



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

Nottingham City Council Fostering Service

14 Hounds Gate
Nottingham
Nottinghamshire
NG1 7BE

16th March 2005

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

Local Authority Fostering Service?

YES

Name of Authority

Nottingham City Council Fostering Service

Address

14 Hounds Gate, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, NG1 7BE

Local Authority Manager

Sonia Cain

Tel No:

0115 915 5555

Address

14 Hounds Gate, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, NG1 7BE

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

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Date of first registration

Date of latest registration certificate

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

31/03/04

Date of Inspection Visit		16th March 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Mark Ryder	124974
Name of Inspector	2	Elaine Cray	
Name of Inspector	3	Bridget Betts	
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		Sonia Cain/Lynn Anderson	

Introduction to Report and Inspection

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Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection

Statutory Requirements from this Inspection

Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection

Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings

(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

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2. Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service

3. Management of the fostering service

4. Securing and promoting welfare

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

6. Records

7. Fitness of premises

8. Financial requirements

9. Fostering panels

10. Short-term breaks

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Part D: Provider's Response

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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 Nottingham City Council 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.

The city council fostering service is a Local Authority service that provides: -

- Emergency and short term placements
- Bridging placements
- Long term/permanent placements
- Parent and child placements
- Home from home placements
- Remand placements
- Supported lodgings
- Foster lodgings

The number of Approved Foster Carers provided by the service was 167 and the number of children being provided with foster placements was 289 at the time of inspection.

The service is based at York House, 2nd Floor, Mansfield Rd, Nottingham.

The foster service is split into The Recruitment Team, The Assessment Team, The Home from Home Team and The Support Teams (which includes the Black Support Team which supports black foster carers).

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 fostering inspection did not assess all standards but focused upon outcomes from young people. The CSCI received 48 children's questionnaires and 20 foster carer's questionnaires. Three foster homes were visited. Only one placing officers questionnaire was received. Due to an oversight by the inspector a children's group was not visited. The inspector visited a carer's group that was well represented. Overall the inspectors were pleased with the outcomes for young people. Out of the three statutory requirements identified two remain outstanding from the last inspection.

Statement of Purpose (standard 1)

This standard was partially met.

The Statement of Purpose related to all areas as defined under NMS. However this document required to be updated. The children's guide was not designed for children with disabilities and different age ranges.

Fitness to provide or manage a fostering service (standards 2&3)

The one standard assessed was met.

The manager of the fostering service is in the progress of being assessed by CSCI to ensure that they are suitable to the role.

Management of the fostering service (standards 4 & 5)

These standards were not inspected at this time.

Securing and promoting welfare (standards 6 to 14)

The eight standards assessed were all met.

Overall foster homes were found to be of a high standard, offering warm clean and comfortably furnished accommodation and well maintained. The agency has a Black Support team that addresses the specific needs of black carers and the black children in placement. All young people spoken with stated they were happy in their placements and get on well with their carers. All foster carers complete child protection training during the preparation to care course. Carers described a variety of ways they support and encourage contact. NCH provides an Advocacy service for young people to assist them during their time in foster care. Young people recorded on their questionnaires that they are encouraged to eat healthily and attend dentist and optician appointments. The majority of young people respondents to the questionnaire stated they receive help and encouragement with schoolwork in their foster home

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

Out of the six standards assessed three were met and three were partially met.

There was no photograph ID on staff files. Staff presented as very experienced and skilled in working with wide range of carers. Interviews with support and supervising social worker's evidenced that they felt supported by the management team. Formal supervision of carers was not clear on their files. A number of carers raised concerns about late payment of expenses. Newly approved foster carers had completed a foundation course as part of their assessment.

Records (standards 24 & 25)

Out of the two standards assessed one was met and one was partially met.

Children's files that were inspected were detailed and well recorded. Inspectors considered that a number of foster care files seen were poorly organised and not standardised.

Fitness of premises for use as fostering service (standard26)

This standard was not met.

Inspectors were concerned with the storage of confidential information within the offices as a number of files were seen not securely locked within appropriate cabinets after working hours.

Financial requirements (standards 27 to 29)

The one standard assessed was not met.

Carers remain concerned about the variable way in which additional expenses were approved. Questionnaires and interviews reflected this concern.

Fostering Panels (standard 30)

This standard was met and considered commendable.

The panel's processes were considered robust and clear.

