



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

Wigan Social Services Dept Fostering Service

Hesketh Meadow
196 Newton Road
Lowton
Warrington
Cheshire
WA3 2AQ

12th November 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

Wigan Social Services Dept Fostering Service

Address

Civic Centre, Millgate, Wigan, Greater Manchester, WN1
1AZ

Local Authority Manager

Tel No:

01942 827 819

Address

Civic Centre, Millgate, Wigan, Greater Manchester, WN1
1AZ

Fax No:

01942 404745

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

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Date of first registration

Date of latest registration certificate

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

14/1/04

Date of Inspection Visit		12th November 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Anthony Kyem	111309
Name of Inspector	2	Mark Kersh	
Name of Inspector	3	None	
Name of Inspector	4	None	
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.		None	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		None	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Paula Jones	

Introduction to Report and Inspection

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Description of Fostering Service

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Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection

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Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings

(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

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

D.1. Provider's comments

D.2. Action Plan

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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 Wigan Social Services Dept Fostering Service. 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.

Wigan Social Service's Department's Fostering Service, provides both care and accommodation through recruited foster carers to a large proportion of the looked after children and young peoples population.

The numbers of foster carers recruited by the service on the 20.10.04 were: 70 recruited foster carers, 76 family and friends' carers, and 17 family network carers.

A total of 134 children and young people were placed with recruited foster carers, 102 were placed with relative friend carers, with 13 children and young people placed with family network foster carers. The service also has 1 treatment foster carer with whom one child is currently placed.

The Fostering Service has undergone a recent restructure this year, resulting in the appointment of a new Fostering Manager. The service has also been relocated to new office premises, which are now situated in Hesketh Meadow in Lowton.

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 is the third successive occasion Wigan Social Services Department's Fostering Service has been assessed against the National Minimum Standards, under the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. The service was observed to have complied with all but three of the statutory requirements, as were previously identified following the service's last inspection, dated January 2004.

The Responsible Person's must now address all outstanding requirements and good practice recommendations, as identified following this inspection, and address these shortfalls within the new timescales identified.

As part of the overall methodology used to undertake this Inspection. Three recruited foster carers and one relative friend carer were case tracked. Ten children and young people were looked after within these placements and were also case tracked as part of the inspection process. Allocated supervising social workers were also interviewed, as to was the Fostering Service's Manager. Questionnaires were also sent to out by the CSCI to a proportion of the children, their social workers and their carers, to ascertain their views about the service. Brief summaries of the Inspection Teams findings are detailed below.

Statement of Purpose

The Fostering Service has a written Statement of Purpose, which was last reviewed in October 2004. The document is currently in a draft format and has yet to be formally approved by an elected member of cabinet. The Responsible Person should ensure that the statement accurately reflects the structural changes, which have recently occurred to the service. The Children's Guide is a comprehensive document, which does contain very useful information for looked after children and young people.

Fitness to provide or manage a fostering service

Discussions both Inspectors held with the Manager, would indicate that the Manager does possess the necessary leadership and managerial qualities, as required, to manage the Fostering Service. The Manager of the service is line managed by the Group Manager of the service who is of senior standing. The Manager's file was examined and was found to contain most of the required information as detailed within Schedule 1 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. One irregularity with the required information was identified.

The shortfalls identified in meeting Standard 3 of the NMS were:

1. That the service failed to notify the Commission for Social Care Inspection of the appointment of a new manager under Regulation 6(3)(a) & (b), and that
2. Examination of the Manager's file revealed that no references were sought or obtained prior to her appointment.

The Responsible Person must ensure that suitable references are obtained for the Manager of the service. Regulation 5,7, & 20 Fostering Services Regulation 2002.

Management of the fostering service

The service has the required systems in place to monitor its own performance. The Fostering Manager has overall responsibility to ensure that quality services are afforded. There are clear and well established lines of accountability between managers, carers and staff. Two senior social workers are accessible to the team, in the Fostering Managers absence. In their absence, the Group Manger of the service is available to the team. The latter arrangements are in keeping with Standard 5.4 of the National Minimum Standards Fostering Services Regulations 2002. Since the recent restructure of the service, several new members of staff have been appointed in enabling the service to achieve its aims and objectives.

