

# inspection report

## Fostering Services

### **Essex Local Authority Fostering Services**

Social Services Directorate  
PO Box 297 County Hall  
Chelmsford  
Essex  
CM1 1YS

10th January 2005 to 10th February 2005

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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

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

### **The role of CSCI is to:**

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

## **Inspection Methods & Findings**

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

### **The 4-point scale ranges from:**

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

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

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

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

## FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

**Local Authority Fostering Service?**

YES

**Name of Authority**

Essex Local Authority Fostering Services

**Address**

Social Services Directorate, PO Box 297 County Hall,  
Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1YS

**Local Authority Manager**

Ms S Hadley

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01245 492211

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Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1YS

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01245 268580

**Email Address**

[www.essexcc.gov.uk](http://www.essexcc.gov.uk)

**Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)**

NO

**Name of Agency**

**Tel No**

**Address**

**Fax No**

**Email Address**

**Registered Number of IFA**

**Name of Registered Provider**

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

**Date of first registration**

**Date of latest registration certificate**

**Registration Conditions Apply ?**

**Date of last inspection**

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		10th January 2005	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		10:00 am	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Jenny Elliott	076559
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>	Jane Greaves	162732
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>	Nicola Welch	133460
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>4</b>	Neal Wolton-Harragan	075102
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> 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.			
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>			
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>		Ms S Hadley	

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**Inspection visits**

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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**

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**(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)**

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- 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**

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**D.3. Provider's agreement**

## INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

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

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

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

The report will show the following:

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

This report is a public document.

## INSPECTION VISITS

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

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

Essex Fostering Service provides planned, emergency and respite care for children with a range of needs in a broad range of circumstances.

The Service is structured by location and specialism. This comprises of four geographically designated locality teams, one countywide Adolescent Fostering Team, one countywide Central Placements Team, a Family Partnership Team and three Shared Care Teams, whose services include foster care. The County Child Protection Manager, based at County Hall, Chelmsford, centrally manages the whole service, although this is currently under review following a recent re-organisation.

This inspection focussed specifically on the Shared Care Scheme, kinship carers and carers with exemptions.

The Shared Care Scheme links children with disabilities with families who can provide short breaks on a regular basis. This can be anything from a few hours to several days per month. The purpose is to offer new experiences and friendships to disabled children in a family environment. It also affords parents the opportunity of respite from their caring responsibilities. The children placed may have a learning disability, physical disability, complex health needs or severe impairment.

The three Shared Care Teams in Essex are based in Basildon, Braintree and Colchester. Whilst they have been previously part of the Children with Disabilities support services, the process of integrating these services into the Looked After Children services is ongoing. The Shared Care service currently provides a service to up to 150 children and young people. Approximately one-third stay overnight with the carers, with two thirds receiving day care.

The kinship carers and carers with exemptions are currently within the remit of the mainstream fostering service.

Essex is a large authority, accommodating over 800 children and young people in local authority care in May 2004. The authority has developed an 'Invest to Save Policy' in recognition of the need to increase the number and type of directly provided foster placements available. The invest to save approach is wide ranging in addition to the development of fee paid carers, the authority works to ensure that children only become 'looked after' where other interventions are not appropriate or exhausted and it is therefore in the best interest of children and young people. The fostering service works closely with other parts of the authority to carefully scrutinise new applications for out of county placements, and to review existing out of county placements to ensure they continue to be in the best interest of children and young people placed. These elements of the strategy did not fall within the remit of this inspection, but were felt to be important in understanding the strategic operation of the service.

## 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.)

Since the last inspection in February, March and April 2004 there has been a continued development of the Essex Fostering Service. Improvements have been evidenced across a range of areas of the service including education, health, training and record-keeping. This inspection was undertaken with the knowledge that staffing resources in some areas were stretched. Evidence for findings reported was gathered from meetings with children and young people, carers, staff within the service, records and from responses to questionnaires. The responses from 266 questionnaires were collated for the purpose of this report.

Carers from the service spoken with were positive about the support they received from the Fostering Service's link workers. This was also reflected in questionnaires returned by carers.

As already stated, this particular inspection focused on shared care, kinship carers and carers with exemptions. Particular emphasis was also placed on diversity issues. It is acknowledged that the authority had made efforts to address this area. There has also been a general improvement regarding training provided, although training in relation to caring for children with disabilities was variable.