Short-term breaks (standard 31)

This standard was not assessed at this time.

Family and friends as carers (standard 32)

This standard was not inspected at this time.

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:

Not 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	
			Please see 'statutory requirements identified during this inspection'	

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 Mark Ryder **Signature** _____
Second Inspector Elaine Cray **Signature** _____
Regulation Manager Rachel Cook **Signature** _____
Date _____

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The appropriate Officer of the Local Authority or the Registered Person (as applicable) is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how requirements 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	7 & 20 schedule 1	FS15	Full and satisfactory information needs to be available on all staff including positive proof of identity including a recent photograph. This requirement remains outstanding from the last inspection.	1.09.05
2	29(2)	FS22	Foster carers approval were not all annually reviewed.	1.08.05
3	23	FS26	All children's and foster carers' records need to be stored in adequate secure storage. This requirement remains outstanding from the last inspection	1.08.05

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 is recommended to be reviewed at least annually.
2	FS1	The children' s guide is recommended to be in a format available for differing age groups and children with disabilities.
3	FS21	There should be clear documented recording of supervision on all foster carers files.
4	FS24	Information of children placed with foster carers should be up to date on the carer's file.
5	FS25	All case records for children and foster carers' should comply with the written policy on recording.
6	FS29	All payments of additional expenses to foster carers should be made promptly.

* 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	8
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)	YES
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	YES
• Contact with parents	YES
• Contact with supervising social workers	YES
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	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	16/03/05
Time of Inspection	10:00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	64

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?
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The statement of purpose was available for inspectors. All areas as recommended under 1.4 had been met. However it was noticeable that the document required updating as figures for numbers of carers and children placed were not accurate
The children's guide was not available for different age groups or children with disabilities. However the guide does give a good introduction to the fostering service and what young people should expect of their care.

See advisory recommendations 1 and 2

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?
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	0
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This standard was not inspected at this time.

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?
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	3
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Sonia Cain has been assessed as suitable for the role as registered manager and is suitably qualified.

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?

0

This standard was not inspected at this time

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

0

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

1

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

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.

3

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

3

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

0

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

1

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)

The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This standard was not inspected at this time

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

Inspectors visited three foster homes during the inspection. One visit had to be cancelled at short notice due to the foster carer not being well. Overall these homes were found to be of a high standard, offering warm clean and comfortably furnished accommodation and well maintained.

Health and safety checks are carried out on an annual basis and referred to during the review of foster carers. These were evidenced in carer's files.

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 agency has a Black Support team that addresses the specific needs of black carers' and the black children in placement. A report from a project has recently been completed that identifies the needs of young black children in foster care. This was shown to the inspector. There were 88 black children placed in foster care. Twenty-eight children were placed in transracial placements (see standard 17).

The fostering service produces an excellent directory of black resources within the city. Training on diversity and anti-discriminatory practice is reflected in the preparation courses for new carers as well as courses arranged throughout the year.

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

All young people spoken with stated they were happy in their placements and get on well with their carers. Questionnaires further evidenced that young people felt that the foster carers are looking after them well.

Carer's referred to the matching of carer's to young people to be 'too rushed' and that it sometimes feels as if there is little planning. A number of carers responded that they did not see the young people before they came to stay with them. New foster carers, who were about to have their first placement, not been introduced to the children. This was fed back to the supervising social worker at the time of this inspection.

Exemptions have been reduced over the last 12 months (see standard 17).

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

All foster carers complete child protection training during the preparation to care course. Further awareness training is organised throughout the year. As part of the assessment process all perspective foster carers have been CRB checked at the enhanced level. Safe caring training is also available and undertaken during the preparation to care course. Information on safe caring was not available in the carer's handbook but had been distributed separately.

Child protection inquiries were recorded and monitored by senior managers.

Young people's questionnaires did not identify bullying as a problem at this time. All young people are given a children's guide in which numbers for support agencies are identified. Young people can also write to the assistant director via a confidential post card if they have concerns about the care they receive.

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
Carers described a variety of ways they support and encourage contact, This included transporting children, helping them to make phone calls and, in some instances, supervising contact. LAC forms inspected referred to contact arrangements. Review minutes reflected that contact is discussed on a frequent basis. Case tracking on two files highlighted that contact was very well promoted and recorded on file. Young people spoken to said that the arrangements for contact was fine.		

