



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

Bradford Adoption & Fostering Unit

Aire Building

35 Saltaire Road

Shipley

West Yorkshire

BD18 3HH

18th October 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?

YES

Name of Authority

Bradford Adoption & Fostering Unit

Address

Aire Building, 35 Saltaire Road, Shipley, West Yorkshire,
BD18 3HH

Local Authority Manager

Sarah Patrick

Tel No:

01274 752918

Address

Aire Building, 35 Saltaire Road, Shipley, West Yorkshire,
BD18 3HH

Fax No:

Email Address

Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)

NO

Name of Agency

Tel No

Address

Fax No

Email Address

Registered Number of IFA

Name of Registered Provider

Alison O'Sullivan

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Date of first registration

NA

Date of latest registration certificate

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

20/10/03

Date of Inspection Visit		18th October 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Dave Stanford	071351
Name of Inspector	2	Graham Drye	
Name of Inspector	3		
Name of Inspector	4		
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Sarah Patrick - Manager	

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(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

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

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Bradford Adoption & Fostering Unit. 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.

The Bradford Adoption and Fostering Unit is a Local Authority provision offering a comprehensive and responsive service aiming to meet short and long term fostering needs as well as the permanency needs of children and young people. The service has also developed a number of other schemes to compliment and support the primary services, which include 'fostering challenge' that provides individual placements for young people who require more intense and additional psychological support due to their challenging behavioural difficulties. There is now a psychologist employed on a sessional basis within the unit and also four family placement support workers, who provide direct work with the children and the carers whilst in placement and support to the family placement social workers. The service draws upon social workers who are independent of the authority to support carers through allegations or complaint investigations. The service's office is based in Shipley.

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 announced inspection took place during October and November 2004. The service has been managed over the last year by a senior manager, due to the manager vacancy in the unit. A new manager has only recently been appointed in July 2004.

Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)

This standard was not fully met

The service has revised the statement of purpose. It has been substantially reduced in size, whilst retaining most of the information necessary for such a document and is more accessible for the revision. There are, however, some minor omissions.

Fitness to Provide or Manage a Fostering service (Standards 2-3)

Both of the standards assessed were met

The manager has suitable experience and is working towards completing an element of the necessary qualifications. There was evidence of a professional and competent approach to the management of the service.

Management of the Fostering Service (Standards 4-5)

Both of the standards assessed were met

There is an established and clear set of guidelines for staff accountability and evidence indicated there is an effective monitoring of the provision of the service. The documentation provided to the Commission was completed in a thorough and timely fashion and discussions held with staff suggested there is a renewed and clear sense of direction to the service.

Securing and Promoting Welfare (Standards 6-14)

All of the standards assessed were met

There was evidence available from discussions held with service users and foster carers and through the inspection of certain records that consideration is always given to ensuring the welfare of those receiving the service. There were good examples of practical and moral support noted.

Recruiting, Checking, Managing, Supporting and Training Staff and Foster Carers (Standards 15-23)

Six of the nine standards assessed were met

Discussions and interviews held with a range of staff indicated there is a clear professional understanding of the purpose of the unit with good levels of practice skill and an appreciation of the legislation that the unit works under. There are issues of concern related to the inconsistency of supervision for staff and the monitoring of workloads and that there are a number of carers without allocated link staff. There were good examples of the provision and support of appropriate training to carers.

Records (Standards 24-25)

One of the two standards assessed was met

Case records inspected were found to be up to date and sufficient in detail. Files inspected through a tracking process were also found to be up to date and contained information which can contribute to the service user's understanding of their life events, however a general review and revision is necessary for the policies and procedures to be more reflective of current practice.

Fitness of Premises for use as a Fostering Service (Standard 26)

This standard was assessed and not met

Whilst the building is appropriate and suitable for the purpose and the administrative systems are well managed and robust, the IT system fails to fully support the staff, due to the age of the hardware and associated software packages.

Financial Requirements (Standards 27-29)

Two of the three standards were assessed and both were met

There is a suitable fee structure and payment system that provides for a range of allowances. Foster carers spoken with felt that the allowance system was satisfactorily efficient, as were the administration of expenses.

