equal opportunities policy.

Standard 21 (21.1 – 21.4) There is an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff to meet the needs of the adoption agency and they are appropriately supported and assisted in providing a service.			
Key Findings and Evidence		Standard met?	3
<p>The inspection found that there is an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff to meet the needs of the adoption agency. Social workers and Team Managers advised that they were appropriately supported and assisted in providing a service.</p> <p>The agency had introduced home working and other flexible working conditions to encourage the retention of salaried staff.</p>			
Total number of social work staff of the agency	14	Number of staff who have left the agency in the past 12 months	2
Number of social work posts vacant	1		

Standard 22 (22.1 – 22.3) The adoption agency is a fair and competent employer, with sound employment practices and good support for its staff.			
Key Findings and Evidence		Standard met?	3
<p>Adoption Matters has sound employment practices. Staff had been given information on the whistle blowing policy, and were aware of how to implement the policy if required.</p> <p>The office manager provided evidence of insurance cover, which demonstrated that the service has adequate public liability and professional indemnity insurance.</p> <p>In addition to this a member of the Board of Trustees attends staff meetings to consult with the staff about any matter.</p>			

Standard 23 (23.1 – 23.6)		
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?	2
<p>The inspection found that the agency offered relevant good quality training opportunities for staff working in the agency. Each member of staff has an individual staff training record that details training completed. Outcomes from training are monitored and linked to staff training needs and service improvements.</p> <p>There was a clear plan to ensure that the agency exceeds National Minimum Standards concerning the need for childcare social work staff to have the ACCA by April 2006. All non-social work staff had been offered NVQ training.</p> <p>At the time of the inspection the agency had developed a draft induction pack linked to TOPSS induction standards, which was being piloted.</p> <p>Given the other work pressures in the team, not all staff had had their annual appraisal or an updated Personal Development Plan (PDP). The agency should ensure that all staff have their appraisals, or joint reviews and PDP's on an annual basis to meet National Minimum Standards.</p>		

Standard 24 (24.1 – 24.9)		
Complaints are resolved quickly and handled in a sensitive, thorough and non-biased manner.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The service has a clear complaints policy and procedure, which was implemented in practice by all staff members.</p> <p>Staff confirmed that they received training in how to deal with complaints and compliments to the service.</p> <p>Adopters and prospective adopters also confirmed in case tracking and through returned questionnaires that they knew how and who to complain to about any aspect of the service. The complaints procedure was compliant with all aspects of National Minimum Standards and Local Authority Adoption Service Regulations 2003.</p> <p>The one complaint that the service had received in the last year was resolved quickly and handled in a sensitive, thorough and non-biased manner. It should perhaps be noted that the large numbers of compliments and thank you letters to be found in the compliments file overshadowed the single complaint in the complaints file.</p>		
Number of complaints made by, or on behalf of a child, in the last year?		1
Number of the above complaints which were substantiated		1

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- All appropriate records are maintained securely, kept and are accessible when required.

Standard 25 (25.1 – 25.5)

The adoption agency ensures comprehensive and accurate case records are maintained for each child, prospective and approved adopter with whom the agency has worked.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
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The agency has written policy and procedural instructions to cover arrangements for maintaining the confidentiality of adoption information and the adoption case records and their indexes.

The agency had employed an information technology manager and invested resources into ensuring that all computerised records were backed up every night. Computerised records were protected by a firewall.

Written records were stored securely in fire -proof cabinets.

The inspectors found evidence on all prospective, and approved adopters' files seen as part of this inspection that status checks and references with their outcomes had been obtained for adults aged 18 or over living in a household.

The inspectors found evidence on some case files of supervisors' comments. The inspectors noted that case records had also been signed and dated by Team Managers. However the agency should develop a system to ensure that the decisions by supervisors are recorded on case files and are legible, clearly expressed, signed and dated as part of the action plan.

Standard 26 (26.1 – 26.2)

The adoption agency provides all relevant information from its case files, in a timely way, to other adoption agencies and local authorities with whom it is working to effect the placement of a child.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The adoption service provides relevant information to other adoption agencies at the earliest, appropriate opportunity. Adoption Matters has a clear and well-understood system for authorising access to adoption case records and their indexes and for authorising disclosure of adoption information in line with Voluntary Adoption Agency Regulations 1983 (2003) and National Minimum Standards.