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
NCH provides an Advocacy service for young people to assist them during their time in foster care. This is commissioned through NCH young people in fostering. The Best Value Review of Children Looked After consulted with young people on the service they receive. 39 out of 43 questionnaires responded to from children felt that they were asked for their opinions about their foster carers. Files evidenced consultation with young people and foster carers, as part of the LAC documentation and reviewing process.		

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
Young people recorded on their questionnaires that they are encouraged to eat healthily and attend dentist and optician appointments. LAC forms identified health needs of young people as well as statutory reviews. Some carers were unclear as to what to include in medical notes. Inspectors were shown a pro-forma which carers should be logging medication, accidents and contact. However not all carers had these forms. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), based at Thorneywood hospital, provided individual sessions for children in foster care as well as input into joint training (see standard 23). Support is also available from the Physical health team based in the Children's Centre at the City hospital.		

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 majority of young people respondents to the questionnaire stated they receive help and encouragement with schoolwork in their foster home: " I get encouraged to do my homework and to work hard".

All foster carers received a handbook, 'The Education of children and young people in Public Care' from the agency. This was recognised by carers and social workers to be a useful guide.

The agency has a dedicated Education Liaison Manager who works with foster carers and social workers to address any educational difficulties. As part of this manager's remit is to offer training and guidance. A task group called 'Education of Children Looked After' meets six weekly to promote and address the educational achievements of all children in Local Authority care. This includes residential as well as fostering.

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?**

0

This standard was not inspected at this time

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

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Recruitment and selection of staff is done centrally.

Four staff files were inspected. All had up to date CRB checks at the enhanced level. References, including from the last employer, were on file. There was no recorded evidence of referee's being contacted by telephone although the files looked at were not of new staff. There was no photograph ID on these files.

See requirement 1

Total number of staff of the agency:

44

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?

0

This standard was not inspected at this time.

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>Nottingham City fostering service has 167 present carers approved that are caring for 289 children and young people. There are 40 exemptions to initial foster carers approvals as of March 2005. These include carers going over numbers, children placed outside of cares approval age range and 28 transracial placements. There were 89 black children fostered. Staff presented as very experienced and skilled in working with wide range of carers. All social workers are qualified. A Post Qualification strategy was in operation. At the time of this inspection there was concerns regarding the terms and conditions between the fostering workers to that of their colleagues in childcare teams. A member of staff commented that the difference in conditions of service was affecting morale within the teams.</p> <p>A dedicated team undertook recruitment of carers. Regular meetings between teams and managers ensured that the recruitment team were aware of the needs of the type of foster carers required.</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>Interviews with support and supervising social worker's evidenced that they felt supported by the management team. Staff presented as knowledgeable and committed to the work. Supervisions are held monthly, as are team meetings. These are all minuted. A citywide meeting is held for all staff on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Social worker's are able to attend in-house training. Joint training between social workers and foster carers is encouraged.</p> <p>An out of hour's service is staffed by volunteers from the fostering teams.</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?	0
This standard was not inspected at this time		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)		
All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	0
This standard was not inspected at this time		

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6)		
The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>All carers, including kinship carers, have an allocated supervising social worker who carries out regular visits in the foster carer's home. Carers have an opportunity to attend a range of courses such as children with disability, first aid and the Webster Stratton Programme. This is a 12-week programme focusing upon parenting skill using a number of exercises (see standard 23).</p> <p>Formal supervision of carers was not clear on their files. Some social workers record supervision with their carers whilst others do not. Policy on supervision was not within the carers handbook</p> <p>Out of hours support was available up until 11pm. This is voluntary run on a rota system by social workers in the teams.</p> <p>Carers groups meet regularly. Groups are run in different areas of the county. One group offers peer support for black foster carers.</p> <p>See advisory recommendation 3</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?	2
<p>The fostering service provides an independent Reviewing Officer to chair all annual reviews for carers. This review process considers the positives and the training needs of carers. An annual report from this reviewing officer identified a backlog of carers who have not had an annual review this year. Some carers stated they have not received copies of the Handbook, which is presently being updated. They were aware of the procedures in respect of complaints, allegations and investigations. There is an identified individual from another agency who can provide support for carers during allegations made against carers.</p> <p>Supervision of carers was not always recorded on carer's files. Foster care agreements were detailed and informative.</p> <p>A number of carers raised concerns about late payment of additional allowances that are processed by the child's placing social worker .</p> <p>See requirement 2</p>		

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Newly approved foster carers had completed a foundation course as part of their assessment. This included child protection training and safe caring awareness. Foster carers commented positively about this course.