Securing and promoting welfare

One young person interviewed by an Inspector had this to say about the care afforded to her by her foster carers, “ Been in a few foster homes. This is the best one ever...Love us like their own, best foster people ever. I think they deserve a medal. “

The Fostering Service prior to this inspection had informed carer's, by way of a quarterly news letter, that they may be interviewed as part of the Commissions inspection process. Some carers communicated that no risk assessments were made available to them on children placed with them. 3 of 4 carers interviewed felt that the information provided at the point of a child's accommodation could be greatly improved. Allowances payable to all recruited foster carers have been increased, which is commendable, and has resulted in a significant increase in approved carers over the past twelve months.

All recruited foster carers receive a comprehensive post approval pack, which covers the service's guidelines and safe care procedures. Carers are also required to complete a foster carers agreement post approval, which outlines the expectations placed upon them by the service. The agreement also requires that carers must not use any form of corporal punishment on any child or young person placed with them by the service.

It is unclear how the service consults with young people about their experiences of the service, other than where their experiences have been negative, leading to complaints or discloses. The services of a children's rights officer/advocate may improve upon the existing opportunities for consultation to occur in this respect.

The Responsible Person must ensure that carers and young people are made aware of the services they should be receiving from the after care team. Where young people are of an appropriate age, the service must ensure that young people are consulted about their future, and are encouraged to be actively involved in the decision making process and implementation of the Pathway Plan.

Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers

The Inspectors examined the Fostering Service's staff's personnel files on site. All were observed to be order, in keeping with the required information as detailed within Schedule 1 of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002. Enhanced CRB disclosures for those files selected were also examined. No irregularities were identified. One worker interviewed stated, " Since we moved here there are delays in getting reports typed, some workers are typing their own letters. I think admin support is insufficient. " Staff also raised this very same issue during a staff meeting attended, which an Inspector directly observed. The Responsible Person should ensure that there is an appropriate level of clerical and administrative support.

Of the four carers visited by the Inspectors 3 of 4 felt supported and spoke favourably of the service. The 1 carer who felt unsupported was a relative friend carer. The other 3 carers were all recruited foster carers. The Fostering Service has the required systems in place for carer supervision, appraisal and support. Comprehensive health and safety policies are in place for carers, which cover legal requirements. The services whistle blowing policy is included within the post approval pack for newly recruited carers.

The uptake of carers on training remains low, particularly amongst those established foster carers. Newly recruited carers are required to attend training, as part of their professional development. The policies and procedures of the service are accessible to staff. The supervision of staff is monthly and a written record is kept and maintained by the service. The supervision of recruited foster carer's is undertaken as specified within Regulation 35 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. Inspection of carer's files demonstrated that staff have worked extremely hard in delivering monthly supervision to carers.

Records

From the sample of the children's individual case files examined, most were found to be in order. Some files require Looked After Children documentation and care plans to be updated. The statutory review arrangements for children and young people placed by the service were all found to be in order. The service maintains individual written records on staff, carers, children, complaints and allegations in keeping with Standard 25.2. The Inspectors examined a number of these records.

Carer's files were all found to be in order and did contain the necessary information in meeting with Regulation 30. Records are kept of all checks and references obtained. The systems for keeping records are congruent with the Looking After Children's System.

Fitness of premises for use as a fostering service

The Inspectors visually examined the services new premises. The building was observed to appropriate for its intended purpose and function. The office space, although limited, is adequate. The only recommendation identified with this standard, is that although files are securely stored within an alarmed basement. The installation of iron bars or other suitable materials to all windows of the basement would greatly improve security.

Financial requirements

The allowances payable to all carers are clearly described within the foster carers post approval pack. The fee payable has been reviewed and increased this year in view of the changing needs of the service, in terms of staff retention.

Fostering panels

As part of the methodology of this inspection. The service's panel was observed. The Chair of the Fostering Panel is also the Strategic Manager for children in public care. The Fostering Panel meets every six weeks and has now been formally constituted. Discussions are currently underway to decide whether the panel should be held every four weeks. Observations of panel members demonstrated that independent representatives from health and education are included. Quorate numbers for panel to proceed are five in keeping with Regulation 25(1). The minutes of previous panel meetings were observed and found to be in order. The recordings of the minutes taken during the panel were observed to be written in pencil. The Responsible Person should ensure that the minutes of future panel meetings are recorded in pen.