Overall Essex Fostering Service was felt to be offering a satisfactory or good service to most children and young people. When asked 'What's the best thing about fostering for you?', comments from children and young people included 'being cared for', 'feeling safe', 'having nice times' and 'I love my family I have now'.

Through the inspection it became evident that some staff working in the Shared Care Scheme felt it did not receive the same priority as mainstream fostering services, however, at the time of the inspection this service had only recently been integrated into the Fostering Service, and it is recognised that it will take some time for necessary changes to become embedded.

Parents and children spoken with were extremely positive about their experience of the scheme, as were the children of carers. One particular family felt that the scheme had enabled them to view children with disabilities as children first.

Discussions with carers and carers' questionnaires, revealed some tensions between carers and placing social workers. This was not reflected in placing social workers questionnaires who generally spoke very highly of carers.

Any issues of concern raised by inspectors during the inspection were dealt with promptly and professionally by Fostering Service staff and managers.



## **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?

YES

**If No please list below**

### STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

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

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

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

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

**Lead Inspector**      Jenny Elliott**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_**Second Inspector**      Jane Greaves**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_**Regulation Manager**      Paul Brewster**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_**Date**      31 March 2005

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

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

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement	
1	34(3) schedule 6, 38	FS24FS12	The Fostering Service must ensure that before making a placement (or within 24 hours of making an emergency placement) carers receive a statement containing all the information necessary to enable the foster parent to care for the child.	31/05/05
2	35	FS21	The Fostering Service must monitor and, where necessary, take action to ensure that the Responsible Authority is ensuring that the welfare of each child placed is suitably provided for by the placement.	30/04/05

## GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	FS18FS5	It is recommended that the Shared Care Scheme becomes more integrated into the mainstream fostering service.
2	FS9FS23F S7	It is recommended that the Service identifies the specific training needs of shared care and kinship carers (as identified in the body of this report) and develop and deliver training to meet those needs.

3	FS29FS22 FS18	It is recommended that the Service provides a clear description of the different types of foster carers the service works with, the payments made to and expectations of each type of carer.
4	FS25	Is recommended that the Fostering Service has a system in place to ensure that out dated records are returned to the local authority by carers and that security codes used where carers are using home computers.
5	FS13FS11	It is recommended that the Service's procedures are reviewed to ensure they support and do not unnecessarily inhibit opportunities for children and young people to make decisions about their lives.
6	FS17	It is recommended that the Service reviews staffing levels and recruits to meet the support needs of growing numbers of carers.
7	FS24FS4	<b>This relates specifically to shared care.</b> The Fostering Service should ensure records are maintained in a manner that enables them to meet the requirements of these standards and associated regulations.
8	FS15	The Fostering Service should ensure that all checks are carried out to assess the suitability of staff working within the service.

**PART B****INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS**

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

Number of Inspector days spent

32

Survey of placing authorities

YES

Foster carer survey

YES

Foster children survey

YES

Checks with other organisations and Individuals

YES

- Directors of Social services

NO

- Child protection officer

YES

- Specialist advisor (s)

NO

- Local Foster Care Association

YES

Tracking Individual welfare arrangements

YES

- Interview with children

YES

- Interview with foster carers

YES

- Interview with agency staff

YES

- Contact with parents

YES

- Contact with supervising social workers

YES

- Examination of files

YES

Individual interview with manager

YES

Information from provider

YES

Individual interviews with key staff

YES

Group discussion with staff

NO

Interview with panel chair

YES

Observation of foster carer training

NO

Observation of foster panel

YES

Inspection of policy/practice documents

YES

Inspection of records

YES

Interview with individual child

YES

Date of Inspection

10/01/05

Time of Inspection

10AM

Duration Of Inspection (hrs)

224

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

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

## Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

### Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

### Key Findings and Evidence

### Standard met?

4

Essex Fostering Service has a well laid out Statement of Purpose containing the areas of information required by Regulation and National Minimum Standards. Since the last inspection this has been reviewed and updated.

The Children's Guide has been finalised and was considered excellent and to exceed National Minimum Standards. It was developed by a team of young people fostered with Essex and is for foster children, prospective foster carers and their families. This has been developed in a CD Rom and paper format. The Guide was very informative and strongly conveyed the emotional impact and practical aspects of being a child or young person Looked After by the Local Authority. The Service and young people involved in producing the guide are commended on this area of work.



## 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

Essex County Council Social Services Department are currently undergoing a management restructuring programme that will see all Looked After Children's services bought under one directorate. The Commission was advised of the interim management arrangements for the Fostering Service in 2004 and is awaiting information from the Authority in respect of the permanent position.