The inspector discussed with two trainers who work in fostering and the CAMHS team, the Webster Stratton Training programme for foster carers. There were 14 foster carers attending this course, which focuses upon good parenting skills. The inspector was informed that the course had been previously piloted. A trainee psychologist was monitoring evaluation and feedback from carers. This included a recall interview some three months after the course to identify the outcomes for carers.

Discussion with carers identified a range of courses. Some carers felt that the timing of these courses could be improved and that childcare is not always considered. Training is linked to the experience and level of the foster carer.

The fostering panel chair explained that she reports back to the assistant director any training needs identified for 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?
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	3
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Case notes and information is copied to the fostering file from the children's social work file (in al loose leaf file). Some of these notes, such as LAC documentation, were out of date, as the children had left the foster home. Children's files that were inspected were detailed and well recorded.

Questionnaires from foster carers evidenced that most of the time carer's were adequately informed about the backgrounds of children placed with them.

Foster carers have the opportunity to attend Life Story Work training.

See advisory recommendation 4

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?
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	2
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The service had separate files for fostering, supervision of staff, complaints and allegations and any significant events. Further records of complaints were detailed within computer files. Inspectors noted a number of differences between the two lists.

Access to records by young people is arranged via the City Council's Data Protection Officer.

A children's register and carer's records were completed on an excel document.

Overall inspectors considered that a number of foster care files seen were poorly organised and not standardised. For instance some files had typed entries whilst others were handwritten. The use of correction fluid on documents was also noted. This was discussed during feedback after the inspection.

See advisory recommendation 5

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			167
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			52
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			65
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			57
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			62
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	55.44	Maximum £	191.51

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

The office occupies the second floor of a large building in the city centre of Nottingham. It is identifiable and accessible during office hours. Inspectors were concerned with the storage of confidential information within the offices as a number of files were seen not securely locked within appropriate cabinets after working hours.

The access to IT and the use of email for support and supervising social workers was considered inadequate. Staff reported that the system is in need of an overhaul.

See requirement 3

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

This standard was not inspected due to the service being a local authority provision and exempt from Regulation 44.

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

This standard was not inspected due to the service being a local authority provision and exempt from Regulation 44.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

A full review of allowances and expenses is presently being considered by the fostering service. This would entail a single payment for all additional expenses by the foster carers. However inspectors were not able to identify any timescales for when this would be implemented. Carers remain concerned about the variable way in which expenses are approved. Questionnaires and interviews reflected this concern.

See advisory recommendation 6

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?

4

Inspectors observed a fostering panel on the 11.03.05 in which 6 applications were heard. There was a variety of applications presented to this panel which included social worker's assessments of new foster carers, recommendations for deregistration and a case in which a significant event had taken place that the fostering panel needed to be aware of. Reports and an agenda had been sent out to panel members two weeks prior to this panel meeting. The panel was quorate and all members contributed to the discussions. Independent members included expertise in a range of relevant areas, such as health and a foster carer from a different agency. Panel were observed to identify relevant issues arising from assessments and consider these in open and frank discussion. Questions were discussed in detail and social workers, team manager and both existing and perspective foster carers were able to present their views to the panel. Inspectors noted the considerable skill in ensuring the foster carers were put at ease and sensitively questioned. The chair was independent of the fostering service and had an extensive experience of child welfare within social work and mental health settings. The panel chair is qualified.

All panel members have been vetted as identified through records. Two members were observers during this panel whilst awaiting CRB clearance. Each member is given a pack that clarifies their responsibilities whilst working for the panel. The information also identifies the nature of good practice assessment in order to consider the merits of each application. The inspectors also had the opportunity to observe and discuss the process of the panel with the Local Authorities decision maker.

A foster carer remarked that they thought the panel process was conducted in a "relevant and appropriate way".

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?	0
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This standard was not inspected at this time

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?	0
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This standard was not inspected at this time

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Not applicable

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 16 th March 2005 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

YES

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

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 16 June 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

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

NO

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

NO

Other: <enter details here>

NO

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 Margaret McKechnie of Nottingham City Fostering 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 Margaret McKechnie of Nottingham City Fostering am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:

Print Name _____
Signature _____
Designation _____
Date _____

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

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