Short term breaks

The Fostering Service has 17 dedicated family network carers whom provide short term breaks for 13 children and young people requiring this service. Specialist equipment is provided as required. Family network carers are assessed and prepared to the same standards as with other recruited carers.

Family and friends as carers

The Fostering Services, Family and Friends fostering procedures state that, " Family and friends foster carers will be supported in the same way as other local authority foster carers but with differences which acknowledge their unique relationship to the looked after child concerned. "

All family and friend carers have been provided with a named key contact of the Placement Support Team. However, they have not been afforded the same status as with other carers in terms of training and supervision.

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:

Since the change to the CSCI. This section of the report is no longer applicable.

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NO

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

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	
Not applicable to this service.		
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
N/a		
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
N/a		
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
N/a		
Comments		

Lead Inspector Tony Kyem **Signature** _____**Second Inspector** Mark Kersh **Signature** _____**Locality Manager** Susan Easton **Signature** S M Easton **Date** 13/12/04

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	3 & 4	FS1	The Responsible Person must ensure that cabinet formally approves the Statement of Purpose. The Registered Person should also ensure that the document accurately reflects the structural and staffing changes, which have occurred to the service.	21/1/05
3	17(1)(3)	FS6	The Responsible Person must ensure that all children placed by the service have a risk assessment completed, which is made available to all recruited foster carers prior to the placement of any child. A copy of the risk assessment should also be retained on the child's file. (Timescale of the 1/3/04 not met)	21/3/05
4	35	FS32	The Responsible Person must ensure that kinship carers are supported in the same way that other recruited foster carers are supported. (Timescale of the 1/4/04 not met)	20/2//04

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	FS1	The Responsible Person should ensure that a separate Children's Guide is developed for children and young people with complex needs.
2	FS4	The Responsible Person should continue to ensure that lines of communication between teams are improved.
3	FS9	The Responsible Person should ensure that the policy on the use of holding/restraint makes it clear, that for some children and young people placed by the service, a no holding policy would be required. The Responsible Person should also ensure that carers are appraised on the policy once approved.
4	FS11	The Responsible Person should ensure that young people's opinions are routinely sought over all key issues that are likely to affect their daily life and their future.
5	FS12	The Responsible Person should ensure that supervising social workers monitor the quality of the written information provided to carers, in ensuring they carers have the relevant information at hand required to provide quality care.
6	FS14	The Responsible Person should ensure that carers and young people are made aware of the services they should be receiving from the after care team. Where young people are of an appropriate age, the service should ensure that young people are consulted about their future and are encouraged to be actively involved in the decision-making process and implementation of the Pathway Plan.
7	FS16	The Responsible Person should ensure that there is an appropriate level of clerical and administrative support provided by the service.
8	FS18	The Responsible Person should ensure that the document currently used to record carer supervision is revised and further developed.
9	FS24	The Responsible Person should ensure that looked after children documentation is kept up to date in respect of each child placed by the service.
10	FS26	The Responsible Person should ensure that the windows to the basement of the service are made completely secure.
11	FS3	The Responsible Person must ensure that suitable references are obtained for the Manager of the service.

* 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	7
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	YES
• Child protection officer	YES
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	NA
• 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	12/11/04
Time of Inspection	10.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	42.5

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 Fostering Service has a written Statement of Purpose, which was last reviewed in October 2004. The document is currently in a draft format and has yet to be formally approved by an elected member of cabinet. The Responsible Person should ensure that the statement accurately reflects the structural changes, which have recently occurred to the service. The Fostering Service's Children's Guide entitled, " Being in care in Wigan " has been supplied to all recruited foster carers, in addition to all children and young people placed, aged 8 years and over. A separate guide has yet to be devised in making the document suitable for children and younger people with complex needs. The latter remaining a minor shortfall as previously identified following the services last annual inspection. The Children's Guide is a comprehensive document, which does contain very useful information for looked after children and young people.

Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The fostering service is provided and managed by those with the appropriate skills and experience to do so efficiently and effectively and by those who are suitable to work with children.

Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.4)

The people involved in carrying on and managing the fostering service possess the necessary business and management skills and financial expertise to manage the work efficiently and effectively and have the necessary knowledge and experience of childcare and fostering to do so in a professional manner.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Manager of the Fostering Service is new in post and is both suitably experienced and qualified. The Manager is currently completing the NVQ level 4, Diploma in Management the completion date for which is April 2005.

Discussions both Inspectors held with the Manager, would indicate that the Manager does possess the necessary leadership and managerial qualities required to manage a Fostering Service. The Manager of the service is line managed by the Group Manager of the service who is of senior standing.

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?

2

A new Team Manager for the service has now been appointed.

The Manager's personal file was examined as part of this inspection, along with a selection of the Fostering Service's staff's files. (See standard 15 of this report) The Manager's file was found to contain most of the required information as detailed within Schedule 1 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. One irregularity with the required information was identified. The shortfalls identified in meeting this standard, were

1. That the service failed to notify the Commission for Social Care Inspection of the appointment of a new manager under Regulation 6(3)(a) & (b), and that
2. Examination of the Manager's file revealed that no references were sought or obtained prior to her appointment.

The Responsible Person must ensure that suitable references are obtained for the Manager of the service. Regulation 5,7, & 20 Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

CRB checks for all staff are renewed every three years.

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?

2

The service has the required systems in place to monitor its own performance. The Fostering Manager has overall responsibility to ensure that quality services are afforded. There are clear and well established lines of accountability between managers, carers and staff. However one serious shortfall with internal communications was identified.

During a home visit, which was undertaken by an Inspector to a foster carers home. It was identified that a young foster child aged 1, was taken by a relative, whilst on supervised contact. When the inspector interviewed the foster carer's supervising social worker, some two days later. The supervising social worker was not in fact aware of the incident. The Emergency Duty Team had not reported the incident to the service, as it should have done. The placing social worker had not alerted the service either. The CSCI have written separately to the local authority outside of this inspection. A suitable response has been received with assurance to improve communication in the future.

The Registered Person should continue to ensure that lines of communication between teams are improved in this respect, in ensuring that the welfare of children is promoted. The supervising social worker once made aware of the incident did contact the foster carer to offer support.

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

X

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

0

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

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

0

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

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

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

1

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

5

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

0

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

0

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)**The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

The Manger of the service has a written job description, which outlines her duties and responsibilities. The Manager does not hold a similar position with any other organisation or service. All workers employed by the service are made aware of the fact that they must declare any possible conflicts of interests. Two senior social workers are accessible to the team, in the Fostering Managers absence. In their absence, the Group Manger of the service is available to the team. The latter arrangements are in keeping with Standard 5.4 of the National Minimum Standards Fostering Services Regulations 2002. Since the recent restructure of the service, several new members of staff have been appointed in enabling the service to achieve its aims and objectives.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

During the course of this inspection, visits were undertaken to four foster carer's own homes. The carer's homes were all found to be comfortably warm, clean and adequately furnished to accommodate all who live there. Prior to being approved, prospective foster carers are required to undertake training, which covers health and safety and safe care. Those young people interviewed during the course of this inspection communicated that they were completely satisfied with the care they received. Young people who had completed the pre inspection questionnaires, and returned these to the Commission for Social Care Inspection prior to this inspection, also agreed this. One young person interviewed by an Inspector had this to say about the care afforded to her by her carers, " Been in a few foster homes. This is the best one ever...Love us like their own, best foster people ever. I think they deserve a medal "

The Fostering Service, prior to this inspection, had informed carer's, by way of a quarterly news letter, that they may be interviewed as part of the Commissions inspection process. The contact details of the lead Inspector were published in the newsletter, in promoting and encouraging foster carers involvement within the inspection process. Risk assessments were available on four of the five children placed, where one exemption had occurred resulting in one foster carer exceeding the approved numbers. The Responsible Person must ensure that all carers are given risk assessments on all children placed. Some carers communicated that no risk assessments were made available to them on children placed with them. 3 of 4 carers interviewed felt that the information provided at the point of a child's accommodation could be greatly improved. Of the sample of children's case files examined, only one file was observed to have a written risk assessment available.