The Shared Care Team Manager is well qualified and has considerable experience of children with disabilities. Staff reported that since his appointment, the scheme's profile had been significantly raised.

Foster carers and children spoke positively about the professionalism of Fostering staff.

Team managers and senior practitioners have a wide range of experience and qualifications to support their work. Team managers were positive about support from peers and their line managers to develop and carry out local roles.

### 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

Personnel files relating to managers were examined and found to meet the requirements of schedule 1.

## 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

Since the last inspection, it was noted that the documentary evidence relating to the approval of exemptions was in place. However, a small number of carers and staff commented that they felt at times under considerable pressure from the central placements team, to take emergency placements.

The Shared Care Scheme allocates supported families a specific number of hours, which they may use flexibly through the year. Once an appropriate match for the child has been identified, it is often an informal arrangement for the parent and carer to decide on when and how these hours will be used.

The Shared Care Co-ordinator may not be necessarily be aware of when these hours have been used until he receives the invoice from the carer for payment. Given that some carers are matched to more than one child, there can be times when the carer may be caring for more than one child at a time. This would appear to contravene the intention of Fostering Services Regulation 34(2)(b); "That any other responsible authority which already has a child placed with the foster parent, consents to the placement". Whilst Essex is the local authority, the allocated social worker of a placed child may not be made aware of the placement of others and may not consider such placements to be in the best interests of the first child. It is therefore recommended related procedures be reviewed.

Supervision given to staff by team managers was generally documented as meeting or exceeding that required by the National Minimum Standards, although in one situation sampled the level of supervision fell below the minimum required. Supervision for carers was not, in all cases, evidenced as being undertaken as frequently as expected, however, a number of carers stated in discussion and through questionnaires that support from the Supervising Social Workers (SSWs) was excellent. 62% of carers completing questionnaires reported being very or quite satisfied with the support they received.

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

X

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

1

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

X

Serious illness or accident of a child.

X

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

X

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

X

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

X

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.		X
Number of complaints made to CSCI about the agency in the past 12 months:		0
Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:		0

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4) The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The lines of accountability within locality teams are clearly defined and understood, with clear arrangements to identify the person in charge when the manager was absent.</p> <p>All staff spoken with were confident in the support from their team manager and carers indicated the same.</p> <p>Some staff working in the Shared Care Scheme felt it did not receive the same priority as mainstream fostering services, however, at the time of the inspection the service was only in the early stages of integration. It is recommended that the Fostering Service attaches high priority to this area of work.</p>		

## 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?
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A sample of carers' homes were visited as part of the inspection. All homes visited appeared appropriately furnished and decorated and maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene.

Evidence was seen on file that household annual reviews were undertaken and that these included checks on the standard of accommodation. Some of the foster homes visited as part of the inspection did appear somewhat overcrowded, although it was noted that the foster children were happy despite this.

The placement request form developed by the service includes a risk assessment proforma, completed where possible risks are identified to a child or others.

Toys, books, etc, appropriate to the child's level of development and understanding were provided. There was good interaction between carers and children and carers were observed responding to the children's needs appropriately.

Children and young people completing questionnaires gave a range of examples about how carers helped them to keep safe and healthy. The most common being the provision of healthy food and ensuring they 'don't eat too many sweets'.

**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? 2**

The Service strives to promote diversity in terms of carers, for example they currently employ same gender couples, disabled carers and carers from minority ethnic backgrounds. Within the offices there are posters and literature, which positively values and promotes equality and diversity.

In one trans-racial placement the foster parent had researched the child's country of origin, cultural culinary, religious and spiritual differences and had acknowledged these along with the other members of the household. The child was actively encouraged and supported to access relationships with people of their own culture and ethnic origin.

One team had developed a calendar incorporating festivals and religious days from around the world. This will be made available to carers and will assist the foster carer, foster child and the carer's children to learn about other cultures and religions.

It is understood a Diversity Officer is due to take up a post within the Corporate Parenting Team shortly.

In discussion with carers and users of the Shared Care Scheme, there appeared to be only limited training available to carers specifically in relation to physical disability, learning disability and sensory impairment. One carer spoken with provided a trans-racial placement. They stated that they had not received any specific input with regards to the child's cultural needs other than that from the parent.