Standard 27 (27.1 – 27.6)

There is a written policy on case recording which establishes the purpose, format, confidentiality and contents of files, including secure storage and access to case files in line with regulations.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The inspection found that the agency keeps separate records for all staff employed by the agency, complaints and allegations.

There is a case recording policy and procedure and a procedure for storing confidential records that is compliant with National Minimum Standards and Adoption Agency Regulations.

The inspectors found some of the records for approved and prospective adopters difficult to access and recommend that the agency should review the structure, content and format of the files to include a simple file structure or index and a chronology of significant events at the front of each file.

Standard 28 (28.1 – 28.2)

Up-to-date, comprehensive personnel files are maintained for each member of staff and member of the adoption panel.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

As has already been stated the agency has excellent personnel files which meet National Minimum Standards and are compliant with Adoption Agency Regulations.

The inspectors recommend that the service should develop individual Adoption Panel members' files to include all the headings laid out in Standard 28.2 of National Minimum Standards.

Fitness of Premises

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- The premises used by the adoption agency are suitable for the purpose.

Standard 29 (29.1 – 29.5)

Premises used by the adoption agency are appropriate for the purpose.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

The inspection found that the premises were secure and fit for purpose. There are identifiable office premises for staff members in the main office in Chester. The agency has recently purchased the Adoption Matters office building, and although the space is limited in the building they have developed home working to combat this. The agency has adequate insurance for buildings and contents. The Information Technology system and server has separate insurance. Adoption Matters has developed a range of disaster recovery plans to protect paper and computer stored records. The investment and thought concerning the preservation of the agency's important information exceeds National Minimum Standards and is commendable.

Financial Requirements

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- **The Voluntary Adoption Agency is non-profit making and is financially viable.**

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.2)

The adoption 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 inspectors found that Adoption Matters was a financially viable organisation with sufficient resources to fulfil all of the agency's obligations.

The Board of Trustees requires the Chief Executive to submit a forward looking review covering a three year period at the mid-point of each financial year. The review includes policy proposals with staffing, costing and funding implications.

In addition to this it is an expectation that the Chief Executive will submit draft plans and an annual budget, in good time to be agreed for implementation in each new financial year.

It is expected that the Chief Executive consult with the Team Managers in the service and others as appropriate when plans and budgets are drafted.

When agreed, plans set within the annual budget define the limits of spending for the year and any additional expenditure will have to be have been agreed by the Board after detailed proposals have been submitted. The Board requires that the Chief Executive will ensure that books and accounts are kept in accordance with Company and other statutory requirements. They are also required to ensure that proper controls and security procedures are implemented and adhered to in the handling of cash, payment of bills and management of investment and bank accounts. In the event of any loss or suspected fraud or financial mismanagement, the Board require that they be informed immediately. Where it is likely that a criminal offence has been committed, the police should be notified.

The Chief Executive will be responsible for the prompt and efficient payment of monthly salaries and will ensure that the agency's obligations to the Revenue and Social Security departments are met. They have a responsibility to notify the Board of any changes in legislation or financial regulations, which may arise and advise on the consequences.

Standard 31 (31.1 – 31.5)

The financial processes/systems are properly operated and maintained in accordance with sound and appropriate accounting standards and practice.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The organisation complies with the Charities Act 1993, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 1995 and 2000 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities – Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2000) and Part VII of the Companies Act 1985.

The Finance Sub-Committee is responsible for ensuring that the financial processes and systems are properly operated and maintained.

The Board requires that the Chief Executive will ensure that books and accounts are kept in accordance with Company and other statutory requirements. They are also required to ensure that proper controls and security procedures are implemented and adhered to in the handling of cash, payment of bills and management of investment and bank accounts.

The Chief Executive Reports to the Finance Sub-Committee on a regular and frequent basis. The inspectors found that the agency has clearly written principles and standards concerning financial processes and as such meets National Minimum Standards.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____
Date _____

D.1 Registered Person'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 2nd April 2004 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

 YES

Comments were received from the provider

 YES

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

 YES

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

Note:

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

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 10TH September 2004 , which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

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

Action plan was required

 NO

Action plan was received at the point of publication

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

Public reports

It should be noted that all CSCI inspection reports are public documents.

D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

Registered Person's statement of agreement/comments: Please complete the relevant section that applies.

D.3.1 I _____ of Adoption Matters 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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