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

The service is making positive efforts, with a recruitment campaign aimed at prospective carers for children and young people of non-white backgrounds, with the intention of increasing placement choice and stability for such children. The service is currently working closely with the local education department to undertake this task, with the recruitment campaign being launched through schools in the borough. Out of borough placements continue to be used where internal provisions are limited. Of those foster carers visited. It would appear that carers are considerate when offering equal access and opportunities to children and young people placed. Matching the needs of older children i.e. teenagers, remains difficult where internal provisions are limited. The service is however specifically looking to recruit more foster carers for older children. Allowances payable to all recruited foster carers have been increased, which is commendable and has resulted in a significant increase in approved carers over the past twelve months. The service is looking to further expand on the multiplicity of its recruited 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

The Fostering Service does ensure, as far as is reasonably practical, that all children are carefully matched with carers capable of meeting young people's individual assessed needs. This cannot always be successfully achieved, especially where children have to be placed in an emergency. The service's recruitment of prospective foster carers will hopefully improve upon the diversity and multiplicity of existing carers. Where possible, children and young people are given the opportunity for introductions to carers and their homes. The Fostering Service does undertake detailed checks during the matching process and takes into account young people's care plans. The Fostering Panel with responsibility for the approval of foster carers consists of professional people with relevant experience of fostering. The Fostering Service has been successful this year in the recruitment of 12 new sets of recruited foster carers with a further 24 relative friend carers due to be approved.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)		
The fostering service protects each child or young person from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>All recruited foster carers receive a comprehensive post approval pack, which covers the service's guidelines and safe care procedures. Carers are also required to complete a foster carers agreement post approval, which outlines the expectations placed upon them by the service. The agreement also requires that carers must not use any form of corporal punishment on any child or young person placed with them by the service.</p> <p>All carers and workers employed by the service have attended child protection training. All are made aware of and further subscribe to the service's safe care policy. Bullying is addressed within the post approval pack for all newly recruited carers.</p> <p>The service has now written a draft policy, following the last inspection, pertaining to the use of permissible and prohibited forms of control. The document contains guidance for carers on the use of restraint or holding within a foster home in keeping with Regulation 13. The Responsible Person should ensure that the policy makes it clear, that for some children and young people placed by the service, a no holding policy would be required. Carers will also need to be trained in de-escalation techniques and in care and control, where appropriate.</p>		
Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:	0	%

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
<p>Emphasis is placed on the importance of maintaining contact, during pre-approval training for prospective foster carers. Carers are required, where necessary, to facilitate and promote contact where this is in the young person's best interests. One carer informed the inspector that a young person's mother would sometimes come to her home for tea, in supporting the local authorities contact arrangements. The service also has dedicated contact officers and social work assistants who supervise contact, as required. The views of children and young people are sought regards contact. Contact is also covered and monitored by the service during supervisory visits, which are undertaken by designated staff each month.</p>		

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
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Young people spoken to during the course of this inspection, felt that their carers regularly consulted with them about issues, which affect them on day to day matters, such as school, contact and friends etc. Young people spoken to appeared to be aware of their right to complain about the service and gave their social worker as being their key contact in doing this. It is unclear how the service consults with young people about their experiences of the service, other than where their experiences have been negative, leading to complaints or disclosures. The services of a children's rights officer/advocate may improve upon the opportunities for consultation to occur in this respect. The Responsible Person should ensure that young people's opinions are routinely sought over all key issues that are likely to affect their daily life and their future.

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
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The service does ensure that carers secure the necessary health care services for children in meeting this standard. Generally, health needs are routinely monitored during the statutory review process. The selection of children's case files examined contained evidence that annual medical assessments have been undertaken. Foster carers confirmed that they had been given care plans, which detail young people's health care needs. One of 4 carers visited had very little information at hand on two very young children placed. Looked After Children documentation was found to have been insufficiently completed. The Responsible Person should ensure that supervising social workers monitor the quality of the written information provided to carers, in ensuring carers have the relevant information required to provide quality care.

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

The service has access to the lead education officer for children and young people in public care. Emphasis is placed on the importance of education during pre-approval training for prospective foster carers. Carers are consequently required to support young people with their education. Both carers and young people gave positive examples of this during this inspection. Carers have made professional links with schools and participate in parent's evenings and meetings at school. Educational achievements are celebrated by the service. One young person, with previous educational difficulties, spoke favourably of the level of support on hand from her carers, stating " when I moved here, they pushed me for my grades. They helped me. They helped me in a lot of ways. They have helped me a lot with school. " The Placement Support Team is also available to carers where educational difficulties arise. The service was also observed to ensure that carers provide an environment where education and learning are valued. Two of the foster carers home's visited had personal computers installed by the service, which young people do use for educational purposes.