Some basic training had been provided to staff, but the 'Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality' action plan provided to the Commission recognised that 'more training is needed for staff supporting carers'. The Fostering Service's modular training programme includes a session on how carers can welcome and support children and young people with different backgrounds into their homes. This is a core module, essential for adolescent and fee paid carers.

The Shared Care Co-ordinator informed the Inspector that should a child have any complex medical needs, this would be presented to the Looked After Child Specialist Health Care Tasks Panel. Carers would then be provided with any appropriate specialist training, e.g. rectal Diazepam or gastro feeding. The panel consider the referral then arrange specific training for the carers.

**Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)**

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

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

Matches within the Shared Care Scheme are achieved through introductory visits and information sharing involving all relevant professionals, the child and his/her family and carers. However, three of the carers interviewed already knew the children and families prior to the caring becoming more formalised. Parents actively provide to the carers information relevant to the care of their child.

Within the mainstream fostering service, evidence of the matching tool being used was seen on file, however managers and staff stated that at times the lack of available foster carers did mean that some elements of matching were not able to be considered. Two of the teams visited had increased the number of foster carers on their books since the last inspection, as part of the Fostering Service's strategy.

Some carers said, in discussion and through questionnaires, that matching was not always successful due to the lack of available carers. 13% of carers completing questionnaires commented specifically on the need for more planning and information to improve the matching process.

The authority had carried out its own analysis of matching in short-term placements, concluding that 85% of those placements met most or all, matching requirements. It was noted that some information provided under 'resource offered' on the matching forms was very general. For example 'carers will ensure all emotional needs are met', or 'carers will endeavour to ensure safe care'. It was not clear to inspectors from these statements that matching requirements in these areas had in fact been met. The Service plans to analyse respite and emergency placements in April 2005. The Fostering Service is encouraged to continue and to develop this monitoring and evaluation.

**Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)**

**The fostering service protects each child or young person from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.**

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

Foster carers spoken with stated they had participated in training including; caring for a child who had been abused, self caring skills, managing behaviour, recognising signs of abuse and ways of boosting and maintaining a child's self-esteem.

The handbook provided for foster families contained clear instruction that corporal punishment or any other forms of humiliating treatment or punishment is not acceptable. Punishments described by children in questionnaires were in keeping with this. A small number of carers said the service had not made clear to them what punishments were acceptable. Procedures were seen to be in place to recognise, record and address any instance of bullying. There was a clear procedure for use where a foster child goes missing from home.

The foster carers spoken with were able to assure the Inspector that they were generally provided with details about the foster child, his/her circumstances and family life, to assist the carer to protect the foster child and their own children for whom they have responsibility. Just over 50% of carers completing questionnaires reported they considered they received enough information about children placed. Two carers reported not being informed of child protection issues and potential risks to children from adults known to them. Several others said that lack of information had impacted on their ability to fully care for a child placed, (some mentioned lack of medical information specifically).

There did not appear to be any real emphasis on shared carers being expected to undertake training, although training was made available. One shared carer was unhappy that their views appeared not to be listened to with regards to concerns they had expressed, and that they were not invited to give a view with regards to the child's name remaining on the At Risk Register. A number of carers and staff in the Shared Care service expressed the view that shared carers are not afforded the same professional credibility as foster carers in the mainstream service.

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

X

%

**Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)**

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

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

Contact details were evident on each of the sampled children's files inspected, clearly detailing how appropriate contact arrangements for each foster child were to be established, maintained, monitored and reviewed.

The views of children had been taken into account in determining contact arrangements and foster care training included skills required to encourage and facilitate such contacts. Foster carers record the outcome of contact arrangements and their perceived impact on the child and then feed this information back to the social worker. One family interviewed encouraged

one of her foster children to have their sibling to 'sleep over' during holiday times to help maintain family ties. Carers reported, through questionnaires, a range of strategies in use to promote positive contact with families. A number of young people felt they had been listened to when requesting more or less contact with families. Placing social workers felt that for 77% of children, carers worked very well or quite well with families. No placing social workers reported a less than acceptable level of working relationship between carers and birth families.

An inspector had the opportunity of meeting the parent of a child who uses the Shared Care Scheme. They informed the inspector that they found the scheme extremely beneficial and gave them the opportunity to spend some quality time with their other child. They spoke very highly of the care their child received from the carer.