Fostering Panels (Standard 30)

This standard was assessed and not met

There remains some difficulties for the make-up and consistent attendance of all the necessary members to the panel, though there is a clear improvement from the previous two inspections of this service.

Short-term Breaks (Standard 31)

This standard was assessed and met

The service has established links with a shared care and support care scheme. Appropriate policies and guidance are in place to support consistency.

Family and Friends as Carers(Standard 32)

This standard was assessed and met

The service is sensitive to the needs of family and friends approved as carers, and these carers appear to be appropriately supported through assessment.

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?

NO

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	
1	23	FS26	The IT provision appears insufficiently robust for the demands of the service. The system must be reviewed and assessed for its fitness.	31/03/04

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

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

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

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector	Dave Stanford	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	Graham Drye	Signature	_____
Regulation Manager	Chris Picking	Signature	_____
Date	1st April 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	19	FS16	Sufficient staff must be available, or a reorganisation of work methods must be completed to address the imbalance in workload distribution and the backlog of foster carer assessments.	01/06/05
2	19	FS18	Sufficient staff must be available, or work methods must be reorganised to ensure that all carers have an allocated link worker.	01/06/05
3	21(4)	FS20	All staff must receive formal staff supervision on a regular and consistent basis.	31/03/05
4	23	FS26	The IT provision appears insufficiently robust for the demands of the service. The system must be reviewed and assessed for its fitness.	31/03/05
5	24	FS30	The fostering panel must be properly constituted.	31/03/05

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	FS1	The statement of purpose and children's guide should contain information on the number and outcome of complaints and the current children's guide should be reviewed.
2	FS25	Over the last year some of the policies and procedures including those in the foster carer handbook have gradually become out of step as working practices have evolved due to the lack of direct managerial oversight. The manager should make a general review these policies and procedures.

* 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	11
Survey of placing authorities	NO
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	NO
• 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	NO
• Contact with supervising social workers	YES
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	YES
Interview with panel chair	YES
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	18/10/04
Time of Inspection	09.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	90

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

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The service has revised the statement of purpose, which is comprehensive, and provides information about what the service can offer, and indicates a number of procedures in relation to the recruitment, training and support of foster carers. However, the document does not have details on the number and outcomes of the complaints made to the service. There is a separate document used throughout the Social Service Department entitled 'In Good Care: You and Your Rights', which is a service user guide to being in care. The service has now developed another guide, entitled 'What is Fostering?' which, is aimed at 0-11 year old service users. It is felt, however, that this is too wide an age range for the document and consideration should be given to produce a more age appropriate document for the under 5's.

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

Bradford Social Service Department has recently appointed a new manager to the fostering service (in July 2004). This manager has experience of managing a similar fostering service with another local authority and has a suitable previous work history. She is currently undertaking the Diploma in Management Studies and expects to complete this by February 2005, and is a qualified social worker, obtaining the CQSW in 1974. Other members managing the link worker teams (known as senior care managers) also have suitable and appropriate experience. Appropriate support to these senior care managers' via the senior management structure is said to be available if the manager is away.

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

Staff records were inspected and proper and up to date checks are maintained on all staff.

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

There remains an established and clear set of guidelines for staff accountability. Evidence from discussions held with all levels of staff, and through the inspection of various records, indicated there is an effective monitoring of the provision of the service to ensure the maintenance and consistency of the service.

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

0

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

X

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.

1

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

X

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.

1

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

X

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

1

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

Whilst acknowledging the manager was a recent appointment to the post, she was still well able to provide information and details of how the service is managed. The documentation provided to the Commission was completed in a thorough and timely fashion and discussions held with staff suggested there is a renewed and clear sense of direction to the service.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Visits were made to a randomly selected number of foster carers. These carers were involved in different schemes within the service and had differing lengths of experience. They were clear about the purpose of the placements and the potential for the length of the placement. Training on a range of topics was provided and seen as an appropriate and valuable tool. There was evidence of useful and comprehensive information being provided, though support on the best way to access and use this information could be further developed. Networking between carers was also facilitated and seen as a positive. Carers were aware of a complaints procedure and felt confident that issues could be raised. The homes were domestic, well decorated and furnished. There were a range of suitable facilities, with toys and playthings available which were appropriate to the ages of the children. They also confirmed health and safety issues had featured as part of the discussions with the service and their link worker.</p>		

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
<p>There continues to be an acknowledged shortfall of carers for Asian and Dual Heritage children. Efforts being made to address this shortfall include specific Asian recruitment and training programmes, using Asian radio and newspapers to advertise, and Asian link workers are employed by the service who provide co-working and are able to facilitate access to information and support on issues of diversity. Discussions with Asian carers indicated they held positive views on the recruitment and preparation process, though voiced some concerns on the timing of the panel meetings and other matters which conflicted with certain religious obligations. Children observed in placement and a number of completed questionnaires showed that suitable facilities and appropriate cultural, ethnic and religious matters were being supported and preserved.</p>		

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
Generally placements are always attempted to be properly and suitably matched, however, this is not always realistically achievable due to the acknowledged occasional shortfalls in available resources. It is accepted that the service always strives to make the best match placement at all times and recognises these shortcomings. Recent changes have been made to further refine the process as the senior care managers have a more direct input in the matching process.		

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
A range of training is available to foster carers in caring for children who may have been abused. Carers spoken with said the training was relevant and practical and support was also available on behaviour management, through the services of an in-house psychologist. Written guidelines are available to carers on how to care for children in a safe manner and discussions with several foster carers indicated that practical instruction and advice was given by link workers. Foster carers were clear that corporal punishment is unacceptable, and all those carers spoken to had developed reasonable methods of dealing with unacceptable behaviour that was understood and agreed with by the children. There are management systems in place to collate and evaluate information on allegations within the fostering 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
Case records showed good supporting evidence that contact with family or with significant other people was properly supported. Files of foster carers examined showed that with the support of the link worker they were encouraged and enabled to maintain appropriate contact with birth families. Foster carers spoken with were aware of the importance and value of these arrangements. Children and young people spoken with talked of their contact arrangements positively and with an understanding of the purpose of the contact.		

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
Discussions with and feedback from children showed that they are clear about their rights to be involved in decisions about their lives and circumstances. They are invited to contribute to and attend reviews and to make their day-to-day views known to their carers and social workers. Evidence was found of complaints being made and taken seriously.		

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)		
The fostering service ensures that it provides foster care services which help each child or young person in foster care to receive health care which meets her/his needs for physical, emotional and social development, together with information and training appropriate to her/his age and understanding to enable informed participation in decisions about her/his health needs.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
Most carers reported that they received information about the health needs of children placed with them in a timely manner. There was one exception and this matter was passed on to the manager of the service at the time of the inspection. Carers confirmed they received training on areas such as health and hygiene and first aid, and those spoken with were aware of their responsibilities with regard to promoting the full range of health needs for the children in their care. Specialist services are also available including a psychologist now working on a full time sessional basis in the unit.		

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
There was evidence found, in the sample of children's files inspected, of Personal Education Plans. It was clear that the service places a proper emphasis on meeting the educational needs of looked after children and carers were fully committed to enabling children to meet their full potential. There was appropriate educational provision in place for all the children sampled and the support networks, including the children's social workers, were geared towards supporting attendance and achievement. Carers understood their responsibilities in supporting children through assisting with homework and attending parents' evenings or other school events.		

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 was evidence in young people's reviews of the development of links with the Independent Living Team and Connexions. These services were being used to discuss the future placements and pathway plans for the young people, which included the preparation of the child to move towards independent living. The service has recognised this issue requires further development to ensure a higher quality of support to both the young people and the foster carers. Work is in progress to develop the necessary required communication between the various agencies. Young people spoken to gave examples of age appropriate opportunities to develop their independence skills.

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

Bradford City Council Social Services have a thorough and clear recruitment policy, which includes taking up a third 'random' reference and the records retained in the unit showed references and police checks are properly sought and completed. There was evidence that the link workers, managers and other staff, including administrative staff, contracted to work with the service have suitable work experience and qualifications. Discussions and interviews held with a range of staff indicated there is a clear professional understanding of the purpose of the unit with good levels of practice skill and an appreciation of the legislation that the unit works under.

Total number of staff of the agency:

42

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

10

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?

2

The service manager and team managers demonstrated clarity in the structure of the organisation and were able to show that there are systems in place to deliver support and monitor performance. Interviews with staff, however, indicated a somewhat inconsistent picture on management support, as there remains a view that the level of professional supervision and the monitoring of workloads was not always sufficient, though informal support mechanisms were seen as a valuable and positive aspect within the unit. It also appears the distribution of workloads continues to be an issue as the staff structure has become skewed due to experienced staff leaving, compounded by the success of recruitment campaigns, thus creating a backlog of assessment work for new foster carers. Some staff expressed a concern that these demands, if not attended to, could lead to best practice being compromised. Other concerns expressed by staff related to the organisation of the 'duty' system, which has developed a number of informal and ad hoc systems in an attempt to support its effectiveness. These matters indicate there is a need for the new manager to review the manner in which workloads are organised and to develop a strategic plan to meet current shortfalls. It is acknowledged that this matter has already been prioritised for action by the management team.

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.7)

The fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff and recruits a range of carers to meet the needs of children and young people for whom it aims to provide a service.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

There has been a number of staff changes over this last year that has had an impact on some areas of the service, as indicated in other standards. The use of Agency staff continues to be necessary whilst the staff recruitment process proceeds. The service does have a staff team with an appropriate range of skills and experience in working with foster carers and in administration, many of whom have worked in the service for a considerable time. There are other staff with specific roles to compliment and support the work of the unit; these include a recently appointed marketing officer, a full time psychologist and three placement support workers. There is a foster carer recruitment policy and strategy in place that is aimed at recruiting a range of carers, from all parts of the community, which aspires to meet the diverse needs of children requiring placement. The carer assessment process is based on a competence evaluation and is a thorough and comprehensive procedure.

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?**

2

The authority has a range of policies and practices in place that are designed to protect workers and carers, including well structured grievance and disciplinary procedures. An out of hours service is available to carers and there is a system for appraisal and support. Discussions held individually with a number of carers and a representative carers group known as B.A.F.A. indicated that in the main support was valued and seen as both practical and useful, though some comments suggested there were some inconsistencies, related to staffing issues in the unit. There are a number of carers who do not have allocated workers which means the provision of support is less predictable as this is managed through the team managers.

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

The service links into the departmental training programme and there is also specific training provision based on staff appraisal. Discussions held with staff members in a group meeting indicated that some staff feel there are limitations to the breadth and depth of the training available and it was said that the specialist nature of their work was not provided for within the training unit strategy as the focus was more to do with direct field work practice. Individual discussions with managers and staff suggested there is a proper appreciation and intent to ensure appropriate and relevant training to all staff. There are appraisal schemes in place to assess individual training needs and evidence of a good range of training accessible both in-house and (though geographical location may be problematic) externally.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5) All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
All staff have job descriptions and were clear about their roles and responsibilities. Formal staff supervision has some degree of inconsistency and is an issue that the management team are in the process of reviewing. Appraisals are taking place at suitable intervals. There are both weekly team and monthly unit meetings held where professional issues as well as practical matters can be raised.		

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
There is a clear and explicit strategy developed by the unit for working with and supporting carers. Foster carers spoken with talked of good relationships and an understanding of the differing roles between the 'link worker' and the children's social worker. Annual reviews are held and carers experienced this as a positive process and in most cases as a support and incentive to develop their practice.		

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
Foster carers are provided with a handbook containing a wide range of information, including details of how the unit will provide support and how carers can access the range of services available. Whilst carers spoken with were acknowledging of the value of this handbook, there was a clear view that it was a daunting document and caused some to worry and have a sense of being overloaded, unfortunately contradicting its purpose. There are a range of methods through which supervision takes place, including meetings with individual and in groups. Complaint procedures were available, with carers understanding how to make proper use of them and all those spoken with knew how allegations would be progressed and that they could access independent support, for example through the B.A.F.A. group.		

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
There was evidence of a range of training accessible to carers. This is made available from the pre-approval through to the induction stage and then forms part of a yearly cycle where there is a clear expectation that carers will attend. The issue is addressed at the annual appraisal and carers are encouraged to attend courses that will support their practice development. There is an appropriate range of training available and courses may also be attended by professionals from both social and health care bodies. There were some comments about the space available for the training that takes place in the unit, which was felt to have been encroached upon. Comments made by some Muslim carers pointed out how a lack of privacy impinged on their time for prayer. Some carers are in the process of NVQ competences, and another group, led by a link worker, is for the children of foster carers.		

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

There is clear guidance in the procedure provided to foster carers on the content and standards of maintaining case files. Case records inspected were found to be up to date and sufficient in detail. Files inspected through a tracking process were also found to be up to date and contained information which can contribute to the service user's understanding of their life events. Foster carers confirmed they had been tutored in ways to record and maintain information of significance to the child. Files are kept in a secure environment.

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

The "Information, Policies and Practice Manual" was examined. This contained relevant documentation and, whilst there was good and clear guidelines for carer's on the use of restraint, the application and use of sanctions and a whistle blowing policy that has been adapted for use by foster carers, elements did not accord with current practice. A general review and revision is necessary for the records to be more reflective of this current practice. Over the last year some of the policies and procedures including those in the foster carer handbook have gradually become out of step as working practices have evolved due to the lack of direct managerial oversight. The administrative records are maintained in a secure environment.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:

331

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:

26

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

1

Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £

152.39

Maximum £

529.18

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Whilst the building is appropriate and suitable for the purpose and the administrative systems are well managed and robust, the IT system fails to fully support the staff, due to the age of the hardware and associated software packages. Suitable security arrangements are in place throughout the building. It may be beneficial to the management of the service if the use of the rooms in the building are reviewed, as there has been a gradual intrusion and consequent erosion of room space, due to activities and work related to other aspects of the children's services division.

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

This service forms part of Bradford Social Services, which in turn forms part of the Council's overall Financial Plan.

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?

0

This standard was not assessed at this inspection.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There is a fee structure and payment system that provides for a range of allowances. The structure relates to the nature of the particular scheme the carer is on and provides an incentive for carers to attend training. Increases in fee payments also depend on the outcome of the annual review and the number of placements that have occurred. Foster carers spoken with felt that the allowance system was satisfactorily efficient, as were the administration of expenses.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
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Two panels operate within this service, one was attended and a subsequent interview was held with the chairperson of that panel. There remains some difficulties for the make-up and consistent attendance of all the necessary members to the panel, though there is a clear improvement from the previous two inspections of this service. Due to the period of time that often elapses between the carer application and attendance at panel some of the statutory checks and references can be to the point of being out of date, which could invalidate the recommendation. It is understood that the service is reviewing the application procedure so that the references will be applied for later, whilst continuing to accept that it will still take some time for the whole process to be completed. It has become custom and practice to hold panels on a Friday, this day is not always convenient to practising members of the Muslim community and is a matter that should be reviewed.

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 service has established links with a shared care and support care scheme. Appropriate policies and guidance are in place to support consistency. Comments from the foster carer group (B.A.F.A) indicated the system is seen as a supportive scheme.	3
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Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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The service is sensitive to the needs of family and friends approved as carers, and these carers appear to be appropriately supported through assessment. Training and subsequent post approval support, though, is not fully matched and consistent with the other areas of the service.	3
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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 18th October 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

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

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

Public reports

It should be noted that all CSCI inspection reports are public documents. 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 Alison O'Sullivan of Bradford Adoption & Fostering Unit 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 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 or 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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