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?**

2

The Fostering Manager advised the Inspection Team that all carers had been invited to an event run by the after care team in providing an opportunity for carers to obtain information on how best to support young people with their transition towards independence. One carer visited did not understand or fully appreciate the importance of a Pathway Plan having no working knowledge of the purpose of such a plan. The carer had not received any training or guidance on independence training, however, had actively supported the young person with gaining employment. The young person in placement was 16 years of age yet he did not have a Pathway Plan. The carer discussed with the Inspector some initial difficulties with the levels of support provided to the young person by the after care team. The Responsible Person should ensure that carers and young people are made aware of the services they should be receiving from the after care team, and that where young people are of an appropriate age, the service should ensure that young people are consulted about their future and are encouraged to be actively involved in the decision making process and implementation of the Pathway Plan.

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

The Inspectors examined the Fostering Service's staff's personnel files on site. All were observed to be order, in keeping with the information as detailed within Schedule 1 of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002. Enhanced CRB disclosures for those files selected were also examined. No irregularities were identified. Clear and written recruitment and selection procedures for appointing new staff are in place, which follow good practice guidance in safeguarding children and young people. The supervising social workers interviewed as part of this inspection, were all conversant with their roles and responsibilities in relation to the service. All staff spoken to were suitably qualified and experienced. A new staff recruitment and retention strategy is now in place which workers were observed to have subscribed to. The allowances payable to all recruited foster carers has been increased as part of the service's staff retention strategy.

Total number of staff of the agency:

26

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?

2

Two supervising social workers and the PST Team Manager were formally interviewed during the course of this inspection. Each were monitored and supported by the Manager of the service. Professional supervision and consultation are provided for all staff employed. From the discussions held with staff, it would appear that there is insufficient administrative support to enable workers to complete set tasks. One worker interviewed stated,

“ Since we moved here there are delays in getting reports typed, some workers are typing their own letters. I think admin support is insufficient. “

Staff also raised this very same issue during a staff meeting attended, which an Inspector had the opportunity to observe. The Registered Person must ensure that there is an appropriate level of clerical and administrative support provided by the service. It was also identified through the discussions held with staff, that staff had not always undertaken further training appropriate to their professional development. The uptake of further training amongst staff appears to be low. All communicated very little attendance with further training. The Services Manager should consider these comments in respect of the development of individuals within the 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
<p>The Fostering Service has a clear assessment process for newly recruited carers, which was evidenced through the discussions held with staff, carers, and through direct observations undertaken in relation to panel. The service is staffed in such a way that the service does strive to achieve the required compliment of staff to meet the needs of the service in line with it's Statement of Purpose. The service currently has two vacancies to fill, in ensuring that the full compliment of staff is achieved at all times. Staff retention strategies are now in place for both staff and carers. Of the four carers visited by the Inspectors, 3 of 4 felt supported and spoke favourably of the service. The 1 carer who felt unsupported was a relative friend carer. The other 3 carers were all recruited foster carers.</p>		

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>There are sound employment practices in place, in relation to both staff and recruited foster carers. Out of hours support is available to all carers through the provision of the Placement Support Team whom provide a wide-ranging and flexible service. Carers can access the service direct through the use of a free phone contact telephone number.</p> <p>One carer who had accessed the services of the PST discussed how supportive the team had been. The team can provide a childminding service to carers, where carers are unable to attend meetings, training or keep significant appointments. Direct work and support for individual children and young people is also provided, as to are support groups for carers.</p> <p>One fostered child visited within placement discussed how she had received anger management training from a PST worker. Both the young person and her carers communicated the positive benefits of the team's involvement.</p> <p>The Fostering Service has the required systems in place for carer supervision, appraisal and support. Comprehensive health and safety policies are in place for carers, which cover legal requirements. The services whistle blowing policy is included within the post approval pack for newly recruited carers. The pro forma document used to record carer supervision could be improved. The document used to record visits undertaken does not prompt or encourage supervising social workers to ask what the services expectations are, in relation to such things as food, clothing, recreation, space, privacy etc, although these matters are generally covered by staff within the bullet point of " other business ". The Responsible Person should ensure the document is revised and further developed.</p>		