**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?****3**

Inspectors attended the 'See, Hear & Say' Young People's Reference Group. This is a monthly meeting attended by young people in both foster and residential care. The local authority is complimented on facilitating this forum, which is clearly valued by children and young people. A clear message from the young people attending was that they considered there were far too many meetings and reviews, that they resented the amount of paperwork that was kept in relation to them, and that the rules which govern Looked After Children made them feel very different from others. One issue raised in particular was that some foster carers are unhappy that the decision for the young people to be able to stay overnight with friends was left to them. Some young people stated that their carers had since told them that this decision had now been overturned and overnight stays could not occur unless the household had been police checked. There were also comments on questionnaires suggesting a lack of understanding from some carers about young people staying with friends. Some young people also felt frustrated by the length of time it could take to repeatedly have permission slips signed to take part in school or social activities. At the same meeting some young people advised inspectors that they did not have an allocated social worker. The Commission recognises the difficulties in place for service providers to ensure that children and young people are adequately consulted, whilst also ensuring their safety and well-being. However it is recommended that procedures are reviewed to ensure that they do not inhibit opportunities for children and young people to take decisions where possible.

Other young people felt quite strongly that there was a significant turnover of social work staff. That contact with their social workers was infrequent. Some felt very aggrieved that social workers did not inform them before they resigned.

93% of children and young people completing questionnaires said carers often or sometimes asked them for their opinions and ideas. However conversely, two of three foster families met with from the Mid Locality Team mentioned how children at times feel they are constantly being inspected and one young person in particular had repeatedly said that he doesn't feel his life is his own now because everyone wants to be part of it.

The Fostering Service had worked with a group of young people to produce an excellent children's guide.

**Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)**

The fostering service ensures that it provides foster care services which help each child or young person in foster care to receive health care which meets her/his needs for physical, emotional and social development, together with information and training appropriate to her/his age and understanding to enable informed participation in decisions about her/his health needs.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

Foster carers generally reported that they received full descriptions of the health needs of each foster child placed in their care, advising inspectors that the record is updated during the placement and moves with the child, however, about 5% of carers completing questionnaires stated this was not the case.

Carers confirmed they are trained in basic health and hygiene issues and first aid. Evidence was seen in relation to hospital, doctor and dental appointments and one of the foster children had a hospital appointment on the day of the visit.

This standard is not as applicable to Shared Care as to other parts of the Fostering Service where parents normally retain primary responsibilities for these issues, however, in relation to children with complex health needs, there is a panel that can offer support, advice and training to carers (see standard 7).

**Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.8)**

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

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

Arrangements to enable children's and young people's educational needs to be met have developed since last year's inspection.

Foster carers sampled reported they had good input into the foster child's educational development, that schools were generally supportive and carers attended parents' evenings and sports days where appropriate. Children and young people reported, through questionnaires, that carers helped with homework, learning support programmes and meetings with teachers. Carers described support they had received from the Corporate Parenting Service and support workers when dealing with difficulties at school. Some young people provided examples of specific help from the Corporate Parenting Service, e.g. funding extra tuition.

One foster carer spoken with felt that the Service should provide more assistance with the provision of school uniforms especially at the expensive time of changing to senior school.

A carer raised an issue relating to school trips, being that senior school activities such as ski trips abroad are funded but a primary school year 6 student who had the opportunity to go on a one week school trip to the Isle of Wight did not receive funding and the carers had to finance this themselves. Other carers reported delays in getting permission slips signed or obtaining passports that meant young people missed out on school trips.

It was evident that there was a wide range of initiatives in place to support the ongoing educational needs of looked after children in Essex. Representatives from Education and Social Services meet to consider the needs of children who are about to become looked after, as well as those placed outside of the County. The Corporate Parenting Service is to have closer links with the Fostering Service under the reorganisation of children's services.

A Fostering Panel observed as part of the inspection included an independent member with an education background.

**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**

There is training made available for foster carers to enable them to give support to a young person preparing to move into independent living. One of the main objectives of the Adolescent Fostering Team is to work with fee paid carers to deliver care and support for young people as they move towards independence.

Some carers reported that they considered poor staffing levels in some of the local authority's Leaving and After Care Teams impacted negatively on young people and the progression of their pathway plans.



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

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

Staff files checked reflected that recruitment procedures generally included obtaining the information referenced in Fostering Services Regulation 5, Schedule 1. Files sampled evidenced, in all but one case, that CRB checks had been undertaken, references sought and photographs held on file, however, copies of qualification certificates were not always held on the files sampled. Files sampled contained two written references if the applicant was being employed from outside the organisation, however, if the applicant comes from within the organisation there is just one reference on file from the most recent employer. There was no evidence on file to suggest that verbal enquiries are made to confirm references.

Fostering Service staff were considered to be appropriately qualified with evidence of this on files, copies of interview notes and application forms were evident in all sampled files.

Total number of staff of the agency:

X

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

X

### 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

There is a clear management structure with defined lines of accountability within both Shared Care and the Fostering Teams. Line managers provide professional supervision for Supervising Social Workers.

The Authority's new structure brings all Looked after Children (LAC) services under one directorate, which will provide opportunities to address some of the tensions reported to have existed between teams that make up the new Fostering Service. There was some concern that the specialism within the Shared Care Team might be lost in the new structure. Managers were aware of these issues and mindful of the need to maintain expertise, while

achieving the advantage of a more coordinated and streamline structure.

**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?**

**2**

At the time of the inspection there were a number of staffing vacancies across the Fostering Service. The Fostering Service was running a robust foster carer recruitment campaign, with a strategy for increasing Fostering Service staff as carer numbers increase. It is important that the Service continues to do all it can to recruit to existing vacancies, particularly taking account of the success of the carer recruitment campaign to date. About 70% of carers completing questionnaires thought there were not enough staff in the Fostering Service. Although about 95% felt that despite this the staff did a good job.

**Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**3**

Within the mainstream fostering service carer supervision was evidenced from discussion and on most of the sampled files. Where regular supervision was not in place, regular contact was evident. Support from the Supervising Social Workers was highly regarded by carers.

Staff spoken to felt supported by peers and managers.

The Service uses two out of hours support mechanisms, the Service's own specialist telephone support service and the Authority's Social Services Emergency Duty Team.

A significant number of shared carers, staff of the Shared Care Scheme and kinship carers reported they did not feel integrated with the Fostering Service. They said that they did not feel the training was relevant to the care they provided. In questionnaires many specifically stated they did not see themselves as foster carers. A small number of shared care and

kinship carers also commented on the payment levels for shared care which they felt were much lower than other carers. With regards to support, carers within the Care Shared Scheme spoken with commented on the availability of the Shared Care Co-ordinator and of the support he provided when required. However, some reported that this support was reactive rather than proactive. It will obviously take time for the full implications of the recent restructure to be experienced. The Fostering Service is encouraged in the work undertaken to date and will need to continue to give the integration strategies high priority.

#### **Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)**

**There is a good quality training programme to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments.**

##### **Key Findings and Evidence**

##### **Standard met?**

**3**

Personal development opportunities were seen to be offered to Fostering Service staff. A comment was made to an inspector that time restraints and heavy workloads were a contributory factor to Supervising Social Workers not taking up as many training opportunities as would be advantageous. The Service had identified and implemented key training needs for staff, including the BAAF competency framework and valuing diversity.

In relation to the Shared Care Scheme, training was open to them to attend, although some staff spoken with seemed to feel that it lacked relevance, for example it was reported that specific training in relation to children with disabilities was missing. Manual handling training and training for children with complex health needs was arranged through the Shared Care Scheme itself.

A number of modules in the new carers' training programme were open to staff and carers jointly.

#### **Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)**

**All staff are properly accountable and supported.**

##### **Key Findings and Evidence**

##### **Standard met?**

**3**

Staff from the Fostering Locality Teams spoke positively about support they receive from their peers and line managers and felt their managers were approachable and that their door was always open.

Staff reported frequent supervision sessions and annual appraisals and these were documented. Regular minuted team meetings were held.

As reported earlier, work is ongoing to bring Shared Care fully within the Fostering Service. Staff in a range of teams were spoken with. Staff in both Shared Care and other fostering teams reported they feel they should be more integrated, although the Shared Care staff are concerned not to lose the focus of children with disabilities. This reflects previous observations that integration of Shared Care with the Fostering Service is at an early stage and tensions between integration and specialism have yet to be fully resolved.

**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?****2**

A number of carers specifically mentioned the support they had received from The Lionmede Centre. This service focuses on the wellbeing of children and young people who are looked after. Its primary function is to provide intervention and support as a means to prevent the breakdown of placements. Lionmede is a multi-disciplinary team comprising of psychiatric nurses, behaviour support workers, systemic family therapists and social workers. Access to Lionmede is a welcome and valued support mechanism, although discussions with carers suggested there was some confusion about who could make referrals to the unit.

All foster carers interviewed during the course of this inspection had praise for their fostering service and felt supported by their Supervising Social Workers, and Fostering Teams.

A significant minority of carers reported in discussion and through questionnaires that children's social workers did not visit or support children sufficiently. One family reported two visits from the children's social worker in eighteen months, whilst others said it was not reliable at all or that children and young people did not have allocated social workers.

This appeared to impact on how supported carers felt as well as on practical issues such as passing on relevant information, gaining access to specialist services and, as described previously, permission to take part in educational activities. All of these issues were described by carers as unnecessary additional stresses. Carers were reluctant to register formal complaints about these issues and did not feel there was any other effective avenue to address difficulties such as this.

Carers can access the Authority's telephone counselling service.

Those shared carers spoken with valued the support provided by the Shared Care Scheme. All stated that their co-ordinators were always available.



**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**

The foster care agreements sampled met the requirements of this standard. Foster carers are allocated a Supervising Social Worker (SSW) to support them in their role. As already described carers from a range of teams spoke positively about their SSW.

The level of supervision and face to face contact between carers and their SSW varied. There were clear expectations in respect of supervisions, training and team meetings for fee paid carers. General, kinship and shared carer roles as foster carers and the Service's expectations of them were less clearly defined.

The Service has a commitment to develop the skills of existing carers through its invest to save initiative and has devised a modular training programme to support this development.

Out of hours telephone support is available from a dedicated support line for carers (until 10pm) in addition to the Emergency Duty Team.

The Service actively supports the Essex Foster Carers Council (EFCC).

**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?****2**

The Service, in conjunction with the EFCC, had developed modular training programmes since the last inspection. This was viewed as a positive development. Where appropriate modules are linked to National Vocational Qualifications. There are clear expectations that fee paid carers will complete all core modules.

The Service's Statement of Purpose states that all applicants are expected to attend preparation training (choosing to foster) prior to their assessment being presented to the fostering panel. It was evident during the inspection, however, that some carers had not completed the course, specifically kinship carers whose panel papers included statements about preparation training such as 'not applicable – kinship carers'. Some shared care carers said that training was often scheduled at weekends when they were looking after children, so they could not attend.

Some general carers, who had been caring for some time, felt the training offered was too basic.

The Service should review the needs of these groups of carers and ensure training opportunities are relevant and accessible.

Specific medication training was provided for shared carers as and when needed.

## Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

### Key Findings and Evidence

### Standard met?

2

Foster carers spoken with said that the case records they receive for the young people in their care is generally comprehensive detailing individual needs, however it was stated that in the case of emergency placements there is very little information to assist them in providing comfort for traumatised children immediately. (See also comments under Standard 12.)

Each file relating to individual members of one sibling group was found to have information about all siblings within the group rather than individual assessments and reports filed for each young person.

Two of the young people spoken with said they were asked for their input when completing records.

The case records sampled in relation to the children within the Shared Care Scheme were generally less detailed than others. For example, dates and records of when the child was placed with the carers were only recorded on the claims forms, which did not meet the requirement of Fostering Services Regulation 30 (3)(a) in that "a record of each placement with the foster parent, including the name, age sex of each child placed, the dates on which each placement began and terminated and the circumstances of the termination. It is recommended that the Fostering Service develops the arrangements to appropriately record and report all placements (see also NMS 4).

Carers were provided with lockable boxes to store information relevant to the child placed.

**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**

Since the last inspection the Fostering Service's files have been internally audited and a more user-friendly system of filing introduced. Records were stored securely in lockable cabinets in the office.

One carer stated that she kept details relating to a number of foster placements over the years stored at her house and also spoke about information regarding the young people in her care being stored on the family's home computer. The Service was aware of a training need amongst staff and carers about record keeping and this has been planned.

All records kept in the Locality Teams visited were seen to be stored appropriately. Evidence of an internal audit was present on the sampled files and generally records inspected were up to date and well organised. There were still some records that were unsigned and/or undated.

Records of exemptions had improved considerably since the last inspection.

**Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:**

822

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

X

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

X

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

X

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

X

**Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £**

X

**Maximum £**

X

## **Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service**

**The intended outcome for the following standard is:**

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

**Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**3**

The offices visited as part of the inspection were fit for the purpose. The office accommodation used by the North Shared Care Team were cramped although the inspector was advised that this team was due to relocate to new office facilities on a business park on the outskirts of Colchester, in the near future.

Appropriate storage facilities were noted and there were no health and safety hazards identified.

As recruited carers increase, the Fostering Service will need to keep premises under review to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

## 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

Essex Fostering Service is financed fully by Essex County Council. Services for children and families receive a high priority within the County Council. The Service's invest to save initiative is designed to improve services in a cost effective way.

### 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

Essex Fostering Service financial systems involve team managers being designated budget holders. Functions are supported by county procedures and regular audit. Managers within the Service are responsible for reviewing budgets and budgetary performances on a regular basis.

**Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)**

**Each foster carer receives an allowance and agreed expenses, which cover the full cost of caring for each child or young person placed with him or her. Payments are made promptly and at the agreed time. Allowances and fees are reviewed annually.**

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

The Service's invest to save initiative aims to increase the number of fee paid carers in the County. Currently there are a number of payment bands with different rates for shared care, kinship carers, general carers and fee paid carers. Some of the differentials reflect levels of expectation from the service and the specialism required of carers. Some (non fee paid) carers felt they were treated less well than fee paid carers. There was not a clear definition of the differences to provide information and guidance to carers and others. It is recommended that consideration is given to providing further detail to foster carers in respect of the different activities of the teams within the Fostering Service and its fee/expenses arrangements.

A small number of carers reported, in discussion with inspectors and through questionnaires, delays in payment, particularly for respite care and one off expenses, including basic equipment necessary to care for children. Comments about payments for on-going care were generally positive.

Some carers were not clear where responsibility lay for purchasing school uniforms, equipment or school trips.

## 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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In a panel observed all panel members were professional and informed in their approach and asked probing questions of potential carers and social workers. Independent members included a previous service user, educationalist and carer. Inspectors were advised that specialist medical advice was obtained where necessary. A number of questions were raised by panel members that were answered by the team manager present. It was clear that discussion about the issues raised had taken place during the assessment period, but the information had not been included in the assessment papers. On the day the panel was observed some of the information and documentation required by the panel had not been made available to them until the panel sat. The team manager provided missing information on this occasion.

The Service is looking at the possibility of recruiting a panel exclusively for kinship carers, due to the issues surrounding the difficulties associated with completing assessments within the 6-week time frame. At this stage thoughts are that the kinship panel would meet every two months.

Training in diversity is being rolled out for panel members. Panel members are predominately white. Panel members will also be invited to attend BAAF assessment training, enabling them to further develop their quality assurance role.

Inspectors understand that the Lionmede Team have offered to attend panel meetings, as a way of providing Lionmede with the opportunity to become involved in the assessment process of potential carers at an earlier stage.

It is recommended that a personnel file is maintained for Fostering Panel chairs and members.

As stated earlier in the report, a number of carers exceed their approval in terms of the number of children placed at any one time on a regular basis. These are often emergency or short-term placements that are not considered by the panel. Consideration should be given as to how these can be appropriately and as need be, independently monitored.

## Short-Term Breaks

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- When foster care is provided as a short-term break for a child, the arrangement recognises that the parents remain the main carers for the child.

### Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.2)

Where a fostering service provides short-term breaks for children in foster care, they have policies and procedures, implemented in practice, to meet the particular needs of children receiving short-term breaks.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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The place of the Shared Care Scheme in the wider Fostering Service is still being established, with the related issues referred to earlier in this report.

The arrangements in place at the time of inspection recognised that parents remained the main carers of children.



## Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- Local authority fostering services' policies and procedures for assessing, approving, supporting and training foster carers recognise the particular contribution that can be made by and the particular needs of family and friends as carers.

### Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

These standards are all relevant to carers who are family and friends of the child, but there is recognition of the particular relationship and position of family and friend carers.

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

During the inspection two kinship carers were interviewed. A number of other kinship carers returned completed questionnaires. The carers interviewed said they felt fully supported by the Supervising Social Worker.

Staff and managers of the Fostering Service recognised the particular relationship and position of family and friends as carers, however, there was no specific training or support in place to address the particulars of these types of arrangements. It was noted however that EFCC was seeking to recruit a kinship carer as a member of the Council and that the Fostering Service was considering developing a specific panel to assess carers of this type.

The Service should continue to address the specific training and support needs of this group of carers.

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

**Lay Assessor**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 10 January to 10 February 2005 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

Comments were received from the provider

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

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 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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005, which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.**

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

Action plan was required

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: &lt;enter details here&gt;

**Public reports**

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

### D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

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

**D.3.1 I \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_**  
**confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation**  
**of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that**  
**I agree with the statutory requirements made and will seek to comply with**  
**these.**

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

### Designation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Or**

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

--

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

### Designation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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