



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

Integrated Services Programme

Central Office

Church Street

Sittingbourne

Kent

ME10 3EG

16th February 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

Local Authority Fostering Service?

NO

Name of Authority

Address

Local Authority Manager

Tel No:

Address

Fax No:

Email Address

Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)

YES

Name of Agency

Integrated Services Programme

Tel No

01795 428097

Address

Central Office, Church Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10
3EG

Fax No

Email Address

info@ispcentral.co.uk

Registered Number of IFA

H060000597

Name of Registered Provider

Integrated Services Programme

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Ms Suzanne Fallon

Date of first registration

30th October 2003

Date of latest registration certificate

30th October 2003

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

27/02/04

Date of Inspection Visit		16th February 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Fiona Holdaway	085810
Name of Inspector	2	Linda Ribbands	
Name of Inspector	3	Robert Pettiford	
Name of Inspector	4		
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.		N/A	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		N/A	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection			

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Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection

Statutory Requirements from this Inspection

Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection

Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings

(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

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

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

Part D: Provider's Response

D.1. Provider's comments

D.2. Action Plan

D.3. Provider's agreement

INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

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

This document summarises the inspection findings of the NCSC in respect of Integrated Services Programme. The inspection findings relate to the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services published by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000, for independent and local authority fostering services respectively.

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

The report will show the following:

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

This report is a public document.

INSPECTION VISITS

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

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

Integrated Services Programme (ISP) aims to provide high quality childcare (in family settings), education and therapy for children and young people whose development has been impaired by abuse, trauma and deprivation. ISP further aims to provide:

- A community of adults who demonstrate, through their working relationships with one another, a model of integration;
- A place where children and young people who are emotionally fragmented, can achieve personal integration;
- Opportunities for children to experience stable family environments by recruiting, training and developing high quality Foster Carers;
- A commitment to carry out research and to campaign to influence social policy, childcare practice and the wider environment for children.

In order to achieve their aims ISP provides:

- Liaison between local authority clients, children, families, foster families, therapists and school;
- Foster families;
- Therapies for adults and children;
- Speech and Language Therapy;
- Education Psychology;
- Respite Care;
- Transport and Escort;
- Contact supervision;
- Education and training for adults and children;
- Help for young people to experience independent living;
- Family placements for mothers and their babies;
- Career and training advice and support for young people;
- Administration;
- Opportunities for growth, research and innovation.

(Taken from ISP's Statement of Purpose – Feb '03)

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 a satisfactory and positive inspection against the National Minimum Standards. Of the 32 standards, 27 were met with 10 rated as commendable, 3 were not met with minor shortfalls and 2 did not apply. A summary of the inspection findings is as follows:

Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)

This Standard was assessed and not met with minor shortfalls.

ISP presented a detailed and well-presented Statement of Purpose which fulfilled the regulatory requirements. The Childrens Guide that is included as part of the Statement of Purpose (standard1.5) was comprehensive and attractively presented although the Inspectors recommended that further consideration be given to the format of the guide to ensure that it is suitable for all children in the service and different formats are available to meet the needs of different groups of children.

Fitness to provide or manage a fostering service (Standards 2-3)

Both standards were met.

It was evident from the documentation provided and the positive outcome of the Managers Fit Person Interview that the Provider and Manager have the necessary qualifications and experience to meet the Standards.

It was evident from feedback provided in questionnaires from carers and placing social workers that they felt the organisation was professionally run, well managed and appropriately staffed and resourced.

Management of the fostering service (Standards 4-5)

Both standards were met.

Regular meetings of staff and carers and staff supervisions are in place. Good monitoring practice includes random sampling by questionnaire of foster carers asking for their views on the service and how its performance impacts on carers and children and inviting suggestions for improvement.

Securing and promoting welfare (Standards 6-14)

All 9 standards were met. 6 Standards were rated commendable.

The overwhelming majority of responses (67) from the questionnaires illustrated that the Social Workers or Placing Officers thought that ISP did a good job in matching children or young people with appropriate foster carers.

Young People's Questionnaire responses (28) indicated that the children and young people felt safe and supported in their foster homes and that they knew how and to whom to make a complaint if they wished.

It was evident that the importance of contact is discussed and promoted and that carers felt

well supported and advised by ISP social workers in this area.

An area of good practice has been developed in response to a need identified for ensuring that the children's opinions of respite care placements are sought. The agency has recently introduced a quick response questionnaire for obtaining the views of the child on any respite care that they receive, a sample of responses was provided for the inspection

The establishment of the Care Leavers Forum in addition to ISP's school groups is also identified as an area of good practice in seeking the views of looked after children in the service.

It was evident from the documentation provided by ISP and from comments by carers and the young people in the questionnaires that education is a primary focus of the agency. Whilst the majority of the young people attend their own local mainstream schools ISP has established its own schools to meet the needs of those children in their service that are unable to access mainstream schools. ISP also provides Individual Education Programmes for those pupils who are not attending school as agreed with the Local Authority and Social Services Department.

An example of excellent practice in supporting foster carers in promoting educational achievement is given. In December 2003 ISP's centre in Rainham held a Ceremony of Achievement (educational and non-educational) for all foster children in mainstream school.

Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers (Standards 15-23)

8 of the standards were met, standard 15 was not met with minor shortfalls, standards 18 & 19 were rated as commendable.

It was evident from the documentation provided that ISP has clear written recruitment and selection procedures. The majority of information required such as references, police checks, certificates of qualifications and medical information was found in place in the foster carers' files and staff files sampled. However there were some gaps in the records identified. Reference to the staffing list provided evidence that a range of staff who are suitably qualified are employed by the agency in sufficient numbers to offer the services as stated in the agencies Statement of Purpose.

ISP has its own Training Manager and a copy of ISP's training brochure for staff and foster carers was referred to, an extensive range of training is offered at all levels. The responses made in the foster carers questionnaires indicated that training is provided to meet individual training needs as well as those of groups and commented very favourably about the quality, frequency and breadth of training offered by the organisation. The manager stated that from the point of approval competencies are assessed and any shortfalls highlighted, each foster carer has a development plan that are reviewed regularly in supervision and at the Annual Reviews. The manager stated that a high number of carers are working towards NVQ's.

Foster carers files evidenced that the agency has a clear strategy for supporting them which includes those items in standard 21.2 such as supervision, support groups, information and advice, out of hours support and respite care. The foster carers indicated how much they appreciated the quality of support offered to them by ISP and the regular contact that they had with their supervising social worker. In addition members of staff and foster carers can access an independent counselling service in confidence, up to seven sessions are provided for free.

Records (Standards 24-25)

Standard 24 was met, standard 25 was not met with minor shortfalls in relation to record keeping as identified also in standard 15 (see above).

A sample of children's case records was seen, these were comprehensive containing all the relevant information and documents. An ISP placement Care Plan has been developed that are to be introduced for each child but the plans whilst simplified need to be explanatory and in language easily understood by children / young people.

Fitness of premises to be used as fostering service (Standards 26)

This standard was met.

The inspectors found that the premises were decorated and furnished to a high standard and children's work was on display in all areas. The atmosphere was warm, friendly and welcoming.

Financial Requirements (Standards 27-29)

All Standards were met, standard 29 is rated as 4 (commendable).

Examination of ISP's Operating Budget for 2003/2004 and other information provided indicated that both standards were met.

In addition to the carers allowance and agreed expenses ISP provides insurance to all carers for the young people in their care, this is identified as an area of good practice and therefore a rating of 4 has been awarded to standard 29.

Fostering Panels (Standards 30)

This standard was met.

From the information provided it was evident that ISP has clear policies and procedures and an examination of relevant documentation, including the Panel Minutes and discussions with the manager and carers indicated that this Standard was met.

Short-term breaks (Standards 31)

This standard does not apply.

Family and friends as carers (Standards 32)

This standard does not apply.

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:

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NA

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

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

COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)

(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)

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

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector

Fiona Holdaway

Signature



Second Inspector

Signature

Locality Manager

Alison Spreadbridge

Signature



Date

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

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

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement	
1	20.3 (d) Schedule 1	15 25	<p>Fitness of workers</p> <p>20. -(3) For the purposes of paragraph (1), a person is not fit to work for the purposes of a fostering service unless -</p> <p>d) full and satisfactory information is available in relation to him in respect of the following matters -</p> <p>(i) except where paragraph (4) applies, each of the matters specified in paragraphs 1 to 6 of Schedule 1;</p> <p>(ii) where paragraph (4) applies, each of the matters specified in paragraphs 1 and 3 to 7 of Schedule 1.</p> <p>Schedule 1 - Information required in respect of persons seeking to carry on, manage or work for the purposes of a fostering service</p> <p>1. Positive proof of identity including a recent photograph.</p> <p>5. Documentary evidence of any relevant qualification.</p> <p>The records required for staff are to be complete.</p>	16/07/04

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	1	The Childrens Guide be developed to ensure that it is suitable for all children in the service and different formats are available to meet the needs of different groups of children.
2	24	That the style and language of the care plan is developed to ensure that it is easily understood by the young people.

* 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	2
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	YES
• Child protection officer	YES
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	NO
• Interview with foster carers	NO
• Interview with agency staff	YES
• Contact with parents	NO
• Contact with supervising social workers	NO
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	NO
Group discussion with staff	YES
Interview with panel chair	NO
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	NO
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	NO
Date of Inspection	16/02/04
Time of Inspection	10.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	7

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

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

ISP presented a detailed and well-presented Statement of Purpose which fulfilled the regulatory requirements. The Childrens Guide that is included as part of the Statement of Purpose (standard1.5) was comprehensive and attractively presented although the Inspectors recommended that further consideration be given to the format of the guide to ensure that it is suitable for all children in the service and different formats are available to meet the needs of different groups of children.

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
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It was evident from the documentation provided and the positive outcome of the Managers Fit Person Interview that the Provider and Manager have the necessary qualifications and experience to meet the Standards.

The Inspectors found the manager to be open, positive and clear about the service provided and it was evident that a clear sense of leadership and direction is given.

It was evident from feedback provided in questionnaires from foster carers and placing social workers that they felt the organisation was professionally run, well managed and appropriately staffed and resourced.

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
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CRB (Criminal Record Bureau) checks have been undertaken for the Registered Provider and Manager and references have been obtained as per the standards.

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

Regular meetings of staff and carers and staff supervisions are in place. Good monitoring practice includes random sampling by questionnaire of foster carers asking for their views on the service and how its performance impacts on carers and children and inviting suggestions for improvement.

Staff files sampled contained job descriptions and questionnaires from carers indicated that there are clear lines of communication.

From the information provided by the agency and questionnaires from social workers it was evident that the financial information required to meet standard 4.4 is provided to the relevant parties.

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

2

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.

7

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

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

22

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

9

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

7

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

0

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

0

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)

The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

From the documentation provided and the Fit Person Interview conducted during the inspection it was evident that the manager has a clear job description and responsibilities and that the level of delegation and the lines of accountability are also clear.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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As part of the selection process the quality of the accommodation for use as a foster home is assessed. Foster carers' files evidenced that foster homes were inspected annually as part of the carers' Annual Review and the manager stated that unannounced visits are undertaken once a year by the centre managers. Questionnaires from foster carers illustrated that the agency provides regular support and training in matters relating to Health & Safety, Child Protection, First Aid as well as other training.

The manager stated that an individual Risk Assessment and Behaviour Management Plan has recently been developed and will be used in conjunction with the agencies Individual Placement Plan.

The responses made in the Young People's Questionnaires (28 responses) indicated that the overwhelming majority of young people were satisfied with their placements, were very appreciative of the quality of support and care they received from their carers and they felt safe.

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

The fostering service ensures that children and young people, and their families, are provided with foster care services which value diversity and promote equality.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The agencies policies demonstrate a commitment to value diversity and support and promote equal opportunities. ISP has developed a considerable amount of expertise in meeting the health and educational needs of children seeking asylum as well as their religious, cultural, racial and linguistic needs. However the manager stated that the agency has experienced difficulties in recruiting carers from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds in spite of targeted attempts to do so.

A working group has recently been set up to review how the agency can best support children in the service with disabilities. One foster carers home had an adapted shower installed to accommodate a child with a physical disability.

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?	4
<p>The overwhelming majority of responses (67) from the questionnaires illustrated that the Social Workers or Placing Officers thought that ISP did a good job in matching children or young people with appropriate foster carers.</p> <p>ISP has a Referral Team experienced in social work or foster care that undertakes the matching of children / young people with foster carers. On those occasions where there is only limited information the team actively pursue local authorities to obtain further information as required.</p>		

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
<p>Foster carers files and questionnaires illustrated that they have attended training in Child Protection and Safe Care guidelines. An examination of the relevant documentation showed that clear guidelines were issued to all carers about Child Protection issues, including bullying, acceptable and non -acceptable forms of punishment and the procedures to be used if a foster child was missing from home.</p> <p>Questionnaire responses from carers demonstrated that carers were provided with full information about the foster child prior to placement.</p> <p>The manager stated that all matters reported under Schedules 7 and 8 will be reviewed and analysed every three months.</p> <p>Young People's Questionnaire responses (28) indicated that the overwhelming majority of children and young people felt safe and supported in their foster homes and that they knew how and to whom to make a complaint if they wished.</p>		
Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:	X	%

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)

The fostering service makes sure that each child or young person in foster care is encouraged to maintain and develop family contacts and friendships as set out in her/his care plan and/or foster placement agreement.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

4

In the information provided in the pre-inspection questionnaire the manager stated that contact details are requested at the point of referral and this is then discussed and agreed at the Initial Placement Meeting. From carers questionnaire responses it was evident that the importance of contact is discussed and promoted and that carers felt well supported and advised by ISP social workers in this area.

Supervised contact can be arranged at ISP offices and supervisors are consistent. Transport is provided where this is needed for children / young people to visit their families. Contact details were well documented in the child's files.

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

The overwhelming majority of children / young people indicated in their responses in the Young People's Questionnaires (28 responses) that their views and opinions are sought by their carers about all aspects of everyday life, such as what to eat, how to spend leisure time, school activities, etc And as previously indicated they knew how and to whom to make a complaint if they wished.

An area of good practice has been developed in response to a need identified for ensuring that the children's opinions of respite care placements are sought. The agency has recently introduced a quick response questionnaire for obtaining the views of the child on any respite care that they receive, a sample of responses was provided for the inspection.

In the information provided in the pre-inspection questionnaire the manager stated that all young people are encouraged to attend their review meetings and are supported by their ISP social worker to advocate for themselves. Their views on their placement are sought through the review process.

The establishment of the Care Leavers Forum in addition to ISPs school groups is also identified as an area of good practice in seeking the views of looked after children in the service. Furthermore the manager stated that ISP is intending to work with the young people to formulate a children's council.

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?**

4

Foster carers are required to register their foster children with a local GP and dentist and records are maintained about the health care of each child. From the children's files sampled it was evident that ISP endeavoured to ensure that full health information was obtained about a child prior to placement. Carers' questionnaire responses (28) stated that they were aware of the health and medical needs of foster children placed with them.

A number of the responses from the Young Persons Questionnaires indicated that their carers encouraged healthy diets and activities.

Children's files sampled evidenced medical consent arrangements were confirmed at the time of placement.

An area of good practice is identified in the agencies provision of a dedicated Health Co-ordinator whose responsibility is to provide health information, promotion and education throughout the agency.

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?**

4

It was evident from the documentation provided by ISP and from comments by carers and the young people that education is a primary focus of the agency. Whilst the majority of the young people attend their own local mainstream schools ISP has established its own schools to meet the needs of those children in their service that are unable to access mainstream schools. ISP also provides Individual Education Programmes for those pupils who are not attending school as agreed with the Local Authority and Social Services Department.

An example of excellent practice in supporting foster carers in promoting educational achievement is given. In December 2003 ISP's centre in Rainham held a Ceremony of Achievement (educational and non-educational) for all foster children in mainstream school, the manager stated that this was "a well attended and enthusiastic celebration of achievements by children" and there are plans to hold similar events this year the aim being for each centre to hold at least one ceremony annually.

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

ISP has a dedicated Leaving Care Team, which provide advice and practical help to carers and young people who are preparing to leave care. The manager stated that the Leaving Care Team attend Looked After Children reviews for all children aged 15 plus and develop a 'Pathways' plan for each young person with the placing local authority. Although these were not seen on files. Informal support continues to be offered by carers to the young person once they have left care.

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

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

It was evident from the documentation provided that ISP has clear written recruitment and selection procedures. The majority of information required such as references, police checks, certificates of qualifications and medical information was found in place in the foster carers' files and staff files sampled. However there were some gaps in the records identified such as foster carers agreements not signed, application forms not on file and other matters such as proof of ID and copies of qualifications as required for staff.

Total number of staff of the agency:

140

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

12

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

From the information provided it was evident that there is a clear management structure with clear lines of accountability; Staff files included clear job descriptions and indicated that regular supervision and training takes place. Carers files included a record of training and carers questionnaires indicated that they had received a wide range of training and that courses were available on a regular basis. Carers and children's files indicated that there were structures and systems in place to ensure assessments, approvals and reviews of carers were managed and implemented effectively.

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
<p>Reference to the staffing list provided evidence that a range of staff who are suitably qualified are employed by the agency in sufficient numbers to offer the services as stated in the agencies Statement of Purpose. From the information provided and from discussion / questionnaire responses of carers it is clear that an assessment process takes place that meets standards 17.6 and 17.7.</p> <p>From carers and young people questionnaire responses it was evident that they felt well supported and advised by qualified and experienced staff.</p> <p>As previously indicated the agency has made targeted attempts to recruit carers from ethnically diverse backgrounds to meet the needs of the children and young people for whom it provides a service.</p>		

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?	4
<p>It is evident from the documentation provided that ISP has clear written recruitment and selection procedures. Foster carers' files sampled provided evidence that there were management systems in place for the carers' supervision, appraisal and support by the agencies social workers and therapists. In addition members of staff and foster carers can access an independent counselling service in confidence, up to seven sessions are provided for free. This has been identified as an area of good practice that exceeds the standards and therefore a rating of 4 has been awarded.</p> <p>Foster carers comments indicated a high regard for the agency and it's staff and confirmed that very good out of hours support is given.</p> <p>ISP has a Health and Safety policy for carers, children and staff that covers all legal requirements.</p> <p>Carers also indicated that the ISP whistle-blowing policy was made known to all employees.</p>		

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?	4
<p>ISP has it's own Training Manager and a copy of ISP's training brochure for staff and foster carers was referred to, an extensive range of training is offered at all levels. The responses made in the foster carers questionnaires indicated that training is provided to meet individual training needs as well as those of groups and commented very favourably about the quality, frequency and breadth of training offered by the organisation.</p>		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)		
All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>From the staff files sampled it was evident that this standard was met, staff have clearly defined roles, job descriptions, receive regular supervision and appraisal. Regular staff meetings are held.</p>		

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6)		
The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Questionnaires from foster carers evidenced that the agency has a clear strategy for supporting them which includes those items in standard 21.2 such as supervision, support groups, information and advice, out of hours support and respite care.</p> <p>The agency has accessed external consultants Pro-Act train foster carers and staff in behaviour management skills and techniques and to assist in developing the agencies behaviour management policies.</p> <p>The foster carers indicated how much they appreciated the quality of support offered to them by ISP and the regular contact that they had with their supervising social worker.</p>		

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)		
The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Foster carer files and social worker files evidenced that foster carers receive regular support and supervision by a named, appropriately qualified social worker. Foster carers are subject to unannounced visits and an Annual Review. Significant Events were properly recorded. The Foster Carers' Handbook contains well presented policies, procedures and guidance, legal information and insurance details. Systems of practical support as indicated in standard 22.7 were in place. Policy documentation seen and comments from carers evidenced that standards 22.8, 22.9 and 22.10 were met.</p>		

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

As previously indicated ISP has its own Training Manager and a copy of ISP's training brochure for staff and foster carers was referred to, an extensive range of training is offered at all levels. The responses made in the foster carers questionnaires indicated that training is provided to meet individual training needs as well as those of groups and comments were very favourable about the quality, frequency and breadth of training offered by the organisation. Foster carers files evidenced that all new foster carers complete full induction training. The manager stated that from the point of approval competencies are assessed and any shortfalls highlighted, each foster carer has a development plan that are reviewed regularly in supervision and at the Annual Reviews. The manager stated that a high number of carers are working towards NVQ's.

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

A sample of children's case records was seen, these were comprehensive containing all the relevant information and documents. An ISP placement Care Plan has been developed that are to be introduced for each child but the plans whilst simplified need to be explanatory and in language easily understood by children. This is recommended in the Recommendations section of this report.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

All confidential records were stored securely and systems are in place to ensure access to them is restricted to the appropriate members of staff. Separate records are kept as per standard 25.2. Evidence was provided that ISP has systems in place for the recording of allegations, complaints, their outcomes and separate records are maintained which brings together data in these areas. All such information received is reviewed and monitored. Some minor shortfalls were identified in the records of staff and carers files that were sampled, records (for staff) of proof of positive ID are required to be retained on file.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:

159

Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:

33

Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:

X

Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:

36

Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:

12

Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £

366.31

Maximum £

602.84

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?

4

The inspectors found that the premises were decorated and furnished to a high standard and children's work was on display in all areas. The atmosphere was warm, friendly and welcoming.

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
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Examination of ISP's Operating Budget for 2003/2004 indicated that this Standard was met.

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
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Examination of the extensive financial documentation presented by ISP indicated that this Standard was met.

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?

4

An examination of relevant documentation and feedback form questionnaire responses indicated that this standard was met, payments are made promptly at the agreed time. In addition to the carers allowance and agreed expenses ISP provides insurance to all carers for the young people in their care, this is identified as an area of good practice and therefore a rating of 4 has been awarded.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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From the information provided it was evident that ISP has clear policies and procedures and an examination of relevant documentation, including the Panel Minutes and discussions with the manager indicated that this Standard was met. During the last year a second panel has been developed the manager stated that members of both panels attend training provided by an external consultant.

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?	9
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This standard does not apply.

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?
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This standard does not apply.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____
Date _____

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 16 February 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

YES

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

NO

Note:

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

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 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 NCSC inspection reports are public documents. Reports on children's homes are only obtainable on personal application to NCSC offices.

D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I Mr John Whitwell of Integrated Services Programme 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 Mr John Whitwell of Integrated Services Programme 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.