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)		
There is a good quality training programme to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Foster carers are given the same access to training as with all of social services staff. In addition, the service has commissioned specific training for newly recruited foster carers. The uptake of carers on training remains low, particularly amongst those established foster carers. Newly recruited carers are required to attend training, as part of their professional development. Carers still have mixed views about training with a wide-ranging rationale for non-attendance. One carer visited was a regularly attendee on training courses and spoke favourably of the courses attended. The service has now begun to closely scrutinise the poor uptake of training undertaken by some carers. The training needs of all carers are informally discussed during supervisory visits. Training is also now monitored and reviewed as part of a carer's annual review. One worker spoken to felt that the courses currently provided to existing carers could be simplified, in providing specific courses on parenting.</p>		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)		
All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>From the discussions the Inspectors held with staff and carers, it would appear that on the whole, those employed by the service do feel well supported. Staff meetings and staff supervisions are all regularly held.</p> <p>The policies and procedures of the service are accessible to staff. The supervision of staff is monthly and a written record is kept and maintained by the service.</p> <p>A Supervision and Appraisal Policy was introduced in January 2003.</p>		

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6)		
The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The Fostering Service regularly reviews the support systems in place, in terms of its effectiveness in working with and supporting its carers.</p> <p>Carer's and staff are clear about each other's roles.</p> <p>The systems in place for the annual reviews of carer's, is thorough with detailed written reports prepared for panel.</p> <p>The arrangements available for respite carers could be improved with the specific recruitment and numbers of sufficient respite carers. The service is however looking to recruit more carers for this purpose. This is one area of the service those carers spoken to would appreciate seeing improvements in.</p>		

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)

The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The supervision of recruited foster carer's is undertaken as specified within Regulation 35 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. Inspection of carer's files demonstrated that staff have worked extremely hard in delivering monthly supervision to carers. From the written summaries available on those carers files examined, this task has been successfully achieved. Foster carer agreements ensure that carers are made aware of the expectations placed upon them by the service. From the home visits undertaken by the Inspectors, recruited foster carers verbally communicated having supportive relations with their own individual supervising social workers. The systems in place for the annual reviews of carer's are thorough with detailed reports prepared for panel. All relative friend carers have now had annual reviews completed by the service.

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

A mentor scheme is in place, which involves recruited fosters carers participating within the assessment and pre approval training of prospective foster carers. The training provided by the service to recruited carers is underpinned with equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice. Newly recruited carers are now automatically nominated for four training courses within the first year of their approval. A further four courses are subsequently provided post approval. After this, attendance on any future training courses becomes optional.

Foster carers are encouraged to attend NVQ training. One carer interviewed was near completion of this. The service having recognised that the uptake of existing training is low, has sought the views of foster carers as part of its training plans annual review. This was achieved through the use of a consultation questionnaire, which was sent to some 200 carers. As with training, the feedback received was low with only 22 questionnaires received. Foster carers annual reviews, now include a review by panel of the training and developmental needs of all 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

Each set of foster carers spoken to, demonstrated an understanding in relation to confidentiality. Information on recording is contained within foster carers post approval pack. All of the carers spoken to kept daily diaries pertaining to the day-to-day events and occurrences of their respective households. The service should ensure that supervising staff sign foster carers diaries periodically.

From the sample of the children's individual case files examined, most were found to be in order. Some files require Looked After Children documentation and care plans to be updated. The statutory review arrangements for children and young people placed by the service were all found to be in order.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The service maintains individual written records on staff, carers, children, complaints and allegations in keeping with Standard 25.2. The Inspectors examined a number of these records. Carer's files were all found to be in order and did contain the necessary information in meeting with Regulation 30. Records are kept of all checks and references obtained. The systems for keeping records are congruent with the Looking After Children's System.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:	236
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:	93
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:	12
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:	4
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	212.48
Maximum £	250.89

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 premises used by the Fostering Service have changed since the service was previously inspected. The new office premises are now at Hesketh Meadow Road in Lowton. The new premises now house both the Placement Support Team and the Fostering Service.

The Inspectors visually examined the services new premises. The building was observed to be appropriate for its intended purpose and function. The office space although limited, is adequate.

The only recommendation identified with this standard, is that although files are securely stored within an alarmed basement. The installation of iron bars or other suitable materials to all windows of the basement would greatly improve security.

The windows from the outside of the property are vulnerable, and potentially penetrable from the outside. The Responsible Person should ensure that these windows are made more secure. This issue was raised with the Manager of the service.

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?	9
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This standard is not applicable to a Local Authority run Fostering Service so has not been assessed.

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?	9
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This standard is not applicable to a local authority run Fostering Service so has not been assessed.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

Of those carers spoken to during this inspection, each confirmed they had always received prompt payment, payable by bank transfer on a monthly basis. No dissatisfactions were communicated with the method of payment used.

The allowances payable to all carers are clearly described within the foster carers post approval pack. The fee payable has been reviewed and increased this year in view of the changing needs of the service, in terms of staff retention.

The payments received by carers are regularly reviewed.

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

As part of the overall methodology of this inspection. The service's panel was observed. The Chair of the Fostering Panel is also the Strategic Manager for children in public care. The Fostering Panel meets every six weeks and has now been formally constituted. Discussions are currently underway to decide whether the panel should be held every four weeks. Observations of panel members demonstrated that independent representatives from health and education are included. Quorate numbers for panel to proceed are five in keeping with Regulation 25(1). The minutes of previous panel meetings were observed and found to be in order.

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 Fostering Service has 17 dedicated family network carers whom provide short term breaks for 13 children and young people requiring this service. Specialist equipment is provided as required.

Family network carers are assessed and prepared to the same standards as with other recruited carers. Detailed information concerning the specific needs of individual children and young people is collated from children's families, prior to the placement of children in ensuring that effective matching is achieved.

Parents remain central to the promotion of their own child's individual health and education.

Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
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Whilst it is acknowledged that the service has done extremely well this year in holding annual reviews on all approved family and friend carers. It also has to be equally acknowledged that the service has not yet quite managed to support relative friend carers, in the same way as with other recruited foster carers, which is a shortfall. The Fostering Services, Family and Friends Fostering Procedures state that,

“ family and friends foster carers will be supported in the same way as other local authority foster carers but with differences which acknowledge their unique relationship to the looked after child concerned. “

All family and friend carers have been provided with a named key contact of the Placement Support Team. However they have not been afforded the same status as with other carers in terms of training and supervision. One relative friend carer, visited by an Inspector, communicated experiencing some behavioural difficulties with the child she cares for, communicating both past and present difficulties. When asked about the types of support the service had provided her with. Her answer was “ I have no contact with anyone at all. I only see them when it’s a review. “

The carer did however have the contact details of the Placement Support Team. When asked why she hadn’t contacted her key contact, the carer replied, “ what’s the point. I’ve had to manage all these years on my own “

Clearly the relative friend carer has, in this instance, failed to take up support, where support could have been available. Through the use of appropriate supervision the carer may have felt more able to have requested support.

The service should ensure that all relative friends carers are supervised in identifying any potential difficulties within these placements, which are significant in numbers. Examination of one carers file revealed serious concerns about a child placed with a relative friend carer having access to a suspected offender. This further evidences the need for the appropriate supervision of these placements. The placement of the young person broke down following a child protection investigation due to an allegation made by the child.

The Responsible Person must ensure that relative friends carers are supported in the same way that other recruited foster carers are supported. One way in which the service could achieve this would be for the placement support team to have more contact with relative friends carers. The re introduction of the fortnightly telephone contact would assist the service in this respect.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Not applicable.

Lay Assessor N/a **Signature** N/a

Date N/a

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 12th November 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

"We are working on the best way to include provider responses in the published report. In the meantime responses received are available on request."

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

NO

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

YES

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 Thursday 13th January 2005, which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

NO

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

Public reports

It should be noted that all CSCI inspection reports are public documents. 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 Wigan Social Services – Fostering Service 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 Wigan Social Services - Fostering Service 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.

“Providers comments and an action plan are available at the Area Office, where these have been submitted